

HOW PEOPLE GROW

What the Bible Reveals about Personal Growth
by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend
Review by Major Josh Anderson

How People Grow, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend, addresses – as you'll no doubt discern from the title – the issues surrounding human growth and change. And while the name of the book

may be disarmingly straightforward, the themes it explores are anything but simple. The growth process is, after all, a difficult reality to parse. While it is safe to assume that everyone has some thoughts about what it involves, it is equally plain that how we mature is not without its mystery.

We all know people who do many of the right things – things like Bible study, worship and prayer – and yet fail to see significant progress in some areas of life. What accounts for this? Why does the gospel sometimes seem to bear so little fruit in the lives of those who purport to believe it? Why can people, people who to all appearances are not overtly rebelling against God, go for decades and remain essentially immature in at least some aspects of who they are?

With a view to shedding some light on these matters, Cloud and Townsend go to work dismantling a basic assumption many seem to have. The assumption is this: There is little or no real connection between theology and working through the complex practical problems of life. Yes, the great truths of the faith have some value in an ultimate sense, but what difference they make in the workaday world of gritty reality is, if we're honest, unclear or even nonexistent.

In sharp contrast to this kind of thinking Cloud and Townsend set forth their major premise: "The growth process at its very core is theological." Or as they state elsewhere, framing it somewhat differently: "The gospel promotes human growth." Rightly understood and applied, theology, they would argue, has everything to do with the earthly realities of daily existence.

True to this basic insight, one of the great overall strengths of the text is that it seeks very self-consciously to anchor itself to the doctrines of the faith. Unlike so many other Christian "Self-help" books, which simply adopt secular methods wholesale and adorn them with a smattering of scripture, Cloud and Townsend make an admirable attempt to remain in a tight orbit around what they find in scripture.

While theology broadly conceived includes many subcategories, the principle object of theology is God himself. In keeping with this, one of the major emphases of the book is an emphasis on a right understanding of God. As the knowledge of God relates to and informs human growth, this means in particular understanding that God is the supreme source of all that we need for life – including our growth and maturation.

This, you may be thinking, goes without saying. Of course God is the source of our growth and sanctification. However, as simple it sounds on the surface, it is fantastically easy to set this aside when we get about the business of living. Few will dispute that we are justified by grace through faith. Yet, how many can sincerely say that they live as if we are also sanctified by grace through faith? Instead, do we not often practically

seek to blaze our own trail toward spiritual maturity by "trying harder" with little or no real dependence upon God?

To witness the degree to which this notion has pervaded our thinking we need look no further than at what we as a Christian community are saying. As Cloud and Townsend observe, many purportedly Christian systems contain principles *about* God, but little or no God. The great irony and tragedy of this is that to exclude continual turning to God in faith for all that we need is to abandon the only hope we have for change.

Another face of this same tendency manifests itself in adopting models of growth that are essentially law-oriented as opposed to rooted in grace. Again, people may comprehend superficially that God relates to them freely and graciously in Christ and yet live daily life as if they were under the Law – a reality that, as Paul teaches, can only provoke and increase sin. Man is perpetually tempted to devise his own life-strategies and forms of self-salvation. Even the most mature of believers is not immune from this natural drift.

One of the points the book stresses repeatedly is that most people have a truncated understanding of grace. Grace is indisputably grounded in the forgiveness of sins. Nevertheless, we diminish and reduce grace if we say that it is the forgiveness of sins and stop there. Instead, suggest the authors, grace must be seen to encompass the entire provision of God for the Christian life. This includes the provision of God for our maturation. We do not grow because of "will-power" or "self-effort," we do not change because we try harder or implement a new strategy for growth. Instead we grow when and because we turn and rely upon the provision of God in Christ and the resources he has provided for us.

The only kind of ministry that can bring about authentic and lasting change, insist the authors, is a ministry of grounded in grace. We must forever have in view the fact that law cannot bring about this kind of change. Instead it can only bring about an awareness of spiritual bankruptcy and death. However, such an awareness is, in its place, critical.

