AN HISTORICAL EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE LIVES AND MINISTRIES OF:

DR. JOHN F. MACARTHUR, JR. AND DR. ROBERT H. SCHULLER

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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ABSTRACT

This project is an historical examination and analysis of the lives and ministries of Dr. John F. MacArthur and Dr. Robert H. Schuller. To accomplish this, the paper was divided into three parts for each man. The first part focuses on the "roots and water" of the person. This section identifies and examines the influences which history has shown have had the greatest and most sustained effect on each man's immediate and long-term thinking.

The second part takes this one step further by looking at how their thinking has affected what "fruit" they have produced throughout their lives, in terms of goals made and projects undertaken. This then looks closely at what they have tried to accomplish through their ministry goals and activities.

The final section then wraps the paper up by showing what their critics have said about what they have done and continue to do in their individual ministries.
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BACKGROUND

John MacArthur was born in Southern California on June 19, 1939. He grew up in a family that possessed a deep pastoral heritage. Both his father and grandfather were pastors. In high school and college, John's quickness allowed him to set multiple records in football as a running back. While at college he also excelled in baseball. The college he attended was called the Los Angeles Pacific College. After a short time spent at Bob Jones University, John felt the Lord leading him into the ministry. As a result, he attended Talbot Theological Seminary where he graduated Summa Cum Laude and received his Masters of Divinity degree. He then continued his education at Grace Graduate School where he received his Literary Doctorate. To conclude his education, he returned to Talbot to earn his Doctorate of Divinity.

It was during his second term at Talbot, 1964-1966, that he also served as an associate pastor at Calvary Bible Church in Burbank, California. Then after graduation he became a faculty representative for Talbot from 1966 to 1969. His primary job during this time was to recruit prospective students. In October, 1968, he candidated at Grace Community Church, and subsequently on January 19, 1969, accepted an invitation to be its pastor. Currently, Grace, which is in Sun Valley, California, is now the largest Protestant congregation in Los Angeles County, with approximately 10,000 people attending each Sunday. As for denominational affiliation, the church is nondenominational.
In addition to his duties as pastor of Grace, MacArthur is also the teacher for both the nationally syndicated radio program, "Grace to You" and the "Master's Communications" tape ministry, which has distributed over nine million cassette tapes worldwide. "Grace to You" is now heard more than 570 times daily throughout the U.S., Canada, England, and South Africa, on over 450 stations.

MacArthur is also a prolific writer. During his twenty-five year ministry, he has authored over 40 books, ten volumes of the MacArthur New Testament Commentary, and over 180 study guides. In addition, he has, since 1981, served on the board of trustees of Moody Bible Institute. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member at the Los Angeles Baptist College (now The Master's College), Talbot Theological Seminary, and Dallas Theological Seminary. In 1985, he was named President of The Master's College, and under his leadership, in 1986, The Master's Seminary came into existence. In addition to his administrative responsibilities, he also regularly teaches Expository Preaching at the seminary.

His own family includes his wife Patricia, four grown children and four grandchildren.
Robert Schuller was born on a farm in Alton, Iowa in 1926. After finishing high school, he went on to Hope College in Holland, Michigan to complete his undergraduate work. After finishing here in 1947, he finished his education by moving on to Western Theological Seminary. After completing his studies there he received his ordination as a pastor in the Reformed Church in America in 1950. He then began pastoring at his first church, Ivanhoe Reformed Church, which was just outside of Chicago from 1950-1955.

Then in 1955, he was commissioned by the RCA to head west to found a new RCA church in California, which he would eventually call the Garden Grove Community Church. When he arrived, however, he found that the only area available for him to hold his services was at a drive-in movie theatre. So he took it and began preaching from the roof of the snack bar to the people in their cars. His big "break" in terms of growth in attendance and popularity followed after Dr. Norman Vincent Peale had come and preached in 1957. This concept of a drive-in church has stayed with Schuller throughout his ministry. After initially purchasing ten acres in 1958 for a walk-in, drive-in church, Schuller followed that by purchasing an additional 10 acres adjacent to the original. About this new addition he said, "These ten acres are the key to the 21st Century" (Penner, 1992, p. 130). By 1968, Schuller's dream for a walk-in, drive-in church had become a reality, for by then the Garden Grove Community Church Campus consisted of the walk-in/drive-in church
itself, and the Tower of Hope. In February of 1970, the initial broadcast of his now world famous, "Hour of Power", was televised. Then in 1978, the largest project of his career began; the building of the Crystal Cathedral. This structure, which would consist of 10,600 windows, was designed by Philip Johnson at a cost of almost $20 million. Schuller's inspiration for the structure of the building came from the four sided star that shown over the Baby Jesus.

The final facet of his global ministry is his new church alliance called "Churches United in Global Mission". Founded in 1991 and composed of over 80 mega-church pastors, its purpose is to create, "an expanding network of Christian churches, from many denominations, uniting to share positively the message of Jesus Christ and His love for the world, [and] to address the needs of humanity and our environment" (Springer, 1992, p. 88-89).
An interesting fact about plants is the way they are affected by the world around them. Their growth is completely dependent upon what they are fed through their roots, the air they take in through their leaves, and the amount of light they receive to break down that air. This example in nature provides a great parallel to our own lives as humans. We also are formed and shaped in our thinking, speaking, and living by what we are fed through our seeing, listening, and reading. In addition, we are also affected by the events that happen to us and the people we come into contact with on a daily basis.

