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# Mail Bag

**A**s always it is a blessing getting the magazine, especially as I got to meet and hear many folk (while at Northland Baptist Bible College) who regularly have articles in your mag. I used to get a number of good mags, but with our dollar only being half the value of the American, it made it too expensive to keep up all the subs. So, I just settled for the one I love to get the most—*Frontline*. Keep up the good work.

*Martin Quaipe  
Rotorua, New Zealand*


**T**he "Newsworthy" section [Nov./Dec. 1999] had an item about the Washington State BBF withdrawing from the BBF. There is much more to the story than what you published, and everything you had in the article was from one side. Here is some more of the story. One of their chief reasons for withdrawing from the BBF was the refusal of the leaders of the BBF or BBC to go along with the doctrine of an infallible KJV. . . . These were *not* alert and devoted Fundamentalists who withdrew. They were a rabble of crack-pots, false-accusers, and lunatic fringers. . . . And lest you think I only found fault with *Frontline*, let me hasten to say that I profited much from several of the articles in this issue. Keep up the high-quality work.

*Doug Kutilek  
dkutilek@juno.com*

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**M**any thanks [to Dr. Gerald Carlson] for writing ("As I See It," Sept./Oct. 1999). Wow! That article is really needed to let people know that there is a difference between wholesome church-related music and New Evangelical music! . . . People who have no objection to the kind of music that you describe as "kind of" Christian seem to enjoy its rhythm. They even sometimes clap their hands with the rhythm. . . . This "music" seems to fit right into the New Evangelical-style of preaching, and no one seems to mind nor be offended. They remind me of the false prophets of Jeremiah's day where the author says in 5:31 "and my people love to have it so."

*Bill Bennett  
wbenn89828@aol.com*

**I**would like to commend you for an outstanding magazine. The article by

Bruce Oyen which discussed keeping the name Baptist ("As I See It," Nov./Dec. 1999 issue) was outstanding. We recently had a *Frontline* Sunday in our church, and we support *Frontline* magazine in our mission budget. I encourage other churches that are independent Baptist by conviction to do the same. *Frontline* is an outstanding magazine.

*Dr. Michael D. Sproul  
Tempe, AZ*

**W**e are so very grateful for a magazine that stays true to God's Word. The articles are excellent.


*Norm & Nan Fechtner  
Camarillo, CA*

**T**hank you for a worthwhile, Christ-honoring magazine that helps to keep me informed of the issues confronting the church today.

*Gerald G. Davis  
Inkster, MI*

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## The Battlefield Is the Mind

**O**ur mind is a battlefield which Satan seeks to control. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, Paul describes this battlefield on which a desperate conflict is constantly being waged. "Casting down imaginations . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." The mind is full of rebellious thoughts, all of which must be taken captive and brought to obedience through Christ.

First, let's look at the mind before regeneration. Second Corinthians 4:4 shows how Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers to prevent them from being liberated by the light of the gospel of Christ. It is man's intellect that keeps him from apprehending God. Satan's strategic plan is to keep men in ignorance of the truth.

But what of the regenerate mind? "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3). Paul's concern was that Satan would lead men, through their intellect, away from sincere devotion to Christ. Man's greatest vulnerability is his mind. Many believers have new hearts but old heads. Our minds must be constantly renewed—our battle with the flesh is first won or lost in the mind.

God gave us minds to use, not to be bypassed through laziness. Subjectivity or "experience" as a basis of spiritual authority is rampant today, particularly

among the Charismatics (e.g., the tongues movement, etc.). The church at Corinth, known for its carnality, had a similar problem. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul speaks about praying in the spirit *and* with the mind. Charismatics say this refers to two different languages of prayer—tongues and regular language. But taken in context, Paul is being sarcastic, warning them not to abandon "the understanding," their intellect, when they pray. The mind must never be passive in prayer.

While we need to develop our mind and intellect through God's Word, let us not fall prey to *intellectualism*—the tendency to bow down and worship the mind. Intellectualism would claim that, because

we have the truth, we are practicing the truth. Such vanity is content to rest in theological formulations and endless discussion of a Christian's mental processes, while neglecting the reality of such deep truths. Such a false intellectualism and pride were a problem for the Corinthians, who were "puffed up" with knowledge.

Many times we speak out against current trends that de-emphasize doctrine. The Devil exploits our zeal as we overcorrect by having exams on Biblical knowledge. In studying for the exam we develop a theoretical interest in truth; but our Biblical knowledge becomes an end in itself (to pass an exam), rather than

a means to an end (knowing God).

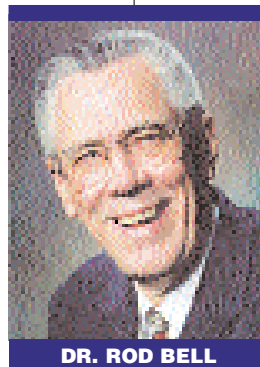
It is dangerous to isolate the intellect, and that is what the intellectual does. Only the mind is engaged; the power of the truth is not felt in the heart. If the mind isolates knowledge from the heart, a false view of knowledge results. Man thinks he knows it all; he becomes unteachable and forgets that now we see through a glass darkly. He becomes arrogant and intolerant of any views other than his own. Paul reminded those at Corinth that *all they had was knowledge*. Knowledge is all that intellectualism can enjoy. The intellectual thinks he has some knowledge of God, but all he has is some kind of knowledge *about* God.

How do we know if we have true knowledge? "But if any man love God, the same is known of him" (1 Cor. 8:3). True knowledge manifests itself in God's love, both in us and through us. True knowledge also produces proper character. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. True knowledge will cause a man to be full of compassion for the lost and full of zeal for God's glory.

How does one obtain true knowledge? "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23–24). We must be fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

God help us to know Thee, and Thy Truth. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The mind of Christ and the knowledge of Him will always humble us. It will never puff us up, nor lead us to bow at the shrine of intellectualism.

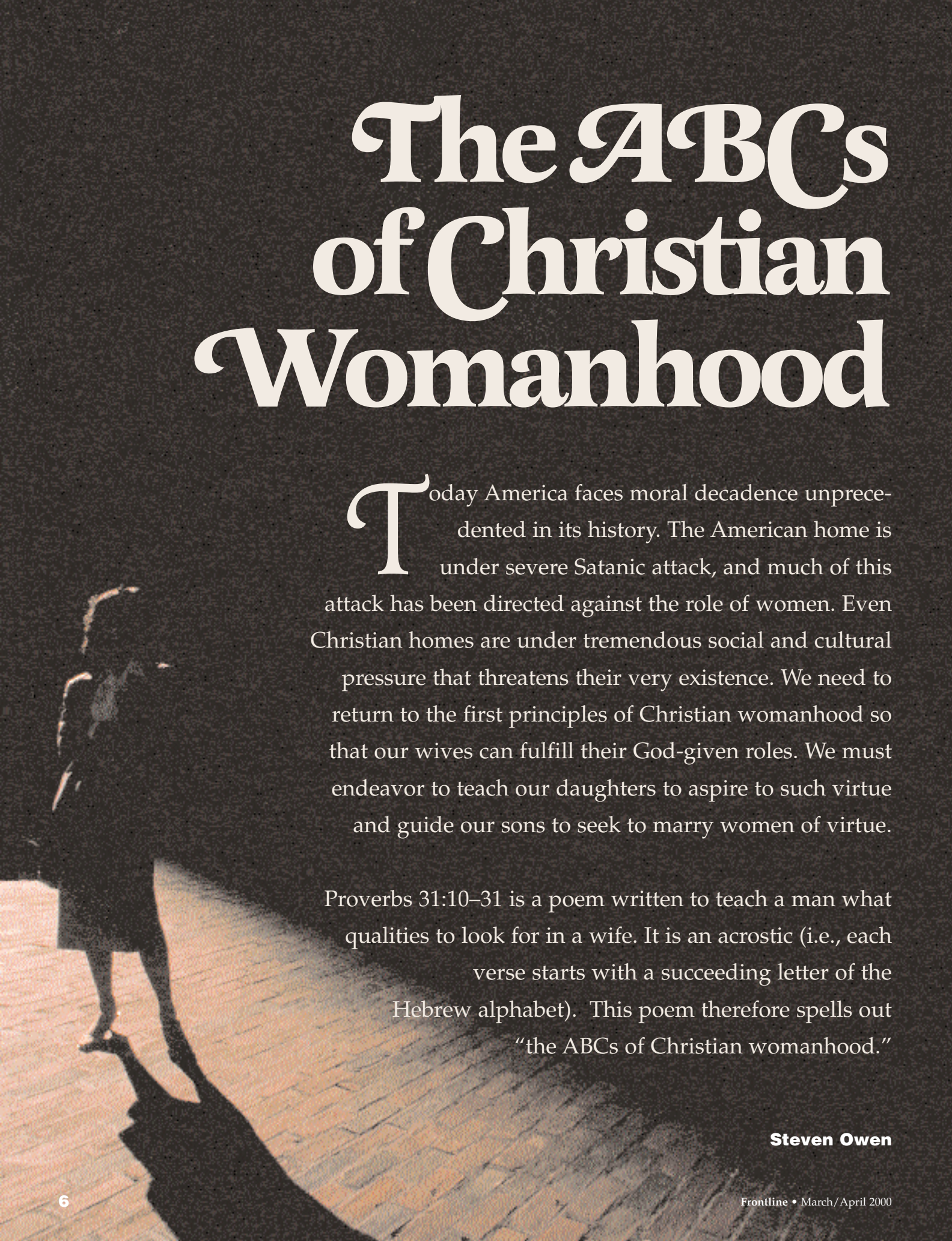
*If the mind isolates knowledge from the heart, a false view of knowledge results.*



DR. ROD BELL



# The ABCs of Christian Womanhood



Today America faces moral decadence unprecedented in its history. The American home is under severe Satanic attack, and much of this attack has been directed against the role of women. Even Christian homes are under tremendous social and cultural pressure that threatens their very existence. We need to return to the first principles of Christian womanhood so that our wives can fulfill their God-given roles. We must endeavor to teach our daughters to aspire to such virtue and guide our sons to seek to marry women of virtue.

Proverbs 31:10–31 is a poem written to teach a man what qualities to look for in a wife. It is an acrostic (i.e., each verse starts with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet). This poem therefore spells out “the ABCs of Christian womanhood.”

**Steven Owen**



Foremost, we all need to assess correctly the value of a true Christian woman. No treasure can compare to her because she will bring more comfort and satisfaction to her family than riches. But, alas, she is so rare because she is so seldom sought. Our culture places such great emphasis on beauty and charm instead of upon character that she is very nearly impossible to find (v. 10). Beauty will pass away (v. 30); a woman can employ charm to use men (v. 30); but a godly woman earns the praise of her husband, her children, her peers, and her Lord (vv. 28–30).

So what are the identifying qualities of the Christian woman? She is a woman of strength. The word translated “virtuous” literally means “strength.” The godly woman is very strong in these six areas.

### The Characteristics of Christian Womanhood

1. *She is absolutely loyal to her husband* (vv. 11–12). She is not a rebel against his will. Her goal is to work with and for her husband, without exception (v. 12). Her submission to her husband will result in a peaceful and prosperous home (v. 11). Her fidelity keeps her husband satisfied, and she becomes a “completer” to him so that he lacks nothing (v. 11). Some women are mixed blessings: Eve tempted Adam (Gen. 3:6); Job’s wife urged him to curse God and die (Job 2:9); and the contentious wife’s endless complaining makes life in the barren desert preferable to her company (Prov. 21:19). But the godly wife’s fidelity to her husband’s will results in prosperity in every facet of home life.

2. *She is strong in her work habits.* She has initiative; she’s a self-starter who needs no prompting to attend to her duties (v. 13). She works willingly and diligently. She gets out of bed early (v. 15), and she works late (v. 18). You will not catch her wasting time (v. 27).

