

The High Calling

A Monthly Journal of the Francis Asbury Society

From the Director's Desk

It is with joy and thanksgiving that I take this privilege to greet you, our world-wide FAS family. From Africa to Asia to Europe to South America and prolifically throughout the United

States, our Society has been busy in fields sharing the message of Christ's transforming power. We have gone through your prayers and gifts, the harvest has been plentiful, and God has been cleansing hearts. So we thank you for being our colleagues in the mission.

Many of you know that June 26th will be Dr. Kinlaw's 90th birthday. Last week he called me to share his reflections on an experience he had as an 8 year-old boy. He had tried to capture the significance of the experience in narrative, story form. I felt you would enjoy reading it and perhaps you would use this issue of *The High Calling* for reflection on how God has pivotally impacted your life so that you could witness to a "clean heart." If any of you would like to write one of your formative stories in life and share it with us, I invite you to do so. We use these saving stories of God to encourage people who are themselves looking for His help.

Finally, our staff has been having such a rich time calling many of you to let you know we are praying for you I thought I should thank you for the blessing! Enjoy Dr. Kinlaw's reflections and I sure hope I can see you at the Hemlock Retreats. Our program is outstanding this summer and you will love being on the mountain with us.

Blessings!



—Ron Smith
Executive Director



Save the Date
Hemlock 2012:
Come to the Mountain

August 19-21
August 21-23

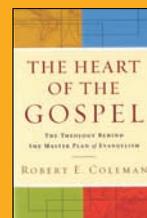
"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them."
—Matthew 28:16 KJV



Summer Book Series

FAS Offers New "Summer Book Series"

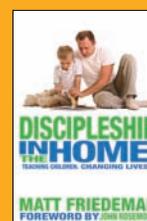
New this summer, FAS is pleased to announce the Summer Book Series, a unique opportunity to engage some of the great books FAS has to offer alongside the authors themselves. Once a month in June, July, and August, the Ministry Center will host a round-table discussion of a selected book, attended by the author of that book.



June's selection is *The Heart of the Gospel*, by Dr. Robert Coleman, world-renowned teacher of evangelism and author of the classic *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. *The Heart of the Gospel* is an in-depth exposition of the



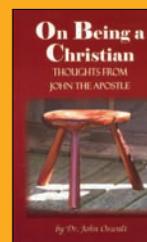
theology behind *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. FAS founder Dennis Kinlaw says of the book, "Coleman's love for both the Gospel and the Christ of the Gospel is contagious. Read and learn and worship."



The book for July is *Discipleship in the Home*, by Dr. Matt Friedeman. Dr. Friedeman is a long-time friend of FAS and currently serves as Professor of Discipleship and Evangelism at Wesley Biblical Seminary. He



has also hosted a radio talk show for the American Family Association and participates in prison and pro-life ministries with his church in Clinton, Mississippi. *Discipleship in the Home* is a hands-on, practical guide for parents raising their children to be disciples of Jesus.



Finally, FAS scholar-in-residence Dr. John Oswalt will be on hand in August to discuss his beloved book *On Being a Christian*



continued on back...

Si Deus Pro Nobis Quis Contra Nos?

by Dennis Kinlaw



Romans 8:31

A few years back I found myself moving ever more deeply into my ninth decade of life. As I looked around I realized that most of my peers, those with whom I had lived and worked across the years, friends and otherwise, had gone on before me. My question was: Why am I still here? So I decided I should ask my Friend.

He, to my surprise, was quite ready to answer me. “Why are you still here? Why? That is because you are not ready yet for the real world. There is too much you don’t know or understand. I have bigger things ahead of you than you are ready for. As of now, you are too dumb.”

That was the beginning of the richest decade of my, now, ninety years.

