

My wife and I have just one child, a son, whom we sent off to college this year for his freshman year. It's been a traumatic time in the Stacy house this fall, Mom and Dad dealing with the "empty nest syndrome," and son experiencing the long-sought freedom from parental control and authority that had, in his view, too long stifled his creativity and independence. A few weeks had passed and Cheryl and I were beginning to adjust pretty well to the quiet again when the phone rang. It was our son at college.

"What are you guys doing this weekend?"

"Oh, we're here. No special plans."

"Well I thought I'd come home this weekend and check up on you guys."

"Are you sure you want to do that? I mean, don't you have late classes on Friday?"

"Well, I just thought I'd come home and check up on you."

"Well, son, you always know you're welcome. Don't you need to study this weekend?"

"I'll bring some books home. I just thought I'd see how you guys are doing!"

"O.K. When will you come?"

"Well, it'll be late Friday after my classes. Tell Mom not to wait dinner on me. It'll be late."

"All right. Be careful."

Friday night late, comes in, throws down a laundry bag full of dirty clothes, flops into bed.

Next morning: "Well, I see you haven't done anything to my old room. Same ole spread, same colors and all. I figured you'd changed it by now."

Sits down to breakfast. Dad has the blessing: "For this and all thy bounty we are grateful, O Lord. Amen."

"Same ole blessing, huh Dad? Yeah, same ole prayer!"

Starts eating. "Pancakes, huh Mom? We always did have pancakes on Saturday morning. Boy I remember that."

Looks at the dishwasher. "Dad, why don't you buy Mom a new dishwasher?"

That ole dishwasher's been here since the Civil War! Same ole dishwasher."

Now why did the kid come home? What's all that about? I mean, wasn't he the one who was just bustin' to get out on his own? He came home to the same ole things to have the double pleasure of complaining about it, and because he knew that whatever else might be changing in his world, there was one place in the world where he would not be ambushed, where he would find things predictable in place—the bedspread, the dishwasher, the pancakes, Dad's prayer—some place to stand while he weighs and thinks and chooses and decides.

Because it's tough out there, especially for college students! Things are changing so fast; everything they thought was nailed down is coming loose; it can

stand" as an "Archimedean Perspective," somewhere outside the vicissitudes of life and the winds of change—solid ground, if you will—where I can view things as they really are and weigh and observe and choose and decide.

In my judgment, this is the biggest crisis facing our society today—a place to stand.

Things are changing so fast, the ground keeps shifting under our feet with such rapidity, that it's difficult to stand in one place long enough to come to a considered, reasoned decision about anything! And while that has implications for virtually all of American life, I want to say a word to you today about the impact that this lack of "perspective" is having on values and morality.

Have you noticed that suddenly everybody is talking about "values" these days? It's the hottest topic in America right now. When there's a major election everybody running for office, whether its for senator or dog catcher, is running on a platform of "basic values."

William Bennett has edited a best seller entitled *The Book of Virtues* in which he argues that America is suffering the consequences of a generation of people who, morally speaking, have no "place to stand" at least in part because we've quit teaching values. Someone, he says, sold us a bill of goods that values could only be caught not taught, and so we quit teaching them, and the result has been the development of a generation of moral illiterates! The answer, says Bennett, is to return to the teaching of values to our children, values like the ten "classic" values he enumerates in his book, honesty, self-discipline, responsibility, courage, and the like — what theologians used to call "cardinal virtues." He illustrates them by means of a collection of classic stories that we all used to be taught but which, by and large, are no longer taught in school.

William Kilpatrick, of Boston University, has written a disturbing challenge to public education as it relates to the teaching of values called *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong: Moral Illiteracy and the Case for Character Education* Stephen Carter's best seller, *The Culture of Disbelief*, calls for the re-empowerment of people of faith in American life. And now he's planning a new book series on "character," including entries on "Integrity,"

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A Place to Stand

Founders Day Address

by

Dr. R. Wayne Stacy

scare you to death!

Sometimes, in the fall, I walk over to N. C. State's campus just to get a look at the entering freshmen. Boy, it's a sight! I saw this one student the other day wearing spiked heels about three inches high, a little leather skirt that looked like it was made out of a postage stamp, with orange hair pulled up in a spike, and I thought to myself: "Boy, isn't he something!"

It's tough out there! Everybody needs a place to stand.

Do you know who Archimedes was? Is that a name you know? Archimedes was a 3rd century Greek philosopher, physicist, mathematician, who said that if he had a lever long enough and a place to stand he could move the earth! Of course, of course, having a place to stand is precisely the problem, isn't it? Where, on earth, do you stand in order to move the earth with a lever? And so, philosophers and theologians refer to this quest for a "place to

Noted Baptist leader, author delivers Founders Day address

Dr. R. Wayne Stacy, pastor of Raleigh's First Baptist Church, was the keynote speaker for the annual Founders Day convocation on Tuesday, Oct. 11. The annual observance, commemorat-

ing the institution's founding in 1848, was held in Turner Auditorium of McDowell Columns building.

Stacy, a native of Florida and well known as a Baptist leader, received his undergraduate degree from Palm Beach Atlantic College. He was awarded his masters and doctoral degrees by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He has completed post-doctoral work at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies in Israel.

He has held teaching positions at several institutions including the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Stacy assumed his current pastorate in Raleigh after serving several churches in Florida and Missouri.

Stacy's denominational service as a Bible study leader, speaker and teacher has been extensive. He has conducted study clinics for a number of years for Baptist associations in Florida, Missouri, Kansas, and Georgia.

In 1983, Dr. Stacy was selected to deliver the Hulburt Preaching Lectures at MacMaster University Divinity College in Ontario, Canada. In 1992, he was chosen for a similar honor to deliver the Preston Lectures in Biblical Studies at Meredith College in Raleigh.

The author of several books, Stacy has been a frequent contributor to the "Pulpit Digest," "The Biblical Illustrator" and other religious publications.

E. Vincent Tilson, vice president for development (left), reviews the convocation program with Dr. Stacy (center), while D. B. Franklin Lowe, Jr., vice president for academic affairs, looks on. Tilson introduced Dr. Stacy as the speaker for the annual Founders Day program.

