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FOREWORD

North Americans have had a long love affair with bigger and better. If the collective wisdom of our marketing gurus can be trusted, and that's a big if, bigger and better is right up there with new and improved. However, what may be true for the latest consumer gadget is not always the case for good writing. In my opinion, good writing harnesses the potential of every word. Good writers choose words carefully because they understand that more words does not necessarily equal better writing.

Simeon Young knows the value of a single word. As an editor he has helped countless writers discard the fluff and make their verbs carry the heavy load in each sentence. More than once I have heard him decry some writer's affection for purple prose, which was his way of identifying their use of verbose and flowery language. Those writers seldom made it into the *Pentecostal Herald*.

But Simeon Young is more than an editor. Every month for more than a decade, he has laid aside his editor's pen and picked up his writer's pen. Each month he crafted a column that was often witty, but always insightful. He has demonstrated much can be said on a single page. He always remained a student of the writing craft, looking to improve his innate abilities. But he doesn't write to practice a craft. He writes to communicate truth.

This volume is a collection of his best editorials from his tenure as the editor of the *Pentecostal Herald*. They remain as relevant today as they were when month by month he worked with words to simply and clearly communicate a facet of truth.

I am confident you will enjoy a piece of Simeon Young's mind. I know I did.

Robin Johnston
Editor in Chief
United Pentecostal Church International



GOD IS AMAZING, BUT IS HE INCREDIBLE?

Accuse me of being excessively concerned with details, but the word *incredible* is overused and mostly misused. The informal definition of the word, which according to the dictionary is “amazing,” has almost completely usurped its primary meaning, “impossible or difficult to believe.” It makes me come across as a grumpy nitpicker to say it, I know, but I refuse to say “incredible” when I mean “amazing” (another overused word). If I say something is incredible, I mean I do not believe it, or it is hard for me to believe. Incredible is not the adjective I use to describe the God of the Bible. The other gods are incredible, but the God of revelation is credible—He is believable! His grace is both amazing and credible. So is His infallible Word. And don’t forget to include His unfailing promises.

We live in a dark age of skepticism, a time when many are unwilling or unable to believe anything positive about God. They are disinclined—or even refuse—to believe in miracles, the Resurrection, and Heaven. For them, the Bible is merely a collection of “incredible” stories that stretch the limits of belief. The doubt and outright disbelief and denial of millions today give up-to-date context to Jesus’ not-so rhetorical question: “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

Luke’s introduction to his Gospel speaks to the current culture of doubt: “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set

forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightiest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed” (Luke 1:1-4). Paul said, “By grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8), and “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God” (Romans 5:1), and “We walk by faith” (II Corinthians 5:7). The writer of the Book of Hebrews in his definitive statement on faith said, “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Thus, from start to finish, active and responsive faith plays an essential role in the lives of God’s people. Remove faith and everything that matters to the people of God, including our salvation, collapses.

Paul expressed his faith in God’s ability with these ringing words: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Amazing? Yes! Incredible? No!

Paul asked a skeptical King Agrippa, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” (Acts 26:8). In view of God’s unfailing faithfulness, why should it be thought incredible by a skeptical world—or by us—that God is able and willing to do amazing things?

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