3. *She is strong in her financial management* (v. 14). She saves money by shopping for bargains (v. 14). She sews (vv. 13, 19) and gardens (v. 16) to save the family budget. She adds to the family income by selling some of her wares (v. 24). She also does this through wise investments (v. 16) and running a business (v. 24). She does not, however, let her entrepreneurial activities interfere with her other duties at home. Perhaps she uses her business to teach her children good work habits and the value of money.

4. *She is strong in the area of motherhood.* She ensures that her family eats a nutritious diet, beginning with a good breakfast (v. 15). Her children are also well-clothed

against the weather (v. 21). And she works at keeping a clean, well-ordered house (v. 27). She is a thorough, efficient manager of all household affairs.

5. *She pays attention to her appearance* (v. 22). Her apparel is both modest and attractive (v. 22). Her emphasis is upon her character. As a result, her character accentuates her beauty.

6. *She is strong in Christian character.* Some women may be willing workers without being Christians; others may be Christians without being good workers; but the woman of solid Christian character will be a willing worker. This godly woman has love and concern for others. She is not greedy or stingy with her income. She is a giver (v. 20). And she is also concerned for the spiritual development of others (v. 26).

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### The Blessings of Christian Womanhood

The feminists of our time insist that Christian womanhood is nothing more than empty, dull slavery. Far from it—the Christian woman is the most fulfilled woman of all.

1. *The woman of strength fulfills her God-given duty to bring credit to her husband* (vv. 11, 23). “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband” (Prov. 12:4). God has created marriage to demonstrate the relationship between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22–23). As it is the church’s duty to glorify Christ, so it is the wife’s duty to glorify her husband. It is in obedience to God’s plan that the wife blesses herself, for she is one flesh with him.

2. *She will have a most fulfilling and satisfying marriage.* Her husband praises her for the blessings she has brought to him (vv. 28–29). He constantly reaffirms his delight in her, and tells her that no woman can compare to her.

3. *Her children love her* (v. 28). Unlike many homes in which the children are bitter against their parents, her children bless her and offer thanks to God that they were born into such a home.

4. *She will find praise and admiration from her peers* (vv. 30–31). Her testimony in the community will be well known (vv. 25, 31).

5. *Lastly, this godly woman finds deep satisfaction in life* (v. 25). The seeds she has sown in her husband, family, church, and community bear an abundant crop of love and esteem. Her life grows richer and fuller with each passing day.

Dear Christian ladies, how can you be so blessed? Only by putting Jesus Christ first in your life and surrendering yourself to follow His plan . . . for “a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised” (v. 30).

Steven Owen is pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Monroe, Wisconsin.





# Women in Luke's Gospel

Layton Talbert

In recent years Biblical scholarship has seen a revival of interest in the role of women in the Bible. Unfortunately, this interest is too often motivated by or mixed with a modern feminist mentality that seeks to liberate women from an imagined patriarchal suppression of their historical significance and contributions. The result is frequently an exaggeration, misapplication, or forced extension of what may otherwise be a legitimate observation. This tendency, in turn, creates a conservative knee-jerk reaction against the whole notion of women's role in Scripture. Any such reaction inevitably leaves us the poorer when we surrender a legitimate concept simply because of its abuse by others.

## Women in Luke's Gospel

Clearly uninfluenced by the modern women's movement, the 19th-century commentator Alfred Plummer called Luke's Gospel the "Gospel of Womanhood." In the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), there are only two stories involving women that Luke does not record—the incident with the Syrophonecian woman and Mary's anointing of Jesus. Luke shares a few other such accounts with one or more of the other synoptic Gospels. However, Luke also records a surprising number of significant passages involving women which are unique to his Gospel either in their entirety or in their extended focus on women.

For example, Luke's nativity account (chapters 1 and 2) is unique in its detailed attention to the words, emotions, and actions of Elizabeth and Mary. Consider, for example, Elizabeth's conception of John, Gabriel's announcement to Mary and her conception of Messiah, Mary's visit with Elizabeth and her *Magnificat*, Elizabeth's unusual role in naming John, Mary's response to the shepherds' message, and Simeon's words addressed specifically to Mary. Much of Luke's detail can be attributed to the likelihood that interviews with Mary and perhaps Elizabeth provided Luke with firsthand source material. However he came by it, the fact remains that the Holy Spirit directed the inclusion of this material in Luke's Gospel account for a reason. These passages are rich with insightful details that can minister truth, encouragement, and inspiration to all readers and to women in particular; they beg only for personal investigation and meditation.

Luke contains many other passages, unique to his Gospel, which focus attention on women. Anna the prophetess (2:36–38); the widow of Nain whose son Jesus resurrected (7:11–15); the repentant sinner woman who anointed Jesus' feet (7:36–50); the women who traveled with, ministered to, and provided for Jesus out of their own substance during His ministry (8:1–3); Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary (10:38–42); the woman who spoke to Jesus while He was teaching (11:27–28); the crippled woman whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath (13:10–17); Jesus' words to the women following Him to Golgotha (23:27–28). All these accounts and the intriguing insights they contain are



recorded in Luke alone. Luke is the only Gospel to use a woman to illustrate the concern and joy of God (the parable of the lost coin), the danger of worldliness of heart ("Remember Lot's wife!"), or the reward of prayerful persistence (the parable of the unjust judge). Other examples of Luke's unparalleled emphasis on women await the inquisitive Bible reader.

For instance, the account of the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet (7:36-50) has profound implications for the depth of our love and the expression of our devotion to Christ. Utterly undeterred by the daunting glares of the superior and self-righteous Pharisees, this repentant woman of the street entered a house and interrupted a meal to express to Jesus her devotion and indebtedness for His unconditional compassion on her. Unable to contain her emotion, she wept on Jesus' feet, washing them with her tears and *wiping them with her own hair!*

Can you imagine any more graphic portrayal of abject, self-forgetful, unrestrained love for Jesus Christ? Anointing Jesus' feet with a precious gift that underscored the depth of her gratitude, this woman embodies what it means to love Jesus Christ with absolute abandon. And the Lord used her spirit and her actions to teach the incredulous onlooking theologians around the table that those who love most are those who are most conscious of the debt from which Jesus has released them and of the bondage from which they have been liberated. Those who love Christ deeply are those who have deeply thought on Christ's love for them. Those who love little, those who know nothing of the soul-experience of this woman, those to whom it is but a strange form of religious excess, only display the penury of their own souls; their awareness of what Jesus has done for them is shallow indeed. One of the most profound truths of the Christian experience was taught by a woman—and only Luke records it.

Plummer makes the interesting observation that there is no occasion in Luke nor in any other Gospel of "a woman being hostile to Christ." It is also significant that, with the single exception of the apostle John, we have no clear record of where the rest of the disciples were during Jesus' crucifixion. Yet all three synoptic Gospels call specific attention to the women who were present at the crucifixion as "eyewitnesses to the events that compose the heart of the gospel message." We know where the women were; where were the men?

### Women in the Book of Acts

Luke's peculiar emphasis on women is not confined to his Gospel. The Book of Acts, also composed by Luke, contains several classes of references to women which are fascinating in themselves and fit Luke's previous pattern of focusing on the actions, attitudes, responses, and roles of women. The phrase "both men and women" occurs frequently in Acts to underscore the fact that women as well as men prayed (1:14), believed (5:14), were baptized (8:12), were imprisoned (8:3, 22:4), and were persecuted (9:2). There are also numerous references to specific women and their actions: Mary the mother of Jesus, Sapphira the schemer, Dorcas the generous, Rhoda the excitable, Lydia the first European convert, an exploited and demon-possessed slave-girl, a converted Athenian named Damaris, Priscilla the wife of Aquila, and Philip's four prophetess-daughters. In addition, there are several more general references to women, including neglected

widows, the widow friends of Dorcas, and the women who met for prayer with Lydia at Philippi. There are also some intriguing references to certain unnamed but "prominent women" (13:50; 17:4, 12).

### Conclusion

Hopefully this brief survey has been enough to whet your appetite. Luke demonstrates a unique attention and insight regarding female perspectives, experiences, responses, characteristics, involvement, and even role models. A personal study of women in the writings of Luke yields much food for thought, truth for application, and virtue to emulate. Begin your own systematic, prayerful exploration through this material and discover how God wants to minister to you from these special portions of His Word.

Of course, there is much more material for and about women throughout Scripture other than in the writings of Luke. Nevertheless, an emphasis such as Luke's should give women of all ages and conditions an added incentive to study out the women whose stories and experiences God has clearly included as a special ministry to His daughters.

Dr. Layton Talbert is a *Frontline* Contributing Editor.



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# Ministering

For the first several days after my son's birth I recall wondering if I could handle the task ahead of me. Ironically, since this was my first child, I was under the impression that the difficulty of raising my son would rest primarily on his feeding and sleeping schedule. I had to ask the question, as any young mother would, what are the requirements of my role as a mother?

My main job was to provide security and love for this little child. But was that the extent of it?

One forgotten element of mothering is the act of ministering to our families. I will admit that I am limited in the amount of things I can do in our church. I have some small responsibilities that I am able to carry out within the confines of my husband's schedule and within the framework of my desire to manage my home effectively. Some would concede then, that I don't actually have a "real" ministry. For a time, I was deceived and bothered by that thought. I soon came to the understanding that God has given me a tremendous ministry opportunity right here in my own home, not only as a wife who is supportive and makes it possible for her husband to do the work of the ministry, but as a mother: I have three little people whom I can directly affect for God's honor and glory. I have seen two of the three accept Christ as Savior, which is the first step. The second phase is actually a series of steps, which involves the discipleship of those new little believers. The chance to teach God's Word to a person in a one-on-one learning environment and to instill habits of godliness in the heart of a child at a very young age is a valuable vocation. We train them so that they, in time, will "teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

Recently my three-year-old daughter taught me a powerful lesson in mothering. As our family gathered around for dinner she asked if she

could be the one to thank the Lord for our food. What we expected to hear was her typical quick offer of thanks accompanied by an exuberant "Let's eat." Much to our amazement, she carefully chose her words of thanks and praise to the Lord along with a few important prayer requests of the day. When she ended her prayer, my husband and I looked up at each other in shock over the list of things for which she had prayed. It was obvious she had been paying attention to how we have prayed in her presence and was attempting to imitate our prayers. That is when I realized what my true ministry really is. I am in the process of raising another generation of praying wives and mothers.

The formative years have become a subject of study among child-rearing experts in recent years. Some would even venture to say that these years would be the deciding factor in the ultimate outcome of a child's future and life values. Scripture indicates that we must "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). Are we thinking about that eight-year-old boy as a future C. H. Spurgeon or as one who would have the resolve and spiritual integrity of Jonathan Edwards? Have we surrendered our children and their lives to the Lord from their earliest ages in hopes that God will use them to bring about the next generation of revival in America?

I would not limit this to our sons. I have often prayed that my two daughters would become mothers and wives who will grow to love and serve the Lord in much the same way the godly women of the Scriptures did. Had Hannah not diligently sought a son and then selflessly given him back to the Lord, a man of God like Samuel

*Are we willing to see our  
as a ministry task  
basics of physical and social  
on a generation of those  
use to further*





# Moms

**Carol E. Selstad**

*position of motherhood  
that steps beyond the  
rearing and propels us to spur  
whom God will  
His work?*

may have never been born.

This remains the key, I believe—are we seeking to surrender our children to the Lord? Are we willing to see our position of motherhood as a ministry task that steps beyond the basics of physical and social rearing and propels us to spur on a generation of those whom God will use to further His work? Where am I heading in this job of mothering? Am I carrying out my job as a praying mother? It should be that my life is such an example of prayer and godliness that my children formulate habits through the activities they see me engaged in.

One thing that my husband does with our children each evening is to pray with them. Instead of just having each child pray, we assign requests to each family member and then teach him or her how to talk to the Lord about the particular request. We explain what the needs of unsaved relatives are and why it is important to pray for them.

