

A note of errata on pages 1373-1374 in the discussion of the dating of the crucifixion—Brown refers to the birth of Jesus in about 6 B.C. He then refers to the approximate age of Jesus at the beginning of His ministry as 30 from Luke 3:23 and notes that this would be circa A.D. 24. However, since there is no zero year between B.C. and A.D. the 30 years should take one to circa A.D. 25.

Brown's work is monumental, cogently written and conservative in the application of its criteria. It has earned a place of primacy in PN research, a credit to the dedication of its author.

Union College
Lincoln, NE 68506-1734

TOM SHEPHERD

Bruce, Robert, and Debra Bruce. *Reclaiming Your Family: Seven Ways to Take Control of What Goes on in Your Home*. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994. 257 pp. Cloth, \$11.99.

The CBS television documentary, "In the Killing Fields of America," graphically portrays the rapidly escalating violence that constitutes one of the symptoms of family and societal disintegration. A medical model might suggest approaching these symptoms from a perspective of diagnosis and prescription. The diagnosis appears to be: a major loss of moral values with paralleling family disintegration. One prescription is set forth in *Reclaiming Your Family: Seven Ways to Take Control of What Goes on in Your Home*.

Robert and Debra Bruce, parents of three teens, have written a comprehensive prescription for parents, "a how-to" handbook that describes step-by-step how to build or rebuild strong families that teach moral values in a spiritual environment. The Bruces admit that parenting has been a learning experience for them which they have shared with their readers. They are a real-life laboratory for the principles they write about, principles that have sound biblical and psychological foundations plus a lot of common sense.

The chapters focus on seven basic areas which need to be managed if one is to have a healthy family and healthy children. The introduction, "Is Your Family Out of Control?" contains assessment tools to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the family. It ends with a Family Assessment Quiz and scoring information to help the reader answer this question about her/his own family.

Seven chapter titles begin with the words "Take control." The first chapter discusses the spiritual health of the family. "Take Control Through Faith in Jesus Christ" stresses the importance of spending time with God and contains many suggestions that will help families build a strong spiritual base.

Chapter 2, "Take Control Through Consistent Discipline," contains many helpful strategies on how to remain firm, consistent, yet pleasant, by maintaining control of one's own emotions.

Chapter 3, "Take Control Through Communication," shows how to really listen and how to communicate with love while all the while remaining firm, authoritative, specific, and fair. The chapter ends with an Anger Check List and describes steps for creative conflict resolution.

Chapter 4, "Take Control Through Christian Values," teaches families how to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered. Values are defined as principles given by the Creator. The authors stress the importance of modeling them in the home and suggest methods for teaching them to children in different age groups.

Chapter 5, "Take Control of the Time in Your Life," recommends prioritizing time use and avoiding overcommitment and perfectionism. This chapter includes ideas on how to nurture one's self as well as the family and ends with 13 enjoyable family-time activities.

Chapter 6, "Take Control of Your Family Income," calls for keeping out of debt through careful planning and prioritizing: "pay God, pay yourself, then pay others." This section contains a host of helpful suggestions, sample budgets, budget worksheets, and a plan that can help any family begin to achieve financial control.

Chapter 7, "Take Control of the Media," challenges parents to decide who will teach their children. Some parents take control by banning certain forms of media; this works about as long as the children are in a controlled environment. The Bruces recommend teaching children *how to choose* on the basis of guiding principles as well as self-control. The chapter ends with a family-time exercise featuring four steps to achieving family media control.

This book is user-friendly in that it is easy to read, yet it is too long to read quickly. This is because it contains such a comprehensive approach to each area: basic principles, self-assessment lists, illustrations from real life, and end-of-chapter interactive question-and-answer sections for family discussion. It is a great reference book and is organized so a parent can quickly locate help on the topics discussed.

One of the strengths of this book is the way the authors provide materials for family participation, which builds family cohesion. At the end of each chapter they describe the steps the family can work on together to achieve the family's goals for growth. Another strong point is the biblical approach combined with sound psychological principles.

If the diagnosis is correct, that many of our society's ills stem from the loss of moral values which results from the disintegration of families, then *Reclaiming Your Family* contains a prescription that will provide healing for many.