Cloud and Townsend are quick to note that grace is only effective when the need for it is perceived. To that end, one of the most important things that we can do is help people get to the end of themselves. Our ministries should not and cannot be about making people feel better about themselves. To the contrary, one of our principle roles is, in a manner of speaking, to facilitate their death. We must teach people to die to law, die to themselves, die to "trying-harder" to save and reform themselves.

What does this look like in practice? Paradoxically, it often means doing what appears, on the surface, to be ungracious. Consider the following quotation:

Confrontation is an important tool to get someone to see his inability to change and to see his need for help. Many people are too soft-hearted; they give encouragement to someone who needs discouragement instead. To encourage a powerless person to try harder is one of the worst things you could possibly do. The best thing you can do is to discourage him from believing he can do it on his own.

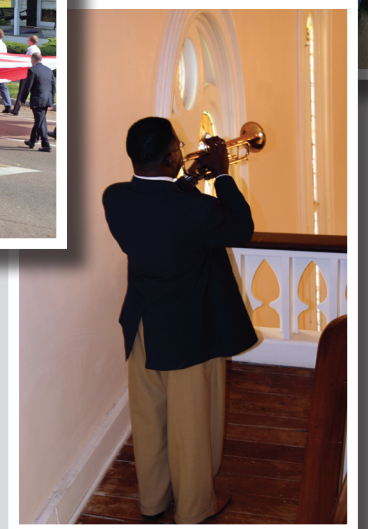
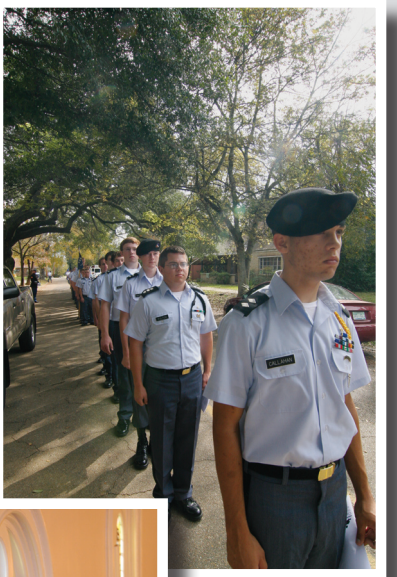


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Founders' Day 2007



Veterans' Day Observance



Celebrating the sacrifices and achievements of America's military heroes is an annual tradition for the Academy. On November 9, local veterans and other guests assembled outside the front door of the sanctuary of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Gibson. At first they could only hear the sound of the Academy's Drum Corps. Then the color guard came into view, marching north on Church Street. They were followed by an enormous American flag spread out over three lanes of the street, carried by over 30 Cadets. The guests entered the sanctuary, followed by the Cadets marching in procession.

In his welcoming remarks, COL Blanton displayed his grandfather's Purple Heart medal and explained to the Cadets its significance. He pointed out that its shape symbolizes the love for their countrymen that veterans who earned it have demonstrated in battle. He added that the image of George Washington on the medal reminds us of the sacrifices veterans made in all of America's wars since the Revolution.

Each veteran in attendance had an opportunity to tell how many years he had served and in which branch of the military. The Academy is proud this year to boast 11 veterans of the Army, Air Force and Marines among its Cadre, some of whom are still serving in the National Guard and Reserves.

COL John W. Ray, president of Ewing and Ray Foundations Services, then addressed the Cadets, cadre and guests. He urged the Cadets to prepare themselves as citizens for a long conflict with Islamist terrorists. Cadet Tom Fulton (CA) recited the poem "In Flanders Fields," and the ceremony was closed as MAJ Monya Williams sounded Taps. The Academy then hosted all its guests at a luncheon served in Bolling Dining Hall on the Academy campus.

Drawing inspiration from great men of the past can build hope for the future. Dr. Jeremiah Chamberlain, for whom the Academy is named, was the first president of Oakland College, and some of the college buildings still exist on the campus of Alcorn State University. Thus the Academy cadre and Corps of Cadets traveled to the University on October 5 to celebrate their rich heritage in Oakland Chapel. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, senior minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi, gave an address, and the Academy presented the Chamberlain Award for commitment to education posthumously to Dr. Clinton Bristow, president of the University between 1995 and 2006. Alumnus John Armstrong received the Hunt Award in honor of his establishing a scholarship for Cadets. The Alcorn State Men's Chorale also performed for the enthusiastic audience. After the ceremony, everyone returned to the Academy campus for a delicious fish-fry.