We talk about the ability that only God has to heal a sick friend or family member. We always remind them that it is God's will that we seek not our own. This gives them a better understanding of

how we can communicate with our God on a personal level and on a specific one as well. We teach them to pray

as the Scriptures teach us to pray. We have them memorize portions of Scripture that deal with prayer. If we start them off now, the habits will be more likely to continue, and thereby the work of Christ will be expanded into the next generation.

As we pray with and for our children, our goal ought to be to bring them to a closer walk with Christ. We cannot teach what we do not first know ourselves. When we live with the realization that we have little eyes watching each action or little ears hearing each word, we are living with a sense of built-in accountability. We must view every avenue of life as a teaching opportunity. When we experience pain or disappointment, we must teach our little ones around us how we ought to view these problems in the light of God and His Word. When we experience happiness we can teach our children to praise the Lord for the things He has provided for us. We will prepare our children for the years ahead and how to face the temptations of this world. When we respond to each situation by reliance upon God through faith in His sufficiency, it is evident in our lives. Through that example we teach our children to put their faith in God for each need they will encounter.

If we would take the task of child-rearing beyond the physical or social and move it into the realm of a spiritual responsibility before God, our homes would be producing the next generation of believers to carry on the cause of Christ. I cannot think of a better way to prepare our children for what lies ahead of them than to teach them how to live disciplined lives in obedience to God and His Word. What a privilege to be used by God as a mother who ministers to her family and teaches them to love and serve Him.

Carol E. Selstad is a mother of three. She and her husband live in Glen Burnie, Maryland, where he is the pastor of Granite Baptist Church.





*The things that make God dear to us are not as much His great big blessings as the tiny things, because they show his amazing intimacy with us. He knows every detail of our individual lives.*

—Oswald Chambers

**M**y 11-year-old daughter Alyssa came in through the back door, her mouth drooping, her blue eyes teary, looking for an understanding hug. I turned away from my ironing pile and set down the iron.

"What's wrong, honey?" I asked softly, pushing some strands of red hair out of her face.

"I lost the toothpick," she sobbed, "and it's so small I'll never find it!" She hugged me tighter, trying not to cry.

She was referring to her brand-new jack-knife, an imitation Swiss Army with a profusion of gadgets. She had just purchased it that morning with money earned by doing chores. There were only boys in our small mission school, only boys for neighbors, no sister, and, oh, how she had wanted a knife, just like all the boys had. Now one of the smaller parts, the toothpick, had been lost. "I'm so sorry, hon," I said as I held her.

After a few minutes she went to her room to lie down, and I returned to my ironing. When I finished the next shirt, I went into her room and said, "Have you asked God to help you find the toothpick? He knows where it is, and He cares about the little things in our lives as well as the big things."

"Are you sure, Mom?"

"Yes, I'm sure. There have been many times in my life when God showed me that He cared about the little things."

"When? What happened?"

"Well," I hedged, "I can't think of anything right this minute, but take my word for it sweetheart, He cares."

I left the room feeling frustrated that I couldn't come up with a concrete example. What I had said I knew to be true. Why then could I not think of one single example of God's special caring when my daughter asked? Was I mouthing platitudes? Would she truly believe me without the examples?

Just then my nine-year-old son Scott came in with a huge grin on his face. In his left hand he held the missing toothpick. "Where did you find it?!" I gasped.

"Well," he said, "I just took the toothpick from my jack-knife, held it out in front of me to help me pick out the size and color of Alyssa's, and then I walked around where we

had been playing. It was in the grass, under a bush."

I sent him to his sister's room where very soon squeals of excitement and thank-you sighs were heard. When Alyssa came out I asked, "Did you pray?" She nodded her head against my chest as we hugged and then went out to play pioneer family with her brother, the dog, and the jackknife.

I returned to my ironing and to prayer. *Lord, thank You for answering Alyssa's prayer, for showing her that You care, even about the little things in her life. Please help me to remember the many times in my life when You answered the little prayers; the ones that wouldn't have mattered that much if You had said no, but because of your fatherly loving-kindness, You said yes.*


As I continued to iron, God refreshed my memory with times and incidents in my life, answers to prayer and special blessings that weren't even prayed for—all because He cares, has always cared, and always will care. I remembered when I was a baby Christian in high school and prayed about finishing class assignments and about keeping the car running until I could get to the next gas station.

I knew I could talk to God about anything.


I remembered as a young mom the countless times God answered my prayer for a parking space. Especially when we had two children and I found it difficult to navigate a grocery cart and babies through the Michigan slush and ice to the far end of the parking lot.

I remembered the job God gave me when my husband was in seminary, giving me two special Christian co-workers when I hadn't even asked for such a blessing.

I remembered the summer my husband lost his wedding band while swimming at his parents' pool. He and his brother combed the pool inch-by-inch while the rest of us searched the surrounding yard, but to no avail. We hadn't been married long, and there was no room in our tight budget for a new wedding band. I was feeling rather sentimental about it, and I really didn't want him to have a different band. I wanted the one that I had placed on his finger during our wedding ceremony. It took me a full year before I could start look-



# Little Things





ing at wedding rings, having finally conceded that any ring was better than none at all.

One hot summer weekend after shopping to price rings, we stopped in at my in-laws' home. My father-in-law came up to me and in his outstretched palm lay my husband's wedding band. He had found it that morning as he was cleaning among the stones surrounding the pool area. It had survived a full year out in the open. It had been rained on, snowed on, and probably stepped on, but it was still intact. As I gazed at that scratched circlet of white gold, I realized that the return of the ring was a special gift from God and that He cared about the little things in my life.


Over the years there have been exciting answers to prayer—prayers for salvation, for direction, for a home, for children, and for our ministry—each portraying God's power, His grace, and His concern in our lives. But remembering the little things, things done out of love for me as an individual just because He cared, once again filled me with thankfulness and overwhelming gratitude.

That night, as I was tucking Alyssa into bed, I shared with her some of my memories of how our omniscient Heavenly Father had cared for me and had given me special blessings even when I had not asked and how He had answered my "little" prayers. She listened with blue eyes wide, absorbing every word. Then we prayed together, thanking God for His goodness to us. As I kissed her goodnight I said, "Don't ever forget about today and the lost toothpick because it will always remind you of God's loving concern for every detail of your life. And when you're a mom," I finished with a smile, "tucking your daughter into bed some night, you can explain to her how you know for sure that God cares about the little things in the lives of His children."

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:11).

Deb Craven is a freelance writer living in Macomb, Michigan. Her husband, Terry, serves as Midwestern Mission Advancement Representative with Baptist Mid-Missions.

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# Remember These Things

*Did you ever want to ask questions of some of those people of whom you read about in the Bible? If I could send the apostle Peter a letter, it might be similar to the following one.*

Dear Peter,

I have been reading your two epistles written to the Christian Jews. I am not a Jew, but I am of the seed of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus. I have read how hard it was for you to accept the command to minister to the Gentiles; but when God convinced you, you in turn, convinced your fellow Jews that "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

While reading the words you penned with the Spirit's direction, I did remember many things. I also thought of some of the hard lessons you had been taught under the discipleship of Jesus Christ. I recalled how He prayed for you when He said, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

I am sure the memory of the years you spent with Christ is woven into the writing of these epistles. You immediately mention the blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. That memory, at times, must be so very painful. You also mention His sufferings. You saw these firsthand as you followed Him in His ministry here on this earth. The greatest suffering came at the end of Christ's life. This is when you, James, and John were but a short distance from Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and you saw Him sweat "as it were great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44). He cried to His Father in agony, "Thy will be done." Did you hear Him, Peter, or had you already fallen asleep? Later, you so bravely tried to defend Him with a sword when they came to take Him from the garden. Then what happened that made you follow him afar off as He entered into the high priest's palace? You were no longer standing by Him, but sat with the servants "to see the end" (Matt. 26:58). Did your heart ache in misery when

you watched as "Jesus held his peace" before the high priest and when the servants spat in His face, buffeted Him, and smote Him "with the palms of their hands" (Matt. 26:63, 67)? Was it then that the love you thought you had for Christ was overcome by a fear that caused you to deny Him when you were identified as one of His followers?

Peter, were you in the crowd when the people cried out "more exceedingly, Crucify him" (Mark 15:14)? Did you then see Jesus scourged and delivered to be crucified? Did you watch as He was stripped, then covered with a scarlet robe and crowned with a crown of thorns? Your dear Christ was then mockingly hailed as "King of the Jews"; did you understand this? After the soldiers finished with Him, did you see them lead Him away to the hill of Golgotha? Did you see Simon, the man with the same name as you, carry the weight of the cross "that he might bear it after Jesus" (Luke 23:26)? Did you watch as they drove the nails into the hands and feet of the One you served and followed, day and night for three years? Did you hear your Savior say, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34)? Did you hear the terror of the thundering voice, of the very Son of God, echo through the darkness, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me" (Matt. 27:46)? Did you weep more violently than you did before, as you remembered your denial and how you forsook Him? I too weep bitterly in repentance when I remember the times I have been too fearful to take up the cross and follow my Lord and Savior.

Did you see John and Jesus' mother, Mary, at the foot of the cross? Peter, where were you? Did a sword also pierce your heart as you watched the pain that was evident in Mary and the beloved disciple's face? Were you crushed with sorrow when you heard Christ's words, "It is finished"? Did you know Joseph of Arimathea? He



also feared being identified with Christ. Did you help him bury your Lord in the garden tomb?

I know from the Bible that you remember the resurrection. You ran to the sepulcher, went in and saw "the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself" (John 20:6, 7). You went away "wondering . . . at that which was to come to pass" (Luke 24:12).

I read that, still in fear, you and the other disciples huddled behind closed doors until Jesus came and stood in your midst. His message of "Peace be unto you" brought a gladness to your heart (John 20:19). You then received the precious gift of the Holy Ghost as Christ breathed upon all of you.

I wonder—did you still not understand? Like so many of us, you went back to the love of your former life and unfortunately took others with you. Did you so soon forget your Lord's command to "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature" (Mark 16:15)? But I see the everlasting love of Christ would not let you go! You went fishing, and all your efforts came up empty until Jesus "shewed himself again" to you (John 21:1). At first you did not know it was Him. Your friend, John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved," had to tell you, "It is the Lord" (John 21:7). Then, Peter, once again you cast yourself into the sea to get to Jesus. This time were your eyes fixed on Him? Jesus called you to "come and dine." He