It was a bit of a surprise for me to realize that He had his eye on me that closely and had plans for me that specific. The conclusion of Paul in Romans 8:31, which became a greeting in the early Church, began to grip me. He is *pro nobis* (for us). I was surprised to realize that I am included in a special way in that *nobis*. He is for me, has plans for me, and has work for me to do that is His work, not mine, and he seeks to prepare me to work *with* Him, not just *for* Him, in His eternal business. But to do that, He let me know I needed to know Him and His ways much better than I do now.

As I began to live in this new relationship with Him, I began to realize that He is a more aggressive Friend than I had thought. My tendency had always been to assume that knowing Him was largely my responsibility, and that it was up to me to draw near to Him. Slowly I began to realize that the initiative in this relationship is first of all with Him because of who He is, and my need was to let Him reveal Himself to me.

What I initiate lets me know who I am. What I let Him initiate, what I receive, lets me know who He is. John said it when he told us that Jesus “came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (John 1:11-12 KJV).

The knowledge of God is something to receive, not attain.

The reason for this is that He is a personal being, not a multiplication table or a primordial philosophical proposition or a universal axiom. A personal knowledge comes only by mutual permission. He is *pro nobis* and the reason we do not know Him better is because of our reluctance to really let Him know us and to acknowledge His initiative when it occurs.

A change began to take place in me, and what a joyous change it has been and continues to be! I am finding that I evaluate events and circumstances quite differently as to their origin and the possibility of purpose and meaning in them. Circumstances that I once would have interpreted as accidental, fortunate or unfortunate, I now realize are pedagogical happenings in which truths reside that transcend our world of time and space. What once were just coincidences are now signs of His aggressive benevolence toward me. This has changed in a very tender way my understanding of past events that I once simply counted as interesting accidents. I came to realize that His aggressive interest is just as present in a child’s life as it is in the life of the mature and sophisticated adult. I recognize this now in

an unforgettable moment when I was about eight years old.

Those were Depression days. My father came home one afternoon and explained to my mother that our bank had failed that day. All of our savings as a family were gone. He changed to his work clothes and went to his vegetable garden whistling and singing, as was his custom, an old hymn, probably “How Firm a Foundation.”

The effect of the Depression on me as an eight year old was the realization that money, even pocket change, was not a part of my life. The place where I missed it the most was at school during recess time. At the mid-morning break of our classes the school made available candy for those children who had some pocket change. I will never forget the attraction a Tootsie Roll held for me in those moments, all the more attractive because I had no penny with which to buy one.

One morning I decided to remedy this. Nothing was ever hidden from me in our home, so I arose a bit earlier than normal, found my mother’s purse and slipped a dollar bill out of it. Then I did something I had never done before. I decided that I needed to take a morning walk. So up the sidewalk past the cemetery toward town I went. I dropped my dollar bill on the sidewalk in the sand. Immediately, I picked up my dollar and returned home to proudly show what I had “found.”

My mother just looked and said nothing. She fed my brother, sister and me and helped them dress to go to school. But she turned to me and said, “Dennis, honey, you don’t feel real good today, do you? I think I will let you stay home this morning with me.”

She continued doing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen, but I was astounded. Almost nothing could happen in my world serious enough to justify skipping school. I sat down in our family room and waited like a lamb for the slaughter.

In due time, my mother left the kitchen, came into the room where I was, pulled a chair up next to me and sat down. Then she looked at me. I noticed that her eyes were teary. Tenderly, she informed me that she knew that my story about finding the dollar was not true and that I had taken it from her purse. She explained how sorry she was that she did not have money to share with me for my desires. But then she said, “What grieves me most is not that you have lied to or stolen from your mother. What troubles me is that you have sinned and have therefore hurt the heart of Jesus. You have grieved Him. Don’t you want to tell him you are sorry and ask Him to forgive you for sinning against Him?”

Suddenly the issue was not stealing, lying, or deception. My problem was primarily neither with my conscience, my mother, the Ten Commandments, or myself. My problem was with the thorn-crowned Jesus who had shed His blood and poured out His life so that I could have an intimate communion, a loving friendship with Him. I had hurt His loving heart.