Expert Cadet Badge Training

November 1 and 2 provided two days of Expert Cadet Badge (ECB) training for the Cadet Corps, utilizing all of the Wilderness resources, Camp Killingsworth and in the pool. This year, out of 119 eligible Cadets, 25 earned the ECB badge.

To merit ECB, a Cadet must score at least 70% percent on the Army Physical Fitness Test, meet the minimum qualification standards with the M4 on the rifle range and pass nine of the ten stations of ECB training. The stations are map reading, assembly and disassembly of M4, camouflage, CPR, first aid, the cold water test, individual movement techniques, indirect fire, hand and arm signals, and give a SALUTE (size, activity, location, unit/uniform, time, and equipment) report.

Besides ECB training, Cadets use the Wilderness for Green Cycle training during afternoon and Saturday activities and for CALFEX in the spring.

This year's awardees are G. Bejin (FL), M. Biederbeck (AZ), J. Bonvillain (LA), M. Chen (Taiwan), M. Collins (FL), B. Couvillion (LA), N. Dean (TX), T. Doiron (LA), B. Duhe (LA), S. Gable (MS), J. Goodwin (TX), A. Guevera (TN), J. Hanks (MS), A. Jeffery (TX), S. Kim (South Korea), L. Maduzia (CA), L. Murphy (MS), M. Nichols (SC), J. Propst (AL), D. Rickels (MS), C. Simpson (AZ), K. Smith (AL), J. Walker (AL), T. Wegman (LA) and D. Wood (TX).



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Cadet LIFE



October/November 2007

SACS/MPSA Accreditation Review Completed

Accreditation is important for every school, and preparation for the review process requires great effort. Chamberlain-Hunt took the necessity of a SACS/MPSA accreditation visit to conduct a rigorous examination of its progress over the last five years and its goals for the future.

The review process required the Academy clearly to articulate its mission and vision, and to develop a detailed profile of its current status, including data on enrollment, test scores, physical fitness, curriculum and disciplinary trends and improvement. The Academy also had to develop an action plan for the next five years, explaining what capital improvements would be necessary, what curricular changes would be desirable, and how tuition and gifts could be expected to pay for the Academy's program and facilities. All of this information was compiled into a written report and sent to the members of the SACS/MPSA review committee in preparation for their visit to campus.

On November 12 and 13, the Academy hosted the committee, which met with groups of Cadets and cadre to discuss various aspects of the Academy's report. The committee also attended a chapel service, inspected the dormitories, visited classrooms, ate in the dining hall, and toured the Wilderness Area, thus getting a taste of every aspect of the Academy's life and work. The committee, cadre and Cadets enjoyed a barbecue and the trimmings, catered by the Pig Out Inn in Natchez.

The committee was impressed with the changes since the previous review, five years ago, stating that "Chamberlain-Hunt has made remarkable strides in resurrecting her proud heritage. The Academy now has the resources in both financial and personnel areas to support its unique mission and mission. The small classes and individual attention given the Cadets is outstanding and noteworthy. Cadets expressed their appreciation for the small classes, the quality and dedication of cadre, and the structured environment." The committee also reported Cadets' comments that the teaching cadre "is well educated, available early in the morning and late at night, and willing to listen outside the classroom." The Academy is determined to continue improving its ministry to boys in the years to come.



CADRE OVERVIEW

Cadre: 64
Administration: 6
Faculty: 22
TACs: 8
Support Staff: 28
Male/Female: 36/28
Military Service: 17%
Advanced Degrees: 64%
MDiv Degree: 16%

CADET CORPS OVERVIEW

Corps: 131
Boarding: 127
Day: 4
States Represented: 20
Foreign Countries: 2
Financial Aid: 32%

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 1	Refocus Day
December 3-4	Board Meeting
December 4	Soccer Starts
December 8	ACT Testing
December 13	Christmas Party
December 16	Phone Calls
December 18-20	Nine Weeks Tests
December 21	Christmas Break Begins
January 7	New Cadets Report
January 10	Returning Cadets Report
January 25-26	Bird Shooting Trip

HOW PEOPLE GROW (cont.)