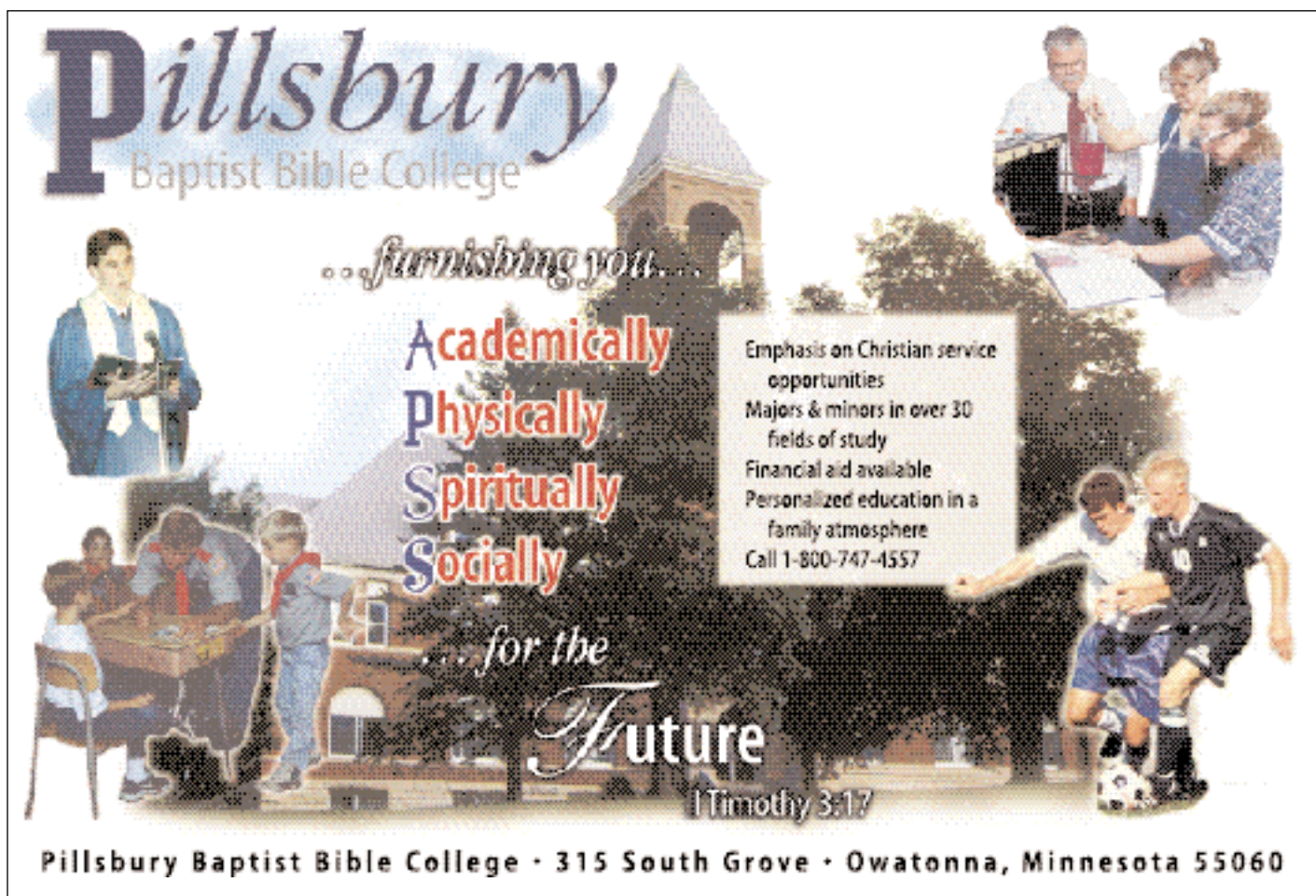
fed you first with physical food, then with a spiritual feeding to help you understand who He is and what He wanted you to do. When did you finally understand the words "Lovest thou me?"

From the accounts given later, it is evident you knew He wanted all your love. He wanted you to put Him first before everything else on this earth. It was this love for Him that would enable you to obey His command, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). How encouraging it is to read that it did enable you to follow Him to the end. You no longer denied Him but defended Him. You no longer fled in fear but lived and lectured boldly. You resisted the Devil with a steadfast faith and were given grace through afflictions. In answer to your Savior's prayer your faith did not fail, and you were perfected, established, strengthened, and settled. You are now a partaker of the eternal glory of God through Jesus Christ.

Thank you for not being negligent to put all who read your letters "in remembrance of these things" though we know them. May we be "established in the present truth" and always be ready to give an answer of the reason for the hope that is in us (2 Pet. 1:12).

Thank you, for you are still strengthening the brethren.

Martha Mazzaferro is a freelance writer living in Chester, Massachusetts.



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## The Woman's Study Bible

Layton Talbert

**T**he past several years have seen an explosion of study and devotional Bibles, all claiming unique features and emphases. A Bible aimed specifically at women, therefore, is nothing new. But *The Woman's Study Bible* (NKJV) stands out among the plethora of specialty Bibles for a number of reasons.

The work was produced almost entirely by women for women, from the editors to the contributors to the illustrators and designers. But those who immediately write this off as merely another encroachment of feminism into Biblical Christianity need to take a closer look. This Bible will surprise you. Dorothy Kelley Patterson's "Introduction" blames Elizabeth Stanton's 1895 *The Woman's Bible*—in which Stanton sought to liberate women from the "oppression" of Scripture—as laying the groundwork for modern feminist theology. In contrast, Patterson writes, "the editorial committee of *The Woman's Study Bible* has chosen to line up *under* the authority of Scripture" (vi). Special topical notes, authored by women, on topics such as Patriarchy (Gen. 28), Feminism (Isa. 5), and Liberation Theology (John 8) bear out this refreshingly conservative, Bible-centered view of women.

In addition, the material is not the kind of frothy fluff that decorates the pages of some women's devotional Bibles. It is beautifully formatted and tastefully designed; but make no mistake, it is a serious study Bible. Each book is preceded by genuinely helpful introductory material regarding the book's title, author, date, background information (setting, purpose, audience, literary characteristics), themes, and outline. Marginal notes are substantive and helpful.

Most importantly, the material itself is scholarly and conservative. Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is unquestioned. The historicity of the Jonah incident is defended (1506), and the unequivocal defense of the Balaam narrative stands in stark contrast to the suspicious silence of the *NIV Study Bible* footnotes on Numbers 22:28 and 2 Peter 2:16. Comments on issues under current debate repeatedly verify the conservative orientation of the study material as well. A topical note (238) listing female metaphors for God (Scripture actually uses several, e.g., Deut. 32:11–12; Hos. 13:8; Luke 13:34) nevertheless argues against altering masculine pronouns for God. Similarly, the extended exegetical treatment of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 is decidedly more straightforward and conservative than the tentative, noncommittal

footnotes in the *NIV Study Bible*.

Brief but detailed topical notes tie together Scriptural references to provide a concise overview, combined with practical applications, of hundreds of topics from a Biblical perspective. Though the topics are at least as diverse as nearly any other study Bible, here are a few that reflect a uniquely feminine focus: Abortion; Adolescence; Aging; Beauty; Childbirth; Child Care; Cosmetics; Egalitarianism; Family Worship; Fatigue; Femininity; Girlhood; Hair; Homemaking; Heroines; Home Schooling; Hospitality; Infertility; Jewelry; Mealtime; Midlife Crisis; Miscarriage; Modesty; Motherhood; Pastor's Wife; Pregnancy; Role Relationships Between Men and Women; Romance; Shopping; Singleness; Time Management; Weight Control; Wives.

Other topical notes address contemporary issues from a decidedly Biblical perspective: Alcoholism; Date Rape; Debt; Divorce; Euthanasia; Feminism; Homosexuality; Occult; Pornography; Positive Thinking; Racial Relations; Remarriage; Sanctity of Life; Self-Esteem; Substance Abuse; Unwed Mothers. Marginal and topical notes on theological topics (e.g., Attributes of God, Liberation Theology, Repentance, Virgin Birth) are not slighted or watered down.

Part of the attractiveness of these topical notes, many of them unusual and unique, is that they are interwoven throughout the Bible itself, usually connected with passages that, directly or indirectly, raise those issues. In addition, a complete index of key marginal annotations, as well as all the articles, topical notes, charts, and portraits of Biblical women, makes it easy to locate specific topics. Another attractive feature is the inclusion of succinct and perceptive portraits of over 100 women in the Bible scattered throughout the text.

Careful attention to the study material, coupled with a consideration of the target audience (women), suggests that *The Woman's Study Bible* can play a helpful role in fulfilling the Biblical injunction that older and spiritually mature women be "teachers of good things" who admonish "the younger women" in areas peculiar to female experience, deportment, and duty (Titus 2:3–5). No one will necessarily agree with everything in the study material, any more than with any other study Bible. Overall, however, *The Woman's Study Bible* contains a wealth of insightful, practical, focused information that uniquely ministers to the special needs and interests of women.

***The Woman's Study Bible* can play a helpful role in fulfilling the Biblical injunction that older and spiritually mature women be "teachers of good things" who admonish "the younger women" in areas peculiar to female experience, deportment, and duty (Titus 2:3–5).**



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## Why Join the FBF?

When Dr. John Vaughn, Editor of *Frontline* and Executive Vice President of the FBF, was asked this question recently, he drew up a list of reasons that fundamental Baptists should join the FBF. The following is condensed from his list.

### 1. We believe in taking a stand for the Truth.

Militant defense of the faith is the most important feature of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship.

### 2. We are a fellowship of individual Baptists, not Baptist churches.

Any fundamental Baptist can find a place of fellowship with his peers in the FBF without bringing his church, mission board, school, or other ministry under the aegis of a convention or association, or being denied the support and fellowship available in those groups that require a church to join.

### 3. We provide a means of fellowship.

One of the most obvious benefits of the FBF is its sponsorship of local, regional, and national meetings for preaching and encouragement. FBF meetings are held to provide a warm-spirited time of refreshment and revival. You will hear strong preaching and make good friends. Exhibitors also attend to introduce the fellowship to helpful products and services.

### 4. We provide a forum for the articulation of resolutions.

At our national meeting we formulate resolutions on current issues, not to dictate to those in the FBF, but to express a Biblical response to various issues.

### 5. We publish a directory of the FBF membership.

Everyone who completes a mem-

bership application is listed in the annual directory. The membership fee of \$20 includes the cost of the directory, which is distributed at the national meeting or mailed out shortly after the national meeting to those who could not attend. It is updated constantly and reprinted each year.

### 6. We sponsor Bible Study tours.

From time to time, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship sponsors tours for the edification and education of those who participate. These tours feature outstanding Bible study and exposition along with excellent, affordable accommodations and transportation. These trips will provide life-changing experiences and promote the building of fellowship and friendships.

### 7. We make health insurance available for our members.

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship recognizes the difficulty many pastors and Christian workers have in obtaining health insurance. The FBF Medical Plan, available to all members, meets this need at a reasonable cost.

### 8. We continue to provide an increasing range of services.

The FBF is developing numerous resources in CD and print media to provide needed materials for fundamental Baptists. The FBF web site ([www.f-b-f.org](http://www.f-b-f.org)) contains hundreds of articles previously published in *Frontline*, sermons from past national meetings, and many other booklets and pamphlets published by the FBF. The organizational structure of the FBF includes a Cooperating Board of State Representatives and Regional Moderators as well as a large and respected Executive Board so that there is always someone nearby to provide information and encouragement when needed. Contact information for all of these individuals is posted at the FBF web site.

### 9. We are a chaplain endorsing agency.

The FBF is a recognized endorsing agency for military, police, fire, and Civil Air Patrol chaplains.

### 10. We have kept the price of membership low.

Annual membership is only \$20—less than what most individuals would pay for a single round of golf. Membership dues help pay for producing and mailing the annual directory and for the expenses related to the national meeting, which often exceed \$25,000. Please send your membership dues by April 1 to the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, 500 West Lee Road, Taylors, SC 29687.

## Thank You!

Many of the pastors who attend the Caribbean FBF regional meetings want to receive *Frontline*, but few can afford the price of a subscription. At last fall's meeting, 74 men indicated their desire for a subscription. In response to our appeal for funds to help pay for these subscriptions, we received gifts from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina; Corinth Baptist Church in Stone Mountain, Georgia; First Baptist Church of Troy in Troy, Michigan; Calvary Baptist Church in Carolina, Puerto Rico; and Dr. Bill Hall, evangelist and FBF board member based in Eads, Tennessee. Our heartfelt thanks to you all for sharing the burden.

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## SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

## First Partaker

## More Kindling to Fuel Preaching on Christ

It is strange," Robert Murray M'Cheyne once wrote to himself after preaching on Revelation 1:15, "how sweet and precious it is to preach directly about Christ, compared to all other subjects of preaching."

Preachers know this sweetness. In the interest of enjoying more of it, in the last issue we began a survey of some books that significantly increase a preacher's understanding of the life of Christ. This issue's column will extend that discussion into specific aspects of His ministry. Please keep in mind, however, that no matter how enthusiastically a book may be introduced here, the recommendation should not be interpreted as a blanket endorsement of the author, his every doctrinal position, or even the entirety of the contents of the book under review. Spurgeon introduced his recommendations in *Commenting and Commentaries* with words that bear repeating here.