In these last years I have remembered this moment, and my understanding has changed. My memory, of course, may be quite selective. But the memories of this moment across the years have not been of a lecture about right and wrong, about judgment and the moral law, even about the relationship of a child to his parents, or the importance of truth. All these factors were recognizably present and inescapable but none of these was the central focus of my mother’s concern. With a wisdom that now is quite awesome to me she moved beyond morality, ethics,

truth and even religion. She made it an exercise in metaphysics, a matter of ultimate truth. She insisted on getting to that ultimate absolute that is behind the good, the true, the beautiful, the righteous, the religious, and the holy. She brought me face to face with the “I” of Moses’ encounter with the “I Am”—the Person from whom we all come and to whom we all go and the One from whom none of us can ever escape.

Is this a bit of evidence of God’s aggressive interest in an eight year old? I think it is.

It was years before I could understand the spiritual glory and intellectual sophistication of the world to which my mother was introducing me. She wanted me to know the confidence and joy that came from just existing and being loved and pursued by God Himself. I would not have understood if someone had said, “Dennis, your mother is helping you think thoughts that Plato and Aristotle could not think and ideas that Descartes and Kant never grasped.” But that is exactly what she was doing. She was letting me know that the ultimate reality, the final inescapable absolute in all existence, is not an “it” or a “what,” but a “Who.” She enabled me to believe that this “Who” is aggressive in His love and interest in me. He has scars in His hands that are testimonies to that. I knew nothing yet about the remarkable story of the origin of the word *person*, its development, or the doors of understanding it would ultimately open for me.

I suddenly found myself in a world where the questions of right and wrong, true and false, honesty and deceit were highly personal matters not just between Mother and me, but also between an Other and me. As Robert Spaeman says, the inescapable reality with which everyone must come to terms is not a *something* but a *Someone*, and His name is Jesus. It was He who forced upon the world the concept of the personal, and He who made it necessary for the term “person” to be developed to represent that concept. This took centuries of Christian history, but when I was eight years of age my mother felt I should begin to understand the reality.

Could it be that good mothers are really the original metaphysicians?

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

*In every condition, in sickness, in health;
In poverty’s vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.*

*Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

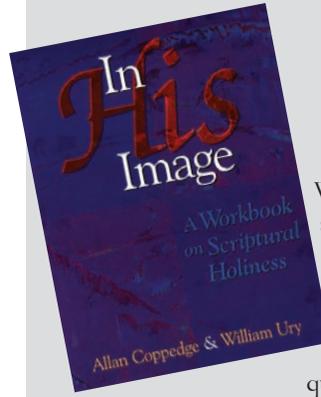
*The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.*

by John Rippon, 1787, public domain



(which was born out of an FAS study of I John). Those who have been fortunate to sit under Dr. Oswalt's teaching can attest to the privilege it is to have someone of his caliber of scholarship in a society of people committed to living and preaching biblical holiness.

The book discussions will all take place in the conference room of the FAS Ministry Center (1580 Lexington Road) on **June 25, July 12, and August 9 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.** Summer Book Series selections may be purchased from FAS online by using promotional code SUMMERBOOK, or by calling our office and mentioning the Summer Book Series.



June 2012 Special Offer *In His Image*

\$9.95 on sale (regularly \$14.95)

Written to assist individuals in becoming serious disciples of Jesus, this study guide focuses on leading readers to an intimate relationship with God and teaches ways to reflect His nature. Study of and prayer on the stories, passages, and questions contained within this twelve-session workbook are great for Sunday school classes and discipleship groups as well as personal study and devotions.

by **Allan Coppedge and William Ury**
Paperback Study Guide—136 Pages
(bulk discount pricing available)

The High Calling—May/June 2012

The High Calling is a publication of the Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.

The Francis Asbury Society

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The High Calling

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