Sometimes the truly gracious thing to do is let someone suffer the logical consequence of their behavior. This we do, not because we think that pain alone can or will reform him, but with a view to seeing him become aware of his own inability to effect change in himself and his profound need for grace.

In addition to a right understanding of God, a second major emphasis is on the primacy of relationships. For many of us deep, abiding relationships with others are not, at least in practice, part of our growth paradigm. Drawing on both scripture and first-hand experience, the authors suggest that one of the chief avenues of grace comes through relationships of a particular kind and depth, in the body of Christ.

In addition to underscoring our dependence upon God, any description of growth that seeks to be biblical, must recognize the fact that we were designed to grow in community. That is to say, just as we are dependent upon God, we are likewise, by design, dependent upon other people. These truths are not unrelated. According to the authors, it is through other people that God principally communicates his grace to individual believers. How do we concretely experience the love, forgiveness and restoring power of God? Largely, say Cloud and Townsend, through other people functioning in the body of Christ when it is truest to the gospel.

The experience of biblical truths as they find expression and, as it were, incarnation in people in the body is integral to true sanctification. So, suggest the authors, those who have an orthodox yet largely abstract understanding of grace and do not experience other people loving them will fail to truly grasp and embrace that grace in a transformative way. Many people, they insist, "fellowship" with others, but are so guarded and share so little of themselves that nothing happens at the heart level. It is entirely possible, and in fact quite common to have a great number of people in our lives with whom engage in "fellowship" and spiritual activities of various kinds, and yet lack the kind and depth of relationships that foster growth. Much of *How People Grow* is dedicated to spelling out just what these relationships can look like at their best.

While *How People Grow* should not be viewed as a final word on all things pertaining to human growth, it is a valuable read. If we are serious about seeing deep, lasting change in our own lives and the lives of those we live with, we would do well to consider carefully the dynamics of growth outlined in this work.

Save the Date: Spring Alumni Day scheduled for 5 April 2008. More information to come.

Honoring Loved Ones—Helping Cadets

Memorial Gifts for October and November

Mr. Jacob Reed Barker
Mr. and Mrs. Bert Scales
Mrs. Peggy McIntosh
Mr. and Mrs. Morris Barker

Mrs. Willa Dean Baskin
Mr. and Mrs. John Armstrong, Jr.

Mr. John C. Batte, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Wiley P. Lowry, Jr.

Mr. Robert Cannada
Mr. and Mrs. Clyde L. Nelson, Jr.

Mr. James Cartwright
Mr. and Mrs. George L. Hand

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Donald
Mr. and Mrs. Dan L. Donald, Jr.

Mrs. Mary Holt Hamilton
Mr. and Mrs. John Armstrong, Jr.

Mrs. Alice Heard
Mr. and Mrs. John Armstrong, Jr.

Mr. Marvin "Sketter" Hynum
Mr. and Mrs. Grady Humphries
Mrs. Lanelle B. Hudson

Dr. Claude A. Jackson
Dr. & Mrs. Ansel C. Tipton, Jr.

Mr. Lyman Kay Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. James H. King

Mr. Otho Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Edwards

Mr. and Mrs. Guy C. Lowe
Mr. and Mrs. Billy C. Greenlee

Mr. William Burnet Lum
Dr. Carolyn R. Goldsborough

Mr. James McAdams
Mr. and Mrs. George L. Hand

Mr. and Mrs. Robert MacDonald
Mr. John A. MacDonald

Mr. Dan McMullen
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Edwards

Mrs. Sally Porter
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Mavar

Mrs. Rachael Scherer
LTC & Mrs. George H. Scherer

Mr. Kenneth Ray Tompkins
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Daily

Mr. Robert D. Wade
Mr. and Mrs. Grady Humphries
Mr. and Mrs. William B. Abraham
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hynum

Mr. Bob Williams
Mr. Joseph W. Harper

Honor Gifts for October and November

Mr. James Beesley
Mr. Robert Murphree

COL and Mrs. A. Shane Blanton
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Quinn

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Tipton
Mr. and Mrs. John Tipton

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