It is to be specially noted, that *in no case do we endorse all that any author has written in his commentary*. . . . Nor have we thought it needful to omit a book because it contains a measure of error, provided it is useful in its own way; for this catalog is for thoughtful, discerning men, and not for children.

I want to begin by mentioning several titles that are so specialized that they don't quite fit into any broader categories.

## General Works on Christ

For a quick reference to nearly anything about our

four primary sources of information on the life of Christ, I turn first to *A Guide to the Gospels* by W. Graham Scroggie. Although not actually a book on Christ's life or teaching, it contains such a systematic analysis of every-

thing even remotely touching on the subjects that it is almost impossible to think of preaching anywhere in the life of our Lord without using it. Chock-full of lists, maps, charts, and topics, the work is, in Cyril Barber's words, "worth an entire shelf of books on the same subject." The final section is titled, "The Gospels Viewed Christologically." Here are 70 studies, many in simple chart or list form, of topics such as "Prophecies of the Messiah," "Chronology of Christ's Life," "Names and Titles of Christ" (he lists 46 used in the Gospels), "Seven Sayings on the Cross," "The Appearances of Christ," and so on. Having turned to Scroggie hundreds of times, often after consulting other standard reference works, I don't think I have ever failed to find additional facts for my sermons. The volume is simply indispensable.

A work of truly encyclopedic proportions is the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (2 vols.), edited by James Hastings. Hastings edited something like 40–50 volumes of religious dictionaries and encyclopedias, but none of them is any better than these two. Wilbur Smith said that he would choose them above any set of Bible dictionaries published in the last century. All such works, of course, are a mixed bag. Some articles, written by liberals, are unbelieving and inaccurate. Some are exceedingly dry. But many are outstanding. Their authors were some of the most respected conservative writers of the first half of the 20th century—men like Edward Charles Dargan, Caspar Hodge, Thomas Lindsay, A. T. Robertson, James Stalker, Milton Terry, W. H. Griffith Thomas, Geerhardus Vos, and B. B. Warfield. The five columns (every column over 750 words) on "Golgotha" are the most helpful treatment I've read. More than 11 columns are given

*"The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits"*  
(2 Tim. 2:6)

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to a first-rate discussion of Christ's most frequently used self-designation, "Son of Man." The eight columns by B. B. Warfield on "Children" in the Gospels are superb. The article on the "Character of Christ" by T. B. Kilpatrick, extending to 34 columns, has been called the finest discussion of this subject to be written in the 20th century.

Anyone wrestling with the chronology of our Lord's earthly life needs Harold W. Hoehner's *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. Hoehner, a long time professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, draws from a wide range of extra-Biblical sources in giving an exceedingly helpful treatment of the key dates in the life of Christ. Though I don't come out exactly where Hoehner does—particularly on the day of the crucifixion—I have profited immensely from his discussions.

Let's move from the academic to the devotional. *Glimpses of the Inner Life of Our Lord*, by W. G. Blaikie, is one of those little treasures that you'll have to scour the used book dealers to find. But if you do, you're not likely to part with it. Blaikie treats 12 of Christ's say-

unto you?" What a blessed legacy it must be! Is it possible for us to lead a life where, amid all that may be outwardly boisterous, there is inward tranquillity like His? Who would not learn the secret of such a life? Who would not be heir to One who promises such a legacy?

And whose preaching will not be enriched by encounters with writing like that?

Another work of truly classic proportions is A. B. Bruce's *The Training of the Twelve*. The product of Bruce's early years (1859 and after) in the Scottish pastorate, this work on the Lord's shaping of the characters and ministry of the apostolic company was heralded by Spurgeon as "a great book, full of suggestions and savour." W. H. Griffith Thomas called it "one of the great books of the 19th century." Wilbur Smith wrote, "This is without doubt the preeminent work on the association of Christ with His disciples."

The depth of spiritual understanding Bruce displays about incident after incident in the Lord's interaction with these men is marvelous. Consider his analysis of the three parables Jesus told in order to encourage men to persist in praying.

He shows His intimate knowledge of their secret imaginations by the cases He puts; for the unkind friend and unnatural father, and we may add, the unjust judge, are pictures not indeed of what God is, or of what He would have us believe God to be, but certainly of what even pious men sometimes think Him to be. And He cannot only divine, but sympathize. He does not, like Job's friends, find fault with those who harbor doubting and apparently profane thoughts, nor chide them for impatience, distrust, and despondency. He deals with them as men compassed with infirmity, and needing sympathy, counsel, and help. And in supplying these, He comes down to their level of feeling, and tries to show that, even if things were as they seem, there is no cause for despair. He argues from their own thoughts of God, that they should still hope in Him.

## The Words of Our Lord

An excellent introduction to the subject of Christ's teaching is *The Teaching of Christ*, by G. Campbell Morgan. Whereas his earlier work, *The Crises of the Christ*, examines the major events of Christ's ministry, this one focuses on specific subjects of His teaching, such as God, the Spirit, Angels, Sin, Salvation, Human Responsibility, and the Kingdom of God. Each would make an excellent sermon series in itself—"What Christ Taught About Satan and Demons," "What Christ Taught About the Holy Spirit," and so on. Morgan's work is a nursery of good things waiting to be transplanted into such sermons. His approach is what we would today call "Biblical-theological" in that he confines himself to precisely what the Lord's statements reveal about each subject and then attempts to

## Robert Murray M'Cheyne—"how sweet and precious it is to preach directly about Christ, compared to all other subjects of preaching."

ings which serve as windows into His inner man, such as "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49) and "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psa. 40:8). All is handled believably, reverently, and suggestively. To give just a sample, he writes of the Lord's words, "My peace I give unto you":

The perfect self-possession of our blessed Lord, the habitual calm of His spirit, the absence of fever and flutter, even when He was most burdened with responsibility and worried with contradiction, are features that arrest every eye. We see him calm in every difficulty, ready in every emergency, unruffled in every conflict. The rude interruptions encountered in delivering His discourses or performing His miracles He meets with combined dignity and courtesy; and though He has sometimes a sharp word for the perversity of His apostles, and even an indignant burst at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, His soul does not lose its composure; He is presently calm and benignant as ever. The miracle of calming the sea seems symbolical of His whole life: winds and waves are ever falling before Him; wherever He goes there is peace and calm.

Is it this peace that He bequeaths to His people when He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give



synthesize these in logical sequence. Touched with Morgan's characteristic artistry, the work succeeds at being a devout, heartwarming theology of Christ's central teachings.

For further help with surveying our Lord's teaching topically, W. S. Harris's *Complete Index to the Thought and Teachings of Christ* is a virtual thesaurus of subjects. Harris classifies Christ's references to hundreds of subjects alphabetically from "Abandonment by Christ" (five references) to "Zeal" (five references). In cases where Christ mentioned a subject frequently Harris further refines his entries by categorizing the teaching in simple outlines. For instance, under "Obedience," he lists six headings—one of which is "Good results of." I was startled to discover that Christ taught at least 14 good results of obedience. There's a sermon or two—or 14!

Many of our Lord's most fascinating teachings are in parabolic form. Some are probably still awaiting their finest exposition, but until then there are several good works with which to begin. Their interpretations sometimes differ or even occasionally contradict one another. None treat the parables, as many of us would do, dispensationally. But each deserves respectful reading.

For starters, try *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord* by R. C. Trench. A philologist, a professor of both divinity and exegesis at King's College in Cambridge, a Bible translator, and a poet, Trench was exceedingly well qualified to deal with the kind of word pictures parables represent. Many of his well-expressed statements can serve as the headings for whole paragraphs of sermonic explanation.

After combing through Trench, turn to G. Campbell Morgan's *The Parables and Metaphors of Our Lord*. This work has the added advantage of treating many of Christ's lesser figures of speech. It has, for instance, three chapters on the illustrations in the Sermon on the Mount, a chapter on the name "Peter" which our Lord gave to Simon (entitled "Rock Personality"), and chapters on metaphors the Lord used of Himself, such as "The Bread of Life," "The Door of the Sheep," and "A Grain of Wheat." All are marked by Morgan's startlingly fresh insights.

For actual sermons on the parables, see if you can find a copy of William M. Taylor's *The Parables of Our Saviour*. Taylor pastored the Congregational Broadway Tabernacle in New York City for 20 years (1872–1892) and fed his people on an expositional ministry that was rare in those days. Once you use him, you'll find yourself keeping your eye out for his other sermons as well—especially his rich series on Bible characters.

One other work that must be mentioned is Benjamin Keach's *Exposition of the Parables*. It would be a shame if the two faults one may find with Keach, his spiritualizing of details and the wordiness characteristic of 17th-century preaching, caused us to dismiss him too hastily. Spurgeon's observation was that although the venerable old Baptist "makes metaphors run on as

many legs as a centipede, he has been useful to thousands." I like to use Keach as a kind of finishing touch for turning up practical applications. In Puritan-like fashion his sermons include whole sections of them, labeled either "Applications," "Uses," or "Exhortations."

By far the largest category of Christ's teaching is that of His extended discourses. For most of these there are one or two excellent helps.

To any who know his works, John Brown of Edinburgh (1784–1858) stands as one of the first rank of 19th-century expositors. Wedding a scholar's mind to a pastor's heart, Brown did not begin publishing until past 60. His expositions, therefore, are the ripe fruit of meditation, ministry, and Christian maturity. Of Brown's writings in general, Spurgeon said, "We always think of Brown as a Puritan born out of due time. Everything he has left us is massive gold. He is both rich and clear, profound and perspicuous."

One of Brown's most appreciated works has been his *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, first pub-

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***Is it this peace that He bequeaths to His people when He says, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you?" What a blessed legacy it must be! Is it possible for us to lead a life where, amid all that may be outwardly boisterous, there is inward tranquillity like His?***

lished in 1850. In his preface, Brown sets the tone for his studies with a caution which, in spite of its length, I feel constrained to include.

It is a growing conviction in my mind, that vital and influential Christianity consists, much more than is ordinarily apprehended, in an intimate personal acquaintance and friendship with our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . To be a Christian, it is not enough that we know and acknowledge a system of doctrine and of law, deduced from the sayings of our Lord and the writings of his apostles. It is necessary that we be acquainted with *his* person, *his* character, and *his* work; that we know the doctrines of Christianity as *his* mind, the laws of Christianity as *his* will. The very life of Christianity consists in loving, confiding in, obeying *him*, and God *in him*; and he plainly can be loved, confided in, and obeyed, only in the degree to which he is known. Speculation about the person and work of Christ, however correct, is not the "excellent knowledge"



in comparison with which the apostles counted all things loss.

My experience with this set has been unfailingly rewarding, particularly when I've been at a loss for how to explain the logical connection between some of Christ's more difficult statements. Brown, as much as any expositor on my shelves, explores those connections and attempts to explain the logical sequence of thought from sentence to sentence. His three volumes handle John 3–8, 10, 12–16; Matthew 5–7 and 15; Luke 11–12; and Mark 7. Spurgeon calls them "the noblest order of exposition."

I know of only one volume dedicated to the Sermon on the Mount that I personally would term a "classic"—David Martyn Lloyd-Jones' *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. Consisting of 60 sermons preached consecutively on Sunday mornings at Westminster Chapel in London from October 1, 1950, to April 6, 1952, the "doctor's" treatment focuses on applications to Christian character rather than the discourse's systematic presentation of any particular view of the Kingdom of God. Lloyd-Jones stated, in fact, "What is of supreme importance is that we must always remem-

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***"None else can give us a capacity to learn. Jesus Christ is such a teacher, that he doth not only give the lesson, but the wit and skill to learn: 1 John v. 20, 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.'"***

ber that the Sermon on the Mount is a description of character and not a code of ethics or morals."

