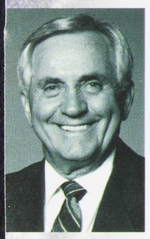
CHAMPIONS of FAITH

Investing Earthly Wealth in Heavenly Values

Entrepreneur Opens Religious School

by Rosanne Dupras



Charles Sharpe

Charles Norval Sharpe, 70, has known a lot of ups and downs in his life, but the last 10 years have been mostly "ups." Sharpe has made millions in the insurance business. The cattle ranch he owns near his rural northeast Missouri hometown of La Belle is one of the largest cattle operations in the state, with 8,000 head of black Angus. A few years ago, this successful businessman gave his life to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as a result of that commitment, he decided to do something to help those less fortunate than himself in the community where he grew up.

Troubled by many of the problems in our country and burdened for young people, Sharpe invested $5 million to turn a portion of his 10,000 acres of rolling pasture and woods into a development known as Heartland Community, consisting of a nondenominational Christian school, a children's home, and a church.

In this last school year, there were 51 students enrolled in Heartland's school and about a dozen kids in the children's home. Most of the students can't afford the $1,250 per year tuition — in fact, most pay about $25 monthly. The 10 teachers at Heartland (one of whom specializes in teaching learning-disabled children) will be initiating a new vocational-technological curriculum this fall to help the older students learn special trades and skills. "Many of our students are not going to be college-bound," Sharpe said, "so we have to give them skills that will help them when they leave here."

Students explore the wonders of computers.

Roughly 150 people attend the Heartland church, pastored by Sharpe and assisted by Greg Baust, who also heads up Heartland Community Life Foundations, a residential drug and alcohol recovery facility. The residential program just began in June, though non-residential rehab work has been going on for the last year. The goal of this program is to help rebuild broken lives, and provide employment, spiritual guidance and educational opportunities.

"We believe the number one need in our society is for people to know the Lord," Sharpe says. "Otherwise, there's no hope."

Heartland Community School
La Belle, Missouri

Heartland Community School opened about a year ago and had its first graduation in June. The school includes grades from kindergarten through 12th grade now, but Sharpe is hoping to add a college or junior college on the same campus in the future.

Art Sell, the administrator for the ministry complex, said that there are both joys and sorrows in a ministry that works with troubled youth. "We have a child here who had been in the public school system and was supposed to be in seventh grade, but he had a second-grade reading level," Sell said. "He was experiencing a lot of frustration." One of the Heartland teacher's wives began to tutor the boy in reading skills and phonics. With that individual attention, he blossomed. As a reward for winning a school contest, the boy was allowed to do something special of his choice, which for him was to bake chocolate-chip cookies for the school. Another young man, a 16-year-old, was living with a staff couple for one year, and after a luncheon honoring the staff, came up to the couple with tears in his eyes and said, "You're the mom and dad I never had."

Some have not been able to overcome their difficulties, however. "We had one boy whose goal was to see how many rules he could break every day," Sell said. "He didn't last long." The staff had to call the boy's mother to retrieve him. Unfortunately, the boy continued to get into trouble and is now in a juvenile home. Sell's response? "Anyway, you try."

All of the children are from the surrounding community. Many are from broken homes, or other difficult family backgrounds. Parents bring the children to the school and the children's home looking for help. "But what it comes down to," Sell said, "is whether or not the child wants to be helped."

Sharpe grew up during the Great Depression, and knows what it's like to go through hard times. "I grew up here," he says. "I've lived here all my life." Now he is enjoying the fruits of his labor in a whole new dimension — investing $5 million to help others. WW

IN OTHERS' WORDS

Rights, Responsibilities and the Supreme Court

Adapted from Slouching Towards Gomorrah
by Judge Robert H. Bork

One of the prices we pay for our Bill of Rights is an emphasis on personal freedom that is not balanced in the document by a Bill of Personal Responsibilities or a recognition, as in the constitutions of other countries, of limits set by community welfare. It is perhaps understandable, though certainly not excusable, that judges began to inflate enumerated rights and to create new rights, which they enforce against democratic decisions. Given the way the Court's decisions are reported — as victories for attitudes or moral positions rather than as legal determinations — those decisions resonate throughout our culture with powerful effects on public attitudes.

The unqualified language of the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence, reflected in the continual expansion of individual rights by the judiciary, feed our national obsession about "rights." That obsession, as Harvard law professor Mary Ann Glendon has pointed out, impoverishes cultural, political, and judicial discourse. There is no more sterile form of "argument" than the bald assertion of rights. But bald assertion, unaccompanied by analysis or reasons, is the common form of discourse in these matters.

The jurisprudence of the First Amendment is a case in point. That amendment is a central concern of modern intellectuals, dealing as it does with speech and religion. The difference in the Court's treatment of these two subjects flows naturally from radical individualism. Modern liberals value speech, which they have now expanded to include non-verbal expression, while their attitude toward religion ranges from indifference to hostility. It is not surprising, then, that the Court's decisions expand the area of protected non-religious expression beyond reason in the interest of the utmost individual freedom. Simultaneously, and largely in the interest of individual autonomy, the Court has drastically limited the public expression of religion beyond anything the ratifiers intended.

Judicial radical individualism weakens or destroys the authority of what sociologists call " intermediate institutions" — families, schools, business organizations, private associations, mayors, city councils, governors, state legislatures — that stand between the individual and the national government and its bureaucracies. All of this has happened within the lifetimes of many Americans. We are worse off because of it, and none of it was commanded or contemplated by the Constitution.

There appears to be only one means by which the federal courts, including the Supreme Court, can be brought back to constitutional legitimacy. That would be a constitutional amendment making any federal or state court decision subject to being overruled by a majority vote of each House of Congress. The mere suggestion of such a remedy is certain to bring down cries that this would endanger our freedoms. To the contrary, as already noted, it is the courts that are not merely endangering our freedoms but actually depriving us of them, particularly our most precious freedom, the freedom to govern ourselves democratically unless the Constitution actually says otherwise. WW

(New York: HarperCollins, 1996) pp. 98-99, 105, 117.

Victory!

Reagan Legacy Cannot Be Denied

(Continued from cover)

opposite the chimpanzee in *Bedtime for Bonzo.* She sneers at Reagan's movie background, arguing that his success is as an illusionist. Interestingly, Bernstein and Politi, virtually alone among liberals, treat Reagan's acting background with respect. And, they point out, it was something he had in common with that talented Polish dramatist and star of amateur theatricals, Karol Wojtyla, who is known to the world today as Pope John Paul II.

Typical of the U.S. history texts is Houghton-Mifflin's *A People, A Nation.* The authors of this book scoff at Reagan's record and openly question whether, given America's domestic problems, we can say we won the Cold War at all.

Some may argue that the Reagan era was a mere blip on the radar screen of history and is of little importance. That argument is wrong. Reagan's contributions were significant, and they matter. Whether the issue of today is importing goods made by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) or partial-birth abortions, whether we are pressing for the defense of traditional marriage or fighting for family tax relief, Ronald Reagan had firm convictions about these things and his record is relevant. The Reagan legacy is worth fighting for. Granting that Reagan failed in some ways, fell short in others, we stand for that legacy. The Berlin Wall collapsed barely two years after President Reagan, against the advice of the foreign policy elite, cried out, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," and the blood-drenched banner of the Soviet Union was hauled down from the Kremlin. The free world can say to Ronald Reagan what Sir Winston Churchill's daughter said to him: "I owe you what all my countrymen and women owe you: liberty itself." WW