In the same way, the starting point in the examination of the lives of John F. MacArthur and Robert H. Schuller must begin not with the fruit that is easily seen in their everyday lives, but instead, with the "roots" and the "water" which has fed them. The terms roots and water are used to symbolize the events and circumstances which have produced the most sustained effect on their thinking, lives, and ministries. Certainly everyone can think of several people or events which could be singled out as being significant to the way they think and live today. To find these influences several books they have authored, books and articles written about them, and people who know or have known them on a personal level were consulted. This allowed for a clearer picture to be drawn to help identify the more prominent people and events which contributed the most in shaping them into who and what they are and say today.
THE ROOTS AND WATER

After examining Robert Schuller's life through reading parts of several of his books and his biography, three influences emerged as being the ones which had the greatest impact on shaping his life and thinking. These were his parents and their Dutch heritage, his association with Norman Vincent Peale and the effect he had on Schuller's theology, and Schuller's own fear of failure and self doubt.

After having studied Robert Schuller's parents and what type of people they were, it was easy to see the sustained impact their influence had upon his life. What they instilled into young Harold, as his mother liked to call him, was the importance of the Dutch work ethic. The Dutch work ethic is significant because of the way it is different from the Puritan work ethic and the way it affected his father. For the Dutch, theology was their guiding force in not just their religious practice but in all areas of their lives. They believed that God did not just "call" men to the ministry but that He also "called" them to an economic profession, such as being a farmer or a blacksmith. So this "call" then became the driving force behind what they did. They were driven to work hard because they were called to do this. It was what God expected them to do.

The event which best illustrates the influence this had on Schuller is his parents reaction, in 1946, to the tornado which destroyed their Iowa farmhouse and almost killed them. The night following the tornado, Schuller's father came into
his room and told him to get ready to work the next day. Robert questioned why to which his father replied, "Never look at what you have lost. Always look at what you have left" (Penner, 1992, p. 49).

Then the day following the tornado, his father followed through by not sitting around whining and moping but instead, he went out and bought a house in town for $50. Then he and Robert set about to take it apart board by board and shingle by shingle so they can then move it and rebuild it out on the land where their previous house had stood only the day before (Penner, 1992, p. 50).

The entire tornado incident clearly laid a foundation for Robert at a young age that said in what ever a person is "called" to do by God they need to take the initiative to work hard and do well. His father's actions bear testimony to this thinking by the way he reacted after the tornado.

As for when Robert received his call to the ministry, he would point to the time when his aunt and uncle came to visit. These relatives, who had just returned home from China where they had been missionaries, told the then six-year-old Schuller that, "One day you're going to be a minister" (Zinsser, 1988, p. 71-72).

Schuller, as is seen through the success of his ministry empire, has applied well the Dutch principles his father had taught him about hard work and pleasing God through what one is called to do.
The second major influence on Robert Schuller's life, in the area of challenging his thinking, came from the teaching of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale. Peale was the pastor of New York's Marble Collegiate Church when Schuller came into contact with him. By this time Peale had published his 3 year best seller, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and was responsible, many said, for bringing Marble Church attendance back up after the Depression (Zinsser, 1988 p. 73).

In terms of what he taught, Carol V.R. George, author of his biography, *God's Salesman*, explains it this way in the forward to her book. She says,

"...the defining element in his thought is the metaphysical notion of positive thinking... It is based on the belief that through the mind and subconscious, utilizing techniques of positive thinking and affirmative prayer, one can achieve spiritual harmony and personal power" (p. 6).

She goes on to say that Peale critiqued the, "sophisticated theological liberalism of the mainstream churches and countered it with his own version of practical Christianity, which accepted as its ministry the cries of everyday life" (George, 1993, p. 6).

Essentially, she is saying that he defended his ministry by saying that it was addressing the practical problems the people were dealing with everyday, rather than giving them information that was not relevant to their immediate situations. George also observed that Peale never claimed to be "profound or intellectual." Instead, he was interested in "everyday issues facing ordinary people" (Frame, 1993, p. 56).
His critics countered with the argument that there were fundamental flaws in Peale's approach. They pointed to what they perceived as the "sin-denying quality of Pealism which makes the individual the center of the universe." They also said that it "camouflages personal denial by confusing success using simple techniques without actually addressing the underlying problems" (George, 1993, p. 6).

American religious historian Randall Balmer said that, "Peale's genius was in the simplicity of his message. That message fit the tenor of the times in the middle decades of this century. It was a message of hope, optimism, and American middle-class values" (Frame, 1993, p. 56).

The effect Peale's ideas had on Schuller is clearly seen in the account which is given in Goliath dealing with their first meeting. By the time Schuller meets Peale he has graduated from both Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and Western Theological Seminary, been ordained as a minister in the Reformed Church in America, and traveled west to start his own drive-in church at the Orange County Drive-in. Unfortunately, the road initially, was a bit discouraging. After struggling for a time Schuller decided to write Peale and ask him to come and speak at his "church". He, however, conveniently left out the fact that his church was a bit unconventional. But, Peale agreed to come and this is what he said during the sermon he gave, combined with Schuller's reaction by his own account.

"What do you think Jesus would say to you?"
Schuller heard Peale repeat. "Do you think He would tell you what a bunch of miserable sinners you are?" 'You bet he would', Schuller thought. 'There's a bunch of them here today. That's for sure'. "No, He wouldn't," Peale said. "He wouldn't call you a bunch of miserable sinners." Schuller was stunned. 'What is he talking about? Of course, they're sinners. Otherwise, what am I doing here? Of course, they're sinners.' "Jesus never called you sinners. he never called one of you out there a sinner...Look it up. Look it up in the Bible. You won't find it anywhere, because Jesus never called one person a sinner." Schuller squirmed in his seat. 'What is he talking about?...That is no way to start a sermon. You're supposed to spend the first twenty minutes making people feel guilty. Then you spend the last five minutes telling them about how Jesus saves. How He died on the cross to save them, the miserable sinners. What does he mean, Jesus never called them sinners' (p 118)?

Later on that day after coming to the conclusion that Jesus does not call anyone a sinner, Schuller has this revelation about the gospel, and in particular, about what he needs to be telling people about Christ.

Schuller looked up from the Bible. It's not here, he thought. Dr. Peale was right. Jesus treated people positively. You have to build people up in order to help them. Making them feel guilty doesn't do them any good. They already feel guilty. That's why they won't come to church...They need self-esteem. They want to feel good about themselves...Self-esteem and possibilities. That's what people need more than anything else. People aren't any different no matter where you go. We all have the same basic needs" (p120).

From these excerpts it is very easy to see how Schuller's thinking was dramatically changed by Peale's teaching in the areas of theology and particularly in the area of sin. No longer is the emphasis of Schuller's preaching simply on showing people their need of Christ as a Savior from their sin. Instead, it is first prefaced with a more positive message filled with words to build self-esteem, because people are already bogged down
too much by their guilt. People need to be built up and encouraged by the fact that they are worth something.

The following Sunday, this change in thinking is reflected by the subject matter of his message.

If you have faith as a tiny grain of mustard seed, you can say to your mountain, Move! And nothing will be impossible to you. Faith holds the key. And faith is nothing more than thinking about your possibilities. That's what God wants for you in this life. That's why Jesus never called you sinners. He wants you to discover the possibilities life holds for you (Penner, 1992, p. 119).

It is surprising to see Schuller's thinking turn so drastically after just one sermon, considering the amount of teaching and training he had received. With such a foundation, it is confusing to see him swayed so quickly. This confusion is only magnified by the fact that the Bible does show Christ referring to people as sinners. He should have noted the three references, found in Matthew 9:12, Mark 2:17, and Luke 5:31, where Jesus gives the reason why He came. In all three books Jesus says that, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance".

Schuller also should have noted how "positive" Jesus' words were as He began His earthly ministry. Matthew 4:17 records that, "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Clearly, Schuller should have known what Jesus had preached about and how He had treated sinners. True He did eat with them, talk to them, and had compassion for them (Matt. 9:10, 36) but it is also within these very contexts that He is found
calling them sinners (Matt. 9:12).

Unfortunately Schuller, rather than using the knowledge gained at seminary to refute Peale, is instead found embracing it. Schuller's added twist though is to teach that by having faith in the possibilities God gives people, they can then succeed. Basically Schuller is teaching Peale's theology that says personal power and harmony are found through thinking positively and using affirmative prayer. The only difference between the two is found in the terminology.

The final area of influence which has substantially affected Robert Schuller's thinking is the area of success, and his deep fear of failure. The fear of failure is very prevalent in his biography. The title, Goliath, serves to symbolize this. Throughout his biography the references are there which show the numerous times he was afraid of failing. He is driven to succeed many times because he is afraid of the consequences of what will happen if he does fail. For him the idea of failure is referred to as Goliath. This is in reference to the David and Goliath story in the Bible. Schuller seems to see himself in the position of David when problems or Goliaths come his way. This is seen most clearly in the narrative given by Penner in Goliath. As Robert Schuller lay in the hospital recovering from an emergency brain surgery Penner recalls this conversation he had with Arvella, Schuller's wife.

I watched her look deep within her husband's soul. Quietly she whispered to me, "He's afraid... "He's
afraid no one wants him anymore." Her words sent a shiver down my spine. "Who wants a tired old man?"
I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe that he could feel that way. "He can't really believe that, can he?" I asked. "Trust Me Jim." Her eyes closed in prayer...As she spoke, his eyes, always twinkling with love and laughter, took on a dull, lifeless look. It was as if a battle raged on within him, a battle that he believed was his alone, a great fight that would only belong to Robert Schuller. He looked deep into the mirror, deep into its crevices, the lines on his face drew tart. There was something cold and terrifying in the air between him and the darkness in the mirror. I followed his gaze deep into the reflection. I reached into the blackness that he had immersed himself in. And for one brief, fleeting moment, I caught a glimpse of it. I saw what he was so afraid of. I saw what lurked in the darkness. I saw the Giant. I saw GOLIATH" (Penner, 1992, pp. 23-25).

His response to this Goliath must be to think positive thoughts, get the right ideas (102), and then act upon them (136). Most of his books follow this theme, which is very similar to what Peale has taught. Peale often reminded his followers that the "answer to their troubles lay within themselves, in the divine energy stored within the unconscious, which they had only to tap into through affirmative prayer and positive thinking" (George, 1993, p. viii).

THE FRUIT

Now that the three main influences upon Robert Schuller's life have been individually examined, the next step is to trace the affect these influences have had upon his life and in particular his ministry goals and efforts.
To begin this discussion the question that must be asked deals with what the goal of his ministry is and how has it been affected by the influences previously looked at? In answering the first question, Schuller clearly states what his goal in ministry is in his biography by saying,

I'm trying to impress people who don't go to church. I'm trying to make an impression on the non-religious American who is riding by on the freeway. I'm trying to get the attention of the person in this world who is too busy running around in the rat race, who is frustrated sitting in traffic, and the person who is looking for a better way, for themselves and their family. The person who is too busy to look for God in the little things in life. The flowers, the water, the trees. I'm trying to help the person who is caught up in the noise and stress of today's world. I'm trying to help that person find God. I'm trying to help people who don't have a place to go to church. Because they're physically or emotionally handicapped. Because they can't find a place made especially for them. I'm trying to help those who don't care or can't go to church. I'm trying to inspire people" (Penner, 1992, p. 124).

His mission then is to develop "....a mission station for those who would not normally attend church" (Penner, 1992, p. 152). He is wanting to inspire people first to come to church and once they are there to find answers to their problems. He is trying to help people by showing them how his possibility thinking has helped others and how it can help them. He is trying to show love to a world that doesn't care. A world that he believes needs to be told they are worth something and that needs to be encouraged by the fact that someone does love them. This thinking thus forms the basis for his now classic opening phrase, "God loves you and so do I!"
By understanding this goal and mission the rest of what he does will make better sense. This goal is based in part on the influences already studied. He is wanting to help people find answers to their problems. And these answers, he believes, are found primarily in the positive and possibility thinking he teaches.

His goal of ministry is further clarified in the pamphlet put out by his ministry. It says that, Dr. Schuller's "dream has become a reality, as the Crystal Cathedral now stands as a testimony that [his] possibility thinking does work, that God gives us wonderful ideas and wants us to succeed in our goals, be they large or small" (The Crystal Cathedral Ministries, 1993, p. 1).

Here all of the influences described come together. The possibility ideas of Peale are seen in the message he preaches. The "you can do it" attitude of his parents is seen in the fact that he has succeeded because of the building he built; his Crystal Cathedral. Finally, the issue of success versus Goliath is found in the idea that God gives us ideas for success, we just need to think positively to be able to conquer the Goliath that is in all of our lives. This Goliath is seen in the adversity we all face each day. This again goes back to his message, that the reason why people are having trouble is because they are so bogged down by guilt and "negative thoughts". Schuller's message to people is to not give them more guilt, but to tell them that the answer is within them. God gives each of us "wonderful thoughts" and our job is to think
positively to make them happen. God wants us to succeed, we just need to tap into that.

Out of this message influenced by the factors already mentioned springs the efforts he currently is undertaking. The first example is the Crystal Cathedral itself. Why did he build it? He explains in his biography that,

There are almost a million people in our county alone who don't even know what religion is. People like that won't even think about coming to church unless you build something that screams out for their attention...But all people really need is love. All they need is hope. And God is love...If you find God, you find love. That's as hard as it gets. We all need love. There isn't a single person in the whole world who doesn't need love" (Penner, 1992, p. 314).

The Cathedral is seen as the vehicle to get people's attention and bring them into church so that they can find the hope and love that Schuller and religion have for them. Essentially what Schuller is saying about love here is that God loves us so much that he gives each of us the thoughts we need to succeed. The only problem according to Schuller is that because we are normally such negative thinkers, caused by the guilt we feel, we fail to see what is actually available to us. So his Cathedral plays the role of awakening people to their need of religion by its magnificence.

Another vehicle he uses to show people their need to be in a church is his "Hour of Power". It also has succeeded in his opinion. This is shown by what the Crystal Cathedral Ministries pamphlet says on its first page. It says that the
"Hour of Power" is seen on over 170 stations throughout the United States, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and over 80 location around the world on the Armed Forces Network. It follows this by saying that it is the number one rated religious program in the U.S. today, and then provides a quote by Time Magazine which states that the "Hour of Power" is "rare among TV services in its appeal". So he is indeed accomplishing his first goal of getting his message to the many hurting people, who normally would not set foot into a church, around the world.

The second goal then is to help them once they do come into the church. Here he has several vehicles to choose from to get that done. Included in them would be:

* 4 worship services each Sunday, *Sunday school for all ages, *Family Life Ministries, *Korean and Hispanic Ministries, *International Possibility Thinking Women's Conference,

And numerous support groups like:


(The Crystal Cathedral Ministries, p. 5)

In addition to these in-house programs, the church also provides a 24 hour telephone counseling center, a magazine dedicated to giving hope titled, Possibilities, the Institute For Successful Church Leadership program, the International School of Christian Communications, the Rancho Capistrano Retirement Center and Rancho Capistrano Renewal Center, an audio and video tape library, and the Crystal Cathedral Memorial Gardens where you can be buried or have your ashes laid to rest.
The newest piece to the Schuller Ministry is his association with a new cross denominational group called Churches Uniting in Global Mission. It classifies itself as "an expanding network of Christian churches, from many denominations, uniting to share positively the message of Jesus Christ and his love for the world [and] seeking to address the needs of humanity and our environment" (Springer, 1992, p. 88). Here we see the positive aspect of Schuller's teaching and thinking interwoven into the purpose of the alliance. To try and funnel people into these churches, Schuller is using his "Hour of Power" to promote member churches and encourage new believers to watch his show to get more information about these local churches near them.

THE HARVEST

Now that both the influences and results of those influences on Schuller's actions and goals have been dealt with, the final step is to examine the "harvest". In other words, now is the time to distinguish the good from the bad in relation to how the world has evaluated what Schuller has done.

Many applaud what he has been doing. In fact in his book Tough Times Never Last But Tough People Do, Schuller includes several "success" stories, from some of his celebrity friends. He cites first Mary Martin, the well known Broadway actress, who has starred on Broadway in such shows as "South Pacific"
and "Sound of Music". She explained to Schuller that "The principles of possibility thinking that I heard from your television ministry helped me accept the loss of my beloved husband...That was a tough time, believe me" (1984, p. 32).

She goes on to say that she later lost her voice, but "Then one morning a possibility-thinking message inspired an idea that led to my health again. My singing voice returned" (Ibid).

For many this testimony echoes what has happened in their own lives. They point directly to the teaching of Schuller and say thank you for the difference his teaching has made in their lives.

Another area where Schuller's ministry has in fact helped others is through its 24 hour telephone counseling center. Included in his biography is a section which again gives short testimonies to how this ministry has helped others in need. One particularly stirring testimony was that of a little girl. Her mother was an alcoholic who would physically abuse her daughter when she became intoxicated. The story shared tells that the mother became excessively angry one night when the daughter poured the alcohol down the drain. Her father had given her a secret phone number where he could be reached if she ever were in trouble. The girl called the number but her father was occupied with another woman and said he couldn't come. The girl then remembered a commercial she had seen on T.V. about hope and help. So she called the N-E-W H-O-P-E number and got some help.

This story is one which serves to back up Schuller's claim
that his ministry is out trying to meet the needs of a hurting world where they need it. He doesn't get caught up with the deep theology of it all, rather he is wanting to inspire people and share the love of God with them. His belief is that all people are alike—they all need love.

Mother Teresa said this about Schuller. "You and I are doing the same thing, [we are] saving people who are dying. In my case, saving them from physical starvation in yours, from emotional [starvation]" (Steinfels, 1992, p. 10L).

She continued in response to the question of who has the tougher job by saying, "You do. If people are physically hungry, they'll grab the food. If they are emotionally hungry, they're suspicious" (Ibid).

Peter Steinfels, New York Times writer, also addressed within the article the fact that "Like Norman Vincent Peale earlier, Dr. Schuller is accused of ignoring sin and evil in his unremitting celebration of 'possibility thinking' and the happy ending...The accusation comes from both conservatives and liberals alike" (Ibid).

Steinfels is correct in his observation. Many place Schuller at differing points along the Evangelical spectrum. For example, Jay Kesler, the President of Taylor University, would place him at the far end. Kesler doesn't necessarily agree with all that Schuller is saying but he would not go as far as to say that he is outside of orthodox Christianity (Kesler, 3/21/94, personal interview).

Others however, like John MacArthur, would place Schuller's
self-esteem teaching in the heresy category. He says that type of teaching only feeds people's pride, rather than leading them to repentance and their need of a Savior from their guilt (sin) (MacArthur, 1994, p. 90).

In specifying his charge in his latest book, The Vanishing Conscience, MacArthur cited Schuller's own writings when he pointed out that Schuller's teaching denies the doctrine of the depravity of man. Schuller writes, "By nature we are fearful, not bad...Label it a 'negative self-image', but do not say that the central core of the human soul is wickedness. If this were so, then truly, the human being is totally depraved" (Self Esteem, 1982, p. 65).

Still others fault him not for his teaching but for his accountability. In Christianity Today, Lyn Cryderman wrote this about Schuller's view of accountability. "Though an ordained minister in the relatively small Reformed Church in America (RCA), there is little the denomination could do to him since his organization, Robert Schuller Ministries, lies outside of the RCA's jurisdiction" (4/18/88, p. 30).

By the mere fact, however, that he is ordained by the RCA and that he makes it a point to share with his viewing audience at the conclusion of every "Hour of Power" broadcast that he is part of the RCA, would seem to say that there is some accountability or responsibility Schuller feels toward the RCA, even if in name only.

The article also discusses the fact that Schuller's ministry has refused to join the Evangelical Council for Financial
Accountability, a group trying to establish standards for ethical fund-raising practices. Schuller's response is to say that it is a good group, but that "They're trying to sell [him] something [he has] been doing for 37 years" (Ibid).

In the final analysis, Schuller's ministry is one which has succeeded in reaching those outside of the church. This is evidenced by the popularity and viewership his "Hour of Power" now commands. He writes, "I worked hard and poured my life into my church. As a result, I learned that great dreams of great dreamers are never fulfilled: They are always transcended. After only fifteen years, my church reached the six-thousand-member mark. We were successful" (Schuller, 1984, p. 61). He goes on to say that he wasn't satisfied with that, there were more "human beings who were empty and hurting on the inside—people who needed healing" (Ibid, p. 62). The result was the Crystal Cathedral. His ministry then is to reach those who don't know the love of God in the World, and evidenced by the numbers he has done that. But as evidenced above many, in the midst of this success, still question whether his message of self-esteem and possibility thinking is actually a message which deals only superficially with the person's feelings rather than addressing the deeper root problem of their sin.
THE ROOTS AND WATER

John MacArthur's "scholarly verse by verse examinations of scripture" (Podilla, 11/5/90, p. B1) form a sharp contrast to Robert Schuller. The ironic fact, however, is that both share many of the same influences. Both had very influential parents and families; were influenced by specific men; apply great intensity and passion to what they do; and serve pastorates in Southern California only miles apart. The contrast, however, becomes clearly apparent as the fruits of these differing influences become evident in their later lives and ministries.

MacArthur's life, as has Schuller's, has been influenced most by his theology. Each of the major influences upon his thinking and life have been related to his theology. This is seen most clearly by the comments his peers have made about his character and life. Among the many were statements dealing with his commitment to the Word like, "Always studying", "A hunger for the Word", "unswerving commitment to encourage, strengthen and train pastors", "You are to audiotapes what Charles Spurgeon was to printed sermons", "Cutting it straight and never compromising" (Grace Today, 1994, various).

The picture painted here portrays a man who is committed to Scripture and to the proclamation and application of it. Now the task is to see where did this desire come from. What influences over his life thus far have fed and produced this type of a man? In examining his life two main areas emerged;
each containing several parts.

The first area, dealing with his youth and boyhood, consists primarily of his college and graduate years. This time period contains several key experiences which influenced heavily the future course of his life and goals. The second area deals with the influence several past fathers of the faith have had upon his thinking and in particular, his role in ministry.

John MacArthur was born into a family with a lineage of pastors which spans at least three generations and maybe even closer to five. His father was a Baptist preacher in Southern California which as a result is where John grew up (Padilla, 11/5/90, p.B1). In high school his exceptional quickness as an athlete allowed him to not only break all the football rushing records there but also all of them at the now-defunct Los Angeles Pacific College where he played both football and baseball. In spite of the church heritage of his youth, this time, was not one characterized by a deep desire to know God. So after two years at LAPC his father decided to send him, against his wishes, to Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. It was on the road home to California after that school year had ended that the first life changing event occurred. As the car he rode in was driving home, it hit another car and flipped. Out of all the people involved in the accident, John was the only one to get hurt. He was thrown from the car and skidded about 120 feet down the road on his buttocks. It was there on the road, still dazed and in terrible pain, that he recalls thinking, "Okay God, I give" (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal
interview).

After this accident he then began to get serious about the Lord. It was only a short time later, however, that another life changing event would again occur. This time he was asked to go on a hospital visit to see a young lady who had also been in an automobile accident. As a result of his visit the girl trusted Christ as her Savior, which caused John to say, "Lord if you want to use me like this then I want to be used" (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview).

This then led him to turn down an offer to become a professional baseball player; his speed had caught the eye of a major league scout, and instead to begin preparing for the pastorate at Talbot Theological Seminary, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude. It was also here that he became the favored student of the "intellectual giant" there, Dr. Charles Feinberg. Moir stated that he was Feinberg's favorite based on his, "intellectual prowess" (4/21/94, personal interview). Moir went on to say that from a human standpoint his incredible memory is what has set John apart in his mind. He commented,

It is like he has a computer up there which allows him to file away information and be able to bring it back later. I have seen him answer a particular doctrinal issue where you get long extensive quotes from Scripture, long extensive quotes of the guys' theologies he is going to quote, and they are essentially the same answers time after time with long periods in between. (4/21/94, personal interview)

After graduation in 1966, MacArthur then began representing Talbot by traveling constantly and trying to recruit new students.
for the school for three years. This was another turning point for him because it was during this time that he was essentially preaching only the same five sermons, but he wanted to do more because he had this insatiable desire to study the Bible and preach it (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview). This led him to resign, in 1969, and become the pastor of Grace Community Church.

By looking at his youth and college years one can clearly see the influence these events had on the shaping of first his relationship with God and then in getting his attentions diverted from playing baseball to serving the Lord. It helped to set a pattern for him of always putting the Lord first.

The second area of influence, which served to mold his theology further and allowed him to define further the role God had called him to be was through his extensive reading of the Puritans and Charles Spurgeon.

The Puritans, who were seventeenth-century English Reformers, heavily influenced MacArthur's "approach to Christianity" (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview). The area of theology where this is seen most is in the area of sanctification, which is the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in believers, making them holy by conforming their character, affections, and behavior to the image of Christ, and justification, which is an act of God's grace whereby He declares that all the demands of the law are fulfilled on behalf of the believing sinner through the righteousness of Jesus Christ
(Faith Works, 1993, pp. 260-261). The Puritans and the Reformers both taught that sanctification inevitably follows justification. This is relative because it is from this foundation that MacArthur wrote his first book called The Gospel According to Jesus. In it, he challenges the idea that a believer can make Christ Savior when he or she receives salvation, but decide later to make Him Lord. The topic has since been coined Lordship salvation.

As for Spurgeon’s influence, it is evident through his reading of Spurgeon’s writings, MacArthur has seemed to develop a kinship of sorts. He writes,

I share at least two things in common with Charles Spurgeon: Both of us were born on June 19, and like me, he pastored one congregation [London’s Metropolitan Tabernacle] for virtually all of his ministry. The more I read of his writing and preaching the more I sense a kindred spirit. (Ashamed of the Gospel, 1993, p.xix)

The "kindred spirit" felt here seems to be more of a mentoring of sorts for MacArthur. Not to say in his preaching style, but in the way MacArthur, as Spurgeon did in his day, has begun to cry out against the heresy he sees pervading the church on a regular basis.

The similarity is that during Spurgeon's time at the turn of this century in England, he was facing what he called the Downgrade Controversy. As the pastor of London's Metropolitan Tabernacle, he saw the contemporary pastors in many of the
denominations around him beginning to fall away from a high view of Scripture, in terms of not seeing it as inerrant. Essentially these preachers were moving away from a literalist view of Scripture and were allowing secular issues to influence their thinking. Spurgeon agreed with his friend, Robert Schindler, when he wrote that the result of this type of preaching finds the character and life of first the pastors and then of the people starting along the downgrade at a breakneck speed (Ashamed of the Gospel, 1993, p. 197).

During 1887, both Spurgeon and Schindler published articles in Spurgeon's monthly magazine called the Sword and the Trowel. In these articles they painted the downgrade of the church around them over several years. They set off a fury of controversy which eventually led to the censuring of Spurgeon from the Baptist Union. What this impressed upon MacArthur the most was the need to stand firm on the Bible even when it might not be the most popular thing to do. MacArthur writes this about Spurgeon,

...he told a friend, 'The fight is killing me.' Three months later word came back from France that Spurgeon was dead. He had not sought a fight. But refusing to compromise what he felt were biblical convictions, he could not avoid the controversy that ensued (Ashamed of the Gospel, 1993, p.xix).

He then writes this about himself in the preface to Ashamed of the Gospel,

Controversy frankly is distasteful to me. Those who know me personally will affirm that I do not enjoy
any kind of dispute. Yet there is a fire in my bones that constrains me to speak plainly regarding my biblical convictions. (1993, p. xx)

The topics of the books he has published in the last six years prove this point that he does in many ways see himself as the Spurgeon of our day. In chronological order they are:

1988: The Gospel According to Jesus: In it he addresses the issues of easy beliefism and Lordship salvation.

1991: Our Sufficiency in Christ: Here he addresses three "fatal trends he believes are undermining modern churches". They are Psychology, Pragmatism, and Mysticism.

1992: Charismatic Chaos: This book hits the area of the Charismatic movement and the experience oriented doctrinal errors it has introduced into the church.

1993: Faith Works: This book is a follow-up to the 1988 book, in which he clarifies what he said in the first book by examining what the apostles preached. Ashamed of the Gospel: Again here he addresses how the church is becoming like the world in the tactics they are using to attract people.

1994: The Vanishing Conscience: In his latest book he addresses the doctrine of sin and how the church has allowed its conscience to become dull in this area.

THE FRUIT

Now that the influences on primarily his theology have been presented, the next step is to continue with how these have affected what he has done with his ministry. The best place to start is by looking at how his theology has affected his goal of ministry. Russell Moir, Pastor of Blackhawk Baptist Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and long time friend of MacArthur, described MacArthur's ministry as being centered around Ephesians
4:11-13 (4/21/94, personal interview). So does this fit with what his theology has been influenced by? Definitely, these passages speak of the saints being equipped for the work of the ministry.

Others echo that this is his goal. Dick Mayhue, Vice-President/Dean of The Master's Seminary, says this,

God put into [MacArthur's] heart that which He put into the apostle Paul's: 'And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach other also' (Mellinger, 1994, p. 4).

His primary goal then is to feed the flock faithfully that God has given him at Grace Community Church. But he also has a heart to train other pastors as he himself was trained, and to sound the alarm through his writings that something is going wrong within American Evangelicalism. Again, this type of purpose falls perfectly in line with what he has been influenced by.

To get a better understanding of his purposes, an examination of what he has put into place to accomplish these tasks must now be undertaken. In keeping with his first priority of feeding his church flock he has continually and consistently put at least 30 hours a week into preparation for his preaching (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview). All the other forms of declaration seem to flow out of this preparation.

Moir tells the story that the tape recording of his messages began, not at MacArthur's request, but when someone in the
congregation came up to him and said they should be taping some of his messages. MacArthur's reply was why don't you do it, so the gentleman did. Another interesting fact about the tape ministry, which has sent out over 9 million tapes, (Mellinger, 1994, p. 14) is that MacArthur receives no income from the tapes which are sent out. Even more amazing is that he doesn't copyright his tapes, so anyone can distribute them at no charge (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview).

The story continues with the radio ministry being born out of another person's desire to hear John on the radio (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview). Out of that humble beginning has come a large listening audience. Everyday MacArthur's messages are heard around the world over 570 times (Mellinger, 1994, p. 6).

The second medium he uses to preach the Word is through the numerous books he has authored over the past twenty-five years he has been in the ministry. He has now written over 40 full length books, 181 study guides, and has just released the 10th volume of his commentary set (Mellinger, 1994, p. 14). It is interesting to note about this commentary set that Moody publishers approached him about writing the set before he had decided to do anything like it (Russ Moir, 4/21/94, personal interview). The influence seen here is to preach the Word faithfully, and then also to be faithful to pass it along to those who will come behind, based on how much he has learned himself from what those before him have left.
THE HARVEST

This section will take MacArthur's fruit and sum it up as being good or bad based on mainly the Christian world's reaction to it. The print media is where he has in recent times been the most controversial. This is due to the fact that his books are where he has chosen to be most vocal about addressing the issues which he feels are dragging the Church into the "downgrade". He has received criticism for many of these books, in particular, accusing him of being too dogmatic. Russ Moir even agreed with this in part when he said, "John sometimes paints with too thick of a brush when dealing with some issues" (Russ Moir, 1994, personal interview).

Others call him divisive, saying his, "fundamentalist-style of Bible preaching drives many potential churchgoers away (Dart, 9/6/91, p. B4). MacArthur responds by saying,

Apart from the charismatics who rant and rave and do their own thing on television,...if you listen to preachers today, you're going to hear spiritual psychology, preaching about family, marriage, love. They are trying to raise people's comfort level, to help hurting people. That preoccupation with comfort zones and with relationships begins to dictate to the preacher that he not say anything that hurts, is painful, or divisive or even doctrinal (Ibid).

He has also drawn fire for his position on psychology's place in Christianity. Christianity Today included an editorial which criticized MacArthur for calling psychology in his book, Our Sufficiency in Christ, one of "three deadly
influences that undermine your spiritual life" (9/16/91, Jones). This article went on to point out that a high view of Scripture does not require that all knowledge must come from the Bible and that "Psychology is an area of valid inquiry where we may learn from the insights and discoveries of nonbelievers" (Ibid).

MacArthur stated his position on the issue in Our Sufficiency in Christ when he said,

True psychology ("the study of the soul") can be done only by Christians, since only Christians have the resources for the understanding and the transformation of the soul. Since the secular discipline of psychology is based on godless assumptions and evolutionary foundations, it is capable of dealing with people only superficially and only on the temporal level. The Puritans, long before the arrival of godless psychology, identified their ministry with people as "soul work". Scripture is the manual for all "soul work" and is so comprehensive in the diagnosis and treatment of every spiritual matter that, energized by the Holy Spirit in the believer, it leads to making one like Jesus Christ. This is the process of biblical sanctification. (1991, p. 58).

He went on to say that it is reasonable for people to seek medical help for physical maladies and that certain techniques of human psychology can serve to lessen trauma or dependency and modify behavior in Christians and non-Christians equally, but he concluded by saying that these types of problems are relatively rare and should not be used to justify the "indiscriminate use of secular psychological techniques for essentially spiritual problems" (Ibid).

In addressing "Christian psychology" he said the term is an "oxymoron". He stated,
"The word psychology no longer speaks of studying the soul; instead it describes a diverse menagerie of therapies and theories that are fundamentally humanistic. The presuppositions and most of the doctrine of psychology cannot be successfully integrated with Christian truth. Moreover, the infusion of psychology into the teaching of the church has blurred the line between behavior modification and sanctification (Ibid, p. 59).

In talking about MacArthur's book, Ashamed of the Gospel, Russ Moir also addressed another complaint many have with MacArthur's approach. He said that many times he attacks straw men rather than dealing directly with an issue. He felt that in that book [Ashamed] he had made some valid points in challenging the present view on Church growth, but that he also had attacked others through guilt by association who were basically "doing church [growth] and doing it well" (4/21/94, personal interview).

But by far the largest amount of criticism has come from his stand on the issue of Lordship salvation dealt with in The Gospel According to Jesus, which started the controversy, and the sequel, Faith Works. In a one sentence definition MacArthur writes that "lordship salvation teaches that the gospel call to faith presupposes that sinners must repent of their sin and yield to Christ's authority" (Faith Works, 1993, p. 23)

Within his sequel, Faith Works, MacArthur quoted one of his critics who said the whole thing is "a superficial conflict and the church would be better off if everyone forgot about it". Another said that the issue is "unnecessarily divisive" (Ibid, p. 22). MacArthur responded to these critics by saying
that this is not theological trivia. He wrote that, "It raises several fundamental questions that have repercussion at the most practical level of Christian living" (Ibid).

Included in the questions are ones like; "How should we proclaim the gospel? Do we present Jesus to unbelievers as Lord, or as Savior only? What are the essential truths of the gospel message? How far in sinning can a Christian go" (Ibid)?

Other critics he cited in Faith Works claimed he was teaching heresy by charging he was promoting "a system of works-based righteousness" (1993, p. 23).

MacArthur's response was to point to the teachings of Luther, Calvin, and the Puritans who all taught that sanctification inevitably follows justification (Ibid, p. 241).

In his latest book, The Vanishing Conscience, MacArthur seems to address some of the claims that say he has been too divisive in his previous books. This time, in commenting on Robert Schuller, he prefaced his remarks by saying,

Christian love demands that we walk in truth (2Jn.6), and that we not turn a blind eye to error. Because I preach and publish, I must be held accountable to the Word of God for what I teach. So must all preachers. Please understand that my criticism of Dr. Schuller's teaching is by no means an attack on his personal character. My concerns are altogether doctrinal, not personal. Because of the aggressive influence of his teaching on the contemporary church worldwide, it is imperative that we let him speak for himself, then measure what he says by the pure Word of God (1994, p. 83).

Many feel that MacArthur is bad for Christianity because he is continually down on everyone. Others say he is a much
he is continually down on everyone. Others say he is a much needed clarion at a time when worldliness is flooding into the church. As discussed in the previous pages, MacArthur is fulfilling his role, as he sees it, to be a modern day Spurgeon. He sees his actions as not being motivated by hate or dislike for those he addresses, but from a desire to preach the Truth clearly and correctly. His job as the pastor of his immediate flock, and by extension those who listen to his sermons by radio, is to warn and equip them to handle the false doctrine and teachers that Jesus warned would be out there. As he said, he is willing to take the criticism for standing for what he believes the Bible says even when that is not popular which currently is the case.
CONCLUSION

In looking at these two men there are both similarities and sharp contrasts, which come to mind. Jay Kesler in comparing the two said that he would place them at opposite ends of the Evangelical spectrum. He believes that the diversity of the culture speaks to the reason for their popularity. On the one end he would place Schuller, a preacher whose "messages appeal to people who are defeated, beaten down and needing a lift" (Kesler, 3/21/94, personal interview).

He said a personality study of Schuller's congregation would probably reveal one full of people with backgrounds in the social sciences like teachers, social workers, and artists. People who see both sides of issues (Ibid).

At the opposite end is MacArthur, "the one who believes he is the preserver of orthodox Christianity" (Ibid).

Kesler believes that MacArthur's message appeals to those who need certainty and direction. In MacArthur's congregation, Kesler guessed one would find a large amount of engineers, accountants, and scientists. These are the "exacting people", those who see issues as being more "black and white" (Ibid).

Kesler also attributed their differences in message to the difference in their age. Schuller is 13 years older than MacArthur and was thus reacting to a different flaw. "Schuller coming out of [a background in conservative orthodoxy] was trying to correct a flaw he perceived to be there, namely it was too harsh on people" (Ibid).
For MacArthur, Kesler sees him as correcting a different flaw; "one of easy believism" (Ibid).

So in the end, both men stand as shining examples of Godly men to some, but as heretics, i.e. self-esteem theology and the Lordship controversy, and overly divisive to others. Only eternity, however, will reveal whose lifetime of fruit and efforts will pass the inspection of the Lord of the orchard.
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