For those not familiar with Lloyd-Jones, I'd like to include a portion of a *British Weekly* article about his ministry. The reporter, Derek Walker, wrote:

Westminster Chapel is a church which thrives without making any visible effort to achieve success—or so it would seem at first sight. It is well filled every Sunday, morning and evening, although its activities are not widely advertised, and although the form of service makes no concessions to modern tastes. . . . The service in the

morning lasts for nearly an hour and a half, while in the evening it also runs to an hour and a half. Sermons are correspondingly long, often 40 minutes in the morning, and 50 minutes at night—this in addition to extempore prayers lasting for a quarter of an hour. It may be that in this very absence of any trace of "modernity" we have the clue to the well-filled pews in Westminster Chapel.

With that outsider's introduction in mind, try reading a half a dozen or so of Lloyd-Jones's messages on the Sermon on the Mount and see if they don't encourage you to believe that Spirit-filled preaching will still fill a church.

Unfortunately, there are few really helpful works on Christ's great prophetic Olivet discourse (Matt. 24–25). The best of which I'm aware is Walter K. Price's *Jesus' Prophetic Sermon*. Price, a pastor and evangelist, provides a premillennial interpretation in ten well-written chapters. His reasoning is easy to follow. He supports his positions with numerous cross-references and makes appropriate use of extra-Biblical sources.

Some of our finest literature on Christ's teaching covers His Upper Room Discourse and High Priestly Prayer. Alexander Maclaren's *Holy of Holies*, 34 matchless sermons on John 14–16, and H. B. Swete's *The Last Discourse and Prayer*, a study of John 14–17, will together not only enlighten understanding but also penetrate the preacher's soul with the *spirit* of the Lord Jesus' own mood and manner on that last night with the Twelve. Add Thomas Manton (*An Exposition of John Seventeen*) and Marcus Rainsford (*Our Lord Prays for His Own*) on the High Priestly Prayer and you will possess some of the most devout spiritual worship to be penned on these chapters.

Thomas Manton defended the appropriateness of our using the kinds of helps we've been discussing, but insisted on our utter dependence upon the Son for spiritual understanding.

None else can give us a capacity to learn. Jesus Christ is such a teacher, that he doth not only give the lesson, but the wit and skill to learn: 1 John v. 20, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true." . . . If that the true knowledge of God is only to be had from Christ, it directeth us in the use of all ordinances to look up to him; there must our trust be fixed, in reading, hearing, meditating. We must use helps and means, else we tempt God, but our trust must be elsewhere. . . . There are wonders in the law, but our eyes must be opened to see them, otherwise we shall have but a superficial and literal knowledge, when men think to find more in books than in Christ.

Amen. ☞



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# Bring . . . the Books

Charles Bridges' *The Christian Ministry*

In 1839, a saintly young Scottish pastor named Robert Murray M'Cheyne took up his pen to write to his dear friend, Andrew Bonar, about a trip to the Holy Land. The purpose of the six-month visit was to inquire into the state of the Jews in the hopes of stirring greater interest in Jewish evangelism. M'Cheyne writes of what they ought to take: "As to books, I am quite at a loss. My Hebrew Bible, Greek Testament, etc., and perhaps Bridge's *Christian Ministry* for general purposes,—I mean, for keeping us in mind of our ministerial work."

Charles Bridges is better known among lay people for his commentary on Proverbs. (He wrote one on Ecclesiastes as well.) But preachers are even more grateful for his work on ministerial life and labor. Bridges authored his classic volume *The Christian Ministry* in 1830, and the book has been steadily republished ever since. That would be a tribute to any volume, but especially to one occupied with a subject about which literally hundreds of volumes have been published since then.

Bridges' work is not a "how-to manual" of fads for contemporary ministry. If it were, no one would have picked it up within 15 years of its first printing. This book is for earnest reflection and prayerful submission. It is one to which I have returned several times a year for more than 25 years now. My copy is marked in almost as many colors of ink and highlighters as there are in the rainbow. Again and again it has adjusted any tendency I've had to drift from Biblical patterns.

The book is in five parts, the first of which is a "General View of the Christian Ministry." Bridges opens his work with the magisterial ideal which I have quoted to our church repeatedly: "The Church is the mirror that reflects the whole effulgence of the Divine character. It is the grand scene, in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe." I'd like to send just that one line to the contemporary minister whose church advertisement came this week, announcing a Saturday night service for those who prefer early Sunday morning tee times and hate to miss the NFL pre-game show. "The Church . . . is the grand scene in which the perfections are Jehovah are displayed to the universe"!

The importance of Bridges' second and third sections ("General Causes of the Want of Success" and "Causes of Ministerial Inefficiency Connected with our Personal Character") cannot be overstated. They deal with one of the most perplexing questions that plague a minister: Why do I not enjoy more success in my ministry? Just the titles of the answers convict: Want [Lack] of entire devotedness of heart to the Christian Ministry, Conformity to the world, The fear of man, The want of Christian self-denial, The influence of spiritual pride, The defect of family religion, to name a few. These chapters contain statements that are burned into my memory. Here is strong meat for those able to chew it:

It ought to be our solemn and cheerful determination to refrain from studies, pursuits, and even recreations, that may not be made evidently subservient to the grand purpose of our ministry. . . . Mr.

Cecil used to say, that the devil did not care how ministers were employed, so that it was not their proper work. Whether it was hunting or sporting, cards and assemblies, writing notes upon the classics, or politics, it was all one to him. Each might please his own taste.

Or try this one:


Cowper's line—"If parsons fiddle, why may'nt laymen dance?"—has at least as much truth as wit in it. If we go one step into the world, our flock will take the sanction to go two; the third will be still more easy. . . . The Minister, therefore, who would not have his people give in to worldly conformity such as he disapproves, must keep at a considerable distance himself. If he walks near the brink, others will fall down the precipice.

Bridges' final two sections deal with the public and private work of the ministry. They include directions for ministering to various classes of hearers, such as the careless, the self-righteous, or the backslider. Again, the insight is striking and the quotations memorable. For instance, "When John preached generally, 'Herod heard him gladly'; when he came to particulars of application—'It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife'—the preacher lost his head." Another one that I like, con-

*"... when  
thou comest,  
bring with thee  
. . . the books"  
(2 Tim. 4:13)*

***"A sense of the dignity of our office—accurately formed, carefully maintained, and habitually exercised—is of the highest importance."  
—Charles Bridges***

cerning preaching in love, reads, "We must wound their conscience as sinners, not their feelings as men."

Read Bridges, and be sure to spend time with the footnotes. Some are in Latin, but most are in English. They come from divines who knew the ministry experientially. "Prayer without study is presumption; and study without prayer atheism," warned one. Bridges, thankfully, prompts earnest ministers to both. 

—Mark Minnick



A great deal of confusion exists regarding the call to the Christian ministry. Maybe there is a yearning to be in full-time service, but you don't have the clear-cut experience some other fellow can describe. Or maybe you feel obligated or pressured toward the ministry but there is no desire. What constitutes a "call" to ministry?

With specific reference to service or ministry, the term *call* or *called* in the NT is surprisingly uncommon (Mark 3:13-14; Acts 13:2, 16:9-10; Rom. 1:1). Biblical conclusions, however, are not drawn merely on the basis of the number of occurrences of a particular word. The *concept* of a calling to Christian ministry is woven into the very fabric of the NT itself.

That concept is also communicated, for instance, in the word "sent," and ministers of the gospel are sometimes described as "sent" individuals. Something of this "sentness" appears in Matthew 9:38 ("Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest") and in Romans 10:15 ("And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"). Other examples of "sentness" can be found in Acts 8:26-27, 9:15, and chapter 10.

Few would debate the idea that some pattern for calling to the ministry can be found in the NT. A clear NT example of a distinct call to the ministry is seen in the apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-9, 15-16). He heard the direct voice of Jesus and received an explicit commission to "all men" (Acts 22:15). Paul knew that God had sovereignly put him into the ministry (1 Tim. 1:12, 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). He described the divine compulsion to preach (1 Cor. 9:16). This sense of compulsion was confirmed by the congregation (Acts 13:3).

The problem is, how is the transmission of this calling understood and received today? Does God transmit sovereign appointments today by means of such direct communication? Direct communication from God, by definition, constitutes revelation. Such revelation would, in principle, suggest that the Scripture is not sufficient or final. Instead, today we believe in a mediated call—the moving of God's Spirit within a person's heart that accompanies and is in agreement with the Scripture.

First Timothy 3:1 furnishes a description of how this happens: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Paul refers to a man's "desiring" the work of the ministry. The adjective "good" describes its excellence; the noun "work" denotes its difficulty. It is work which demands preparation.

What is most important for our study are the two terms translated "desire." The first use of "desire" (*oregetai*) in verse 1 means "to covet" or "to aspire to" and refers to "reaching out after" an object. Moreover, the verb occurs here in the middle voice, which lays stress on the *agent* doing the action. In this case, the subject is reaching after this object (the ministry) for himself, stirring up something within himself. He is not passively waiting for a mystical call from above.

The second verb translated "desire" in 3:1 (*epithumeo*) highlights the level of emotional response. Often translated "love," it means "to passionately fix upon a thing" and describes the subject setting his heart upon the object. This strong inclination of the heart cannot be suppressed, even in the face of difficulty (cf. Romans 1:14-15; 15:20-21). "This godly desire, if controlled by the Spirit of God, may deepen into a sacred conviction" (Homer Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958], 123).

The common conception of calling that one should not aspire to leadership in ministry, that one wait patiently (passively) until God calls, is not supported by the text. To the contrary, 1 Timothy 3:1 positively encourages those who aspire to ministry. The desire alone does not qualify one for ministry, however, since desires can fluctuate or be inappropriately motivated. That is why Paul proceeds to list the requisite qualifications for the office desired (1 Tim. 3:2ff.).

Someone may ask, "Where is God in the call?" Such desire, or divine compulsion, is the direct work of the Holy Spirit. Other passages fill out the elements of ministerial calling:

The requisite gifts must be present in the one who is called (2 Cor. 3:6).

Real and deep conviction is involved in the call, as one becomes profoundly aware of duty, of an obligation placed upon him by the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 9:16b).

There will be growing evidence of divine blessing that confirms the call; as one begins to exercise the gifts, there will be evidence of people desiring to listen (cf. 2 Cor. 3:5-6). Furthermore, it is imperative by NT example that such a call be confirmed by the church.

Is there evidence that God is moving you, or someone you know, into the ministry of the Word? Charles Bridges summarizes such a divine moving when he writes: "The two grand combining requisites for this 'divine vocation' may be determined to be, a *desire*, and a *fitness*, for the office" (*The Christian Ministry* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976, orig. 1830], p. 94).

**"Rightly  
dividing  
the Word  
of Truth"  
(2 Tim. 2:15)**



Hardly a day goes by for the average individual without at least some emphasis upon health needs. Exercise, vitamins, and healthy food help develop and maintain good physical condition. Certainly such personal choices should be commended. How much more commendable it is when God's people develop and maintain spiritual disciplines. For "bodily exercise" profits "little: but godliness is profitable unto all things" (1 Tim. 4:8). With such a clear promise, a believer cannot go wrong by developing "spiritual muscles," particularly in his prayer life.

### Developing prayer muscles requires substantial time.

People live life at an aggressive pace. Meetings, church activities, shopping trips, ballgames, music concerts, home projects, and more fill the days of God's people. For most believers, there is little spare time. Too often Christians convince themselves that they are so busy they "do not have time to pray." Even those in ministry find their responsibilities so overwhelming at times that they do not feel they can afford the "luxury" of spending substantial time in prayer with the Lord.

Such was the case of a lady missionary who decided to develop some spiritual prayer muscles after reading an account of John Hyde's prayer life. She writes:

Most of the year has been a battle to keep to my resolution. I have always lived so active a life, accustomed to steady work all the day long, and my new life called for much of the best part of the day to be spent in prayer and Bible study. Can you not imagine what it was, and what it is sometimes now? To hear others going around hard at work while I stay quietly in my room, as it were inactive. Many a time I have longed to be out in active work among the people in the rush of life, but God would not let me go. His hand held me with as real a grip as any human hand and I knew that I could not go. Only the other day I felt this again and God seemed to say to me, "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Yes, I knew I was ashamed of the years of almost prayerless missionary life. Every department of the work now is in a more prosperous condition than I have ever known it to be. The stress and the strain have gone out of my life. The joy of feeling that my life is evenly balanced, the life of communion on the one hand and the life of work on the other, brings constant rest and peace. I could not go back to the old life, and God grant that it may always be impossible (Francis McGaw, *Praying Hyde*, pp. 58–59).

It was the great missionary Adonarim Judson who

said:

Arrange thy affairs, if possible, so that thou canst leisurely devote two or three hours every day not merely to devotional exercises but to the very act of secret prayer and communion with God. Endeavor seven times a day to withdraw from business and company to lift up thy soul to God in private retirement. Begin the day by rising after midnight and devoting some time amid the silence and darkness of the night to this sacred work. Let the hour of opening dawn find thee at the same work. Let the hours of nine, twelve, three, six, and nine at night witness the same. Be resolute in this cause. Make all practicable sacrifices to maintain it. Consider that thy time is short, and that business and company must not be allowed to rob thee of thy God (E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, pp. 51–52).

C. H. Spurgeon echoed Judson's sentiment when he observed:

In driving piles, a machine is used by which a huge weight is lifted up and then made to fall upon the head of the pile. Of course the higher the weight is lifted the more powerful is the blow which it gives when it descends. Now, if we wish to impact our age and society with ponderous blows, we must see to it that we are uplifted as near to God as possible. All our power will depend upon the elevation of our spirits. Prayer, meditation, devotion, communion, are like a windlass to wind us up aloft. It is not lost time, which we spend in such sacred exercises, for we are thus accumulating force, so that when we come down to our actual labor for God, we shall descend with an energy unknown to those to whom communion is unknown (*The Quotable Spurgeon*, p. 173).

### Developing prayer muscles creates complete dependence.

In a day when men grope for answers to the dilemmas of a complex world, the Lord desires for His people to find comfort and wisdom in Him alone. John 15:5 reads, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." So God is looking for people who develop some prayer muscles that acknowledge and rely upon Him for daily strength and provision.

E. M. Bounds wrote, "What the Church needs today

*"To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, 'A window shalt thou make in the ark.'"*

*Charles Spurgeon*



is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men who the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer” (E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*, p. 7).

What believer has not heard of George Mueller’s dependence upon the Lord? But do you know *why* Mueller founded his orphanage in England?

Now if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained, without asking any individual, the means for establishing and carrying on an orphan house, there would be something which, with the Lord’s blessings, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the orphan house. . . . The first and primary object of the work was . . . that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need only by prayer and faith, without any one being asked by me or my fellow laborers, whereby it may be seen that God is FAITHFUL STILL, AND HEARS PRAYER STILL (Arthur T. Pierson, *George Muller of Bristol*, p. 398).

What dependence upon the Lord!

### **Developing prayer muscles produces results.**


When God’s people discipline themselves to spend time with the Lord, resting completely upon Him for strength, the Lord begins to work. Dr. Rod Bell, in his recent autobiography, describes the results of a ministry that seeks the face of God in prayer. He relates the beginnings of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, in the area that was called “Bootleg Corner,” the opposition he initially faced (death threats, spiritual struggles, concerns for his family), and the prayer meetings he and other preacher boys had seeking the power of God for that ministry. Then he tells of the blessings.

One such blessing was the conversion of a bootlegger named Bill Hughes. In one service, Bill Hughes stood and gave a testimony, not for the Lord but for the Devil. To counter, a brother named Hal Williams stood to give a testimony for the Lord. Shortly thereafter, Bill “turned and, with tears streaming down his face, ran out the door.” Pastor Bell “told one of the men, ‘Take the service; I’m going after him.’ I ran after him to his home . . . and there he sat with a bottle in his hand. His head was in his hands, and he was weeping.” That night, Pastor Bell led Bill Hughes to the Lord. Bill later became one of the best soul winners in his church. The salvation of Bill and many others from “Bootleg Corner” took place because God’s people developed prayer muscles (Rod Bell Sr. *The Mantle*

*of the Mountain Man*, pp. 84–85).

John R. Rice relayed numerous incidents in which God answered the prayers of His people. He tells the story of a day back in the early 1930s when God provided the finances needed for a daily radio broadcast: “One day, as was our custom, Mrs. Rice, one of the secretaries, and I agreed to pray for \$30.00 to come that day. We expressly named \$30.00 in our prayer and agreed in asking God for it. The morning mail came about 9:00 o’clock and contained among many letter offerings totaling \$13.50 for the radio broadcast.” The noon and afternoon mail arrived, but included no additional support.

I went into a study and began to dictate a Bible lesson. Later, a secretary came to the door and said, “Brother Rice, Mrs. W \_\_\_\_ wants to see you.” I invited her to bring the lady in, and she came to thank me for the blessings received from the radio broadcast. As she talked a bit about the blessings she had received through my Bible teaching, she opened her purse and handed me a \$1.00 bill. She said, “I have never forgot how my heart was thrilled the first time I heard you at the Epworth League meeting explain the Scriptures. Now to think the joy I have in hearing you on the radio every day!” Tears came in her eyes and she said to me, “Give me that dollar back!” She handed me a \$5.00 bill instead. “My neighbor has been listening to you, a Catholic woman,” she said. “She had seemed so hard to reach and so far from God, but now I am beginning to believe that she may get saved. It is wonderful what the broadcast is doing for people who hear.” Then suddenly she said, “Here give me the \$5.00 bill, and I will give you ten instead!” . . . As she told how her husband had been blessed by the broadcast, she said, “I believe Frank would want me to give you everything I have in my purse except just carfare to get home!” With tears in her eyes and with trembling lips she handed me back the \$5.00 and the \$1.00, and then in her coin purse she found coins totaling fifty cents and handed them to me. With happy steps she left the office and went away. I turned again to the Bible study lesson I was dictating. But in the back of my mind things began to add up—\$13.50 plus \$10.00 plus \$5.00 plus \$1.00 plus 50 cents—exactly \$30.00! My heart ran over with joy. Thirty dollars that day was better than \$50.00, because it was exactly what we had asked for (John R. Rice, *Prayer: Asking and Receiving*, pp. 76–77).

Dean C. J. Vaughn once said, “If I wished to humble anyone, I should question him about his prayers. I know nothing to compare with this topic for its sorrowful self-confessions” (J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 75). Vaughn’s comments express to modern believers their need to discipline themselves in prayer. With churches struggling and believers grappling to keep their spiritual chins above water, the need is critical for God’s people to begin to take seriously the important subject of developing spiritual prayer muscles. 

Dr. David Pennington is the Senior Pastor of Burge Terrace Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.





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## Mother Love

I had known my Savior's love for me and had loved Him deeply in return for the past 13 years. I had a close family, and I loved my parents and my brothers and sisters. I was blessed with a loving, godly husband and thought the world of him. But in 1985, after the birth of my first child, I experienced a type of love I had never before known.

I vividly remember when I first felt the strength of it. I had delivered my daughter, Heidi, on a Saturday and returned home Sunday. On Monday, my baby needed to go in for her first check-up at the doctor's office. Since I was still recovering, it was agreed that my husband should take Heidi in for the check-up. It was only sensible. I was fine with that . . . until they drove out of the driveway. Why had I sent my baby away, without me? What if something happened to her in the car, while my husband was busy driving? What if she fell down in the car seat? What if she smothered in her blanket? I should be with her! I was her mother, after all! I suddenly realized the fierce, protective sort of love that every new parent experiences, the realization that this miraculous new life, who is part of me and part of my husband, has been entrusted by God to my care and keeping (Ps. 127:3). My husband felt it too that same day. I remember he told me that it seemed everyone on the road was out to get him and he had to drive so carefully and defensively, now that Heidi was in the car with him.

That love does not diminish with the next child. When Ethan was born 20 months later, my then-unmarried sister felt sorry for him. She couldn't see how any of us could possibly love him as much as we loved Heidi. Not to worry. The fierce parent-love

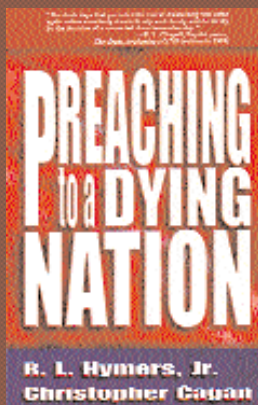
kicked right in. I never had any fear of favoring one over the other.

So when Ethan, shortly after his birth, exhibited signs of infection and had to spend ten days in the neonatal intensive care unit, I experienced worry and anguish. My third child, born three years later, decided to try out the NICU as well, by simply forgetting to breathe several times. During both of these difficult times, what helped me most was simply remembering my Savior's love. I knew the all-consuming, fiercely protective love I had for my child. But how much greater, how far beyond comparison was the Lord's love for my (or was it His?) baby! He was in complete control of the situation. He would work out what was best for His little one, and for me. I too was His child.

Perhaps these situations were just an introduction to my realization of the wonderful providence of God. I know I did not grasp all of it then, and I'm still learning. This seems to be a theme He is teaching me year by year, day by day—through His Word, through books, through Sunday school classes, through trials. He orchestrates all events for our spiritual good, and His ultimate glory. I have no reason to complain about . . . anything! My physical frailties? Who made me thus? Trying, uncomfortable situations? Who placed me there? Even the weather—who is in control of all forces, natural and supernatural? My loving, merciful, longsuffering Savior is the all-knowing, all-powerful director of the universe. In this I can rest. In His arms I can place my—His—precious children.

Esther Talbert is a wife, mother of four, and home educator living in Travelers Rest, South Carolina.

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# Bouquet of Joy

**B**ouquets of flowers say so much of what lies within the heart. Perhaps you have experienced the happiness of a slightly drooping bouquet of dandelions proudly presented to you from a small, sweaty, tightly clenched fist. Floating stemless bouquets on a saucer of water served as oft-repeated centerpieces during the early years of our five children!

Surely the finest bouquet ever presented is the "bouquet of joy" given to us by the loving, nail-riven hands of the Lord Jesus Christ as He offers to us His blood-bought gift of salvation through His shed blood.

Joy is what we all want—to know we are loved; to know life has meaning and purpose; to know someone understands and cares. All of this and much more are contained only and completely in the source of lasting, eternal joy, the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a combination of beauty and the sweetest of fragrance found in the blest Son of God! Only as we reach out and take His gift of eternal life does the joy of the indwelling Christ burst forth with fresh, new life within us!

"But," you might ask, "what has happened to my joy in Christ? I know Him as my Savior, but life has left me feeling as though the rug has been pulled out from beneath my feet, leaving me flat on the floor, bruised, broken, and gasping for air!"

A good truth to know and accept is that life is a mixture of joys and sorrows, smiles and tears. As His children, our consolation is that nothing comes as a surprise to our loving Father. He knows all about the situation from beginning to end. As has been wisely said, "God is infinitely *kind*, infinitely *gracious*, infinitely *good*, infinitely *loving*." We *can* trust Him. The trials that come to us are first filtered through His loving hands before they ever reach us, purposed to grow and strengthen us in Him.

Difficulties draw us to our knees and to the promises of God found in His Word.

Squirm and struggle as we might against binding, uncomfortable circumstances, the joy we so desire will flood our hearts if we will begin to love, learn, and live the precious Word of God. Psalm 119:71 reminds us, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."

To *love* the word of God is to put the stems of our lives deep down into the cool water of the Word, allowing the rejuvenating joy of the Lord to flow into our minds and hearts. Nothing can compare to the refreshing waters of the Bible! Drinking it into ourselves provides sure quenching to the thirst of frustration, disappointment, fear, loneliness—whatever your need may be.

When you love someone, you want to be with him. You hang on his word, listening with your heart as well as with your ears. We wives need to keep our ears tuned to our husbands. Polishing up our listening abilities will go a long way to putting some "zing" back into the relationship! Stop what you are doing and look into his eyes as he speaks, and *listen*! Not only will you draw a positive response from your husband, you will also rekindle and deepen your appreciation of him through careful, loving listening.

The same is true with God's Word. If our love for the Bible is waning, it is largely because we have relegated our time and attention of loving the Word to a low notch on our list of "things to do." Joshua 1:8 tells us to "meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein."

As we give ourselves to loving God's Word, it will follow that our relationships to those around us will be affected. The lingering fragrance that comes from drawing up close to our Heavenly Father will begin to emanate from our words, attitudes, and actions. Love the Word!

Next, we must *learn* the Word. Anything good that we desire to add to our lives

**Leola Olney**



requires discipline, doesn't it? It is that way with the Bible. Self-discipline, time, and effort are to be exerted if we really want to know God's Word better. Because it is "quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12), learning the Bible necessitates disciplining our mind, body, and spirit. There is nothing Satan works against more than our quiet times of meditation with God, poring over His Word, taking notes, searching references, and committing verses and whole passages to memory.

Satan knows that if we have troubles and cares, Romans 8:28 and Philippians 4:6-7 will make a difference. He knows that if we memorize the "Romans Road" we just might lead someone to Christ!

He also knows that if we begin memorizing Scriptures such as Ephesians 6:10-18, we will be "on" to him and his work of discouragement. Count on it, Satan will do all he can to keep us from faithful attendance at church. He will do whatever it takes to keep us away from midweek services and Sunday school because they are Bible study and prayer times. Morning and evening messages from a Bible-preaching pastor are also too much of a threat to his program of destruction. Headache, baby's stuffy nose, misplaced car keys, lost shoes, a hosiery run—you name it—will be used to keep you from church.

Third, *live* the Word! Applying God's wonderful Word directly to the concerns and burdens of daily life is much like placing freshly trimmed flower stems in fresh water. James 4:7, 8 offers great advice: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you." You might call it "practicing the promises," or even better, "blooming for God"!

A simple prayer-goal of my heart which possibly would be of help to you is, "Lord, help me to so live in your Word that your Word will live in me." Wherever our little sphere of influence may be is the place where He has planted us, at least for today. In whatever place that is, there is an urgent need that we as daughters of the King of kings allow the "beauty of the Lord" (Psalm 90:17a) to be upon us and shine through us. If we

are daily withered and drooping, we have only ourselves to blame. We have forgotten to keep our stems in the water of the Word.

Psalm 119 is exciting to me because it *all* speaks of God's Word! Every verse mentions the judgments, testimonies, commandments, and law. In it God tells us to "run to" and "take heed to" His Word. We are told to "rejoice . . . meditate . . . delight" and "be established" in it. We are to "keep . . . seek . . . respect . . . learn . . . declare . . . fear . . . remember . . . talk . . . love . . . speak . . . observe . . . believe" and "give thanks" for it.

Verse 31 of this same wonderful Psalm brings a smile as David writes, "I have stuck unto thy testimonies." This is precisely what God would have us do, ladies. We must let the Word of God live in and through us so that His beautiful "bouquet of joy" can be ever seen and sensed by others. "Stick" by the Word of God! *Love it, learn it, live it!*

Leola Olney is a freelance writer living in Godfrey, Illinois, where her husband, Tom, serves as pastor of Faith Baptist Church.

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Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave. —Martin Luther

The least sin deserves infinite punishment because it is committed against an infinite God. —a Puritan

The nature of the gospel is that it divides. —Richard Owen Roberts

Tomb, thou shalt not hold him longer;  
Death is strong, but life is stronger;  
Faith and hope triumphant say,  
Christ will rise on Easter Day. —Philip Brooks

Calvary means "the place of a skull" and that is where our Lord is always crucified, in the culture and intellect of man. —Oswald Chambers

Much outcry, little outcome. —Aesop

Don't think there are no crocodiles because the water is calm. —Malayan proverb

A man's greatness can be measured by his enemy. —Unknown

We must do something about the cross, and one of two things only can we do—flee it or die upon it. —A. W. Tozer

Even when I was young, I suspected that much might be done in a better way. —Henry Ford Sr.

He that is down need fear no fall. —John Bunyan

Opportunities are seldom labeled. —Unknown

We are more sure to rise out of our graves than out of our beds. —Thomas Watson

The Easter bunny never rose again. —S. R. Christian

The gospel to me is simply irresistible. —Blaise Pascal

Even the woodpecker owes his success to the fact that he uses his head and keeps pecking away until he finished the job he starts. —Coleman Cox

Education is useless without the Bible. —Noah Webster

The reprover should have a lion's stout heart or he will not be faithful, and a lady's soft hand, or he is not likely to be successful. —George Swinnock

Oh, Sirs, deal with sin as sin, and speak of heaven and hell as they are, and not as if you were in jest. —Richard Baxter

Christianity begins where religion ends—with the resurrection of Christ. —Unknown

When the noble Christian and scientist Michael Faraday was dying, some journalists questioned him as to his speculations for a life after death. "Speculations!" said he. "I know nothing about speculations. I'm resting on certainties. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and because He lives, I shall live also." —*Gospel Trumpet*

Oh! How precious the dust of a believer! Though the world mind it not, yet it is precious unto God. The husbandman has some corn in his barn, and he has other corn in the ground; and the corn that is in the ground is as precious to him as that which is in the barn. —Thomas Watson

We are passive *in* our regeneration, but we are not to be passive *about* our regeneration. —John Duncan



*"... I'm getting a pulse ..."*

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.



# CHALLENGES FACING FUNDAMENTALISM

**I**t was said that Rip Van Winkle slept through the American Revolution. Today we face a cultural crisis that began in the last few decades of the 20th century and will probably continue unabated into the new millennium. The Church is not exempt from this. In spite of surface appearances—Christian bookstores and television stations, megachurches (often filled with people from other churches who are attracted by the glitz and glamour of size), and religious statements made by aspiring officeholders in the political realm—Christianity has been largely marginalized by a secular culture.

In the Chinese language, the idea of crisis is communicated by combining the two characters for “danger” and “opportunity.” The first-century world into which Christianity was born was also in crisis. In fact, of all the generations since the first, the present century is perhaps the greatest parallel. If a group that committed themselves to follow Christ after the advent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost could make such an impact on their culture, this could be Fundamentalism’s greatest challenge and opportunity.

The cry of the Psalmist is relevant today: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do” (Ps. 11:3)? Our reaction to the current crisis must be neither isolation and alienation nor syncretism and unfaithfulness, but a faithful proclamation of the gospel message that interacts with, and impacts, the world about us.

To accomplish this, we must recognize root problems rather than surface symptoms. In a day of complex issues, we need leaders like the children of Issachar who “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chron. 12:32). Not only is the outer fabric of society being frayed by issues such as the acceptance of abortion and homosexuality, but an entire worldview of meanings and values has changed in the last few decades.

In the 1700s a movement known as the Enlightenment arose in Europe which placed human reason above divine revelation. The full impact of this was not felt in the United States until the 1850s when it challenged what has been called the “Christian” century. Much of the religious world attempted to integrate Christianity with this new movement but wound up “giving away the country store.” By the turn of the 20th century, that integration had produced a modernism which Fundamentalists saw as no more Christian than any of the world religions. One of the responses to this was the publication of *The Fundamentals* (1910), a series of apologetic essays to counter modernism.

Apologetics is still needed, but the battle lines have changed. Today we deal with a postmodernism that denies

the possibility of objective truth and treats all values as relative. Modernism affirmed the reality of truth but did not believe that it was found in traditional Christianity. Postmodernism denies the reality of absolute or objective truth altogether—a philosophy that has influenced every phase of society, including art, architecture, music, law, economics, and religion.

While still in the process of development, certain characteristics of a postmodern society have emerged: (1) a search for spirituality that will put meaning in life, although this is rarely sought in the Christian faith or the Bible; (2) a tendency to view the person as an integrated whole rather than as a conjunction of soul and body; (3) a longing for genuine community since truth is not only defined by the individual but by the community of which he is a part; and (4) a belief that since truth is not objective, no religion can claim to have exclusivity of truth; therefore, postmodernism is syncretistic. This is the generation in which we are called to live and minister. To make an impact upon this postmodern generation, Fundamentalists must consider several propositions.

## *Communicating with Our Culture While Avoiding Compromise and Contamination of Our Message and Mission.*

Every generation must “translate” the gospel message in its cultural context without transforming the message. Trying to move into culture and make the message palatable, the New Evangelical has often blunted and distorted the gospel. The Fundamentalist moves into his culture with certain non-negotiables: God has revealed Himself propositionally in the Scriptures and definitively in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

As we approach society, however, it is imperative that we come with the essentials of the Christian faith but without the baggage of culturally conditioned views and personal preferences not clearly delineated in Scripture. The national on the mission field was correct when he said to the Western missionary: “You bring us the potted plant. Just bring us the gospel seed and let us plant it in our culture.” The Pharisees took God’s laws and, in an attempt to be faithful in implementing them, produced a complex moral code that multiplied God’s commandments many times over (artificially designating, for instance, the length of a Sabbath day’s journey and prohibiting the eating of an egg laid on the Sabbath since work was involved in producing it). This over-interpretation insulated them from the very people they needed to reach. While recognizing the depravity of the human mind (Rom. 8:7) and the necessity of the illuminating power of the





# MILLENNIUM IN THE NEW

James E. Singleton

Holy Spirit (John 16:7–11), it is still necessary that the gospel be presented minus the trappings of our subcultures.

Having reduced the gospel to its essential message, we must then move out of our subcultures. Individuals create a subculture in order to gain significance. Christians do not need subcultures since we get our significance in who we are and what we have in Christ. Nevertheless, believers sometimes construct subcultures that isolate and alienate us from others. We have our “Christian” bowling leagues and golf tournaments. Even Christian schools often become a subculture and isolate our students from invading other cultures. The purpose of Christian education is to prepare us to invade other subcultures to make an impact for Christ. A father who homeschooled his children recently said with great delight, “My children do not have a friend who is not a Christian.” Granted, we have to fortify ourselves, but the Christian is to reach out to the unbeliever. The simple fact is that most believers have few healthy relationships with unbelievers except the occasional contact in a place of business. Christ invaded the pagan subcultures of his day. In fact, this was the religious crowd’s chief criticism of Him—that He actually ate with publicans and sinners. How awful!

This approach treats evangelism as both an event and a process. The key to evangelism in the early church was the invasion of other subcultures. The early church used these interlocking spheres of kinship, community, and association as the “internet” for communicating the gospel. The challenge today is to get to know people intimately and communicate to them the essentials of the gospel message.

### *Balancing Academic Theology with Commitment and Obedience.*

While there is need for intellectual preparation for the ministry, the deepest need is a profound spiritual preparation. When William Wilberforce opened Cuddesden College in 1854, he wrote: “Threefold aspect of resident here: 1. Devotion; 2. Parochial Work; and 3. Theological Readings.” In other words, there must be a training of the heart, hands and head; there must be devotional, practical and intellectual training.

Paul reminds us of the dangers of the mere intellectual apprehension of the truth when he warns the Corinthians that “knowledge puffeth up” (1 Cor. 8:1). What kind of knowledge does this? The knowledge that does not relate itself to God. Our study of Hebrew should not stop with a philological interest in a word; it is a word in God’s Word that relates to us something about God. All of our studies should be pursued with minds in humble submission to what the

Spirit of God says through the Scriptures and its application in our lives. In our training institutions, orthodoxy should breed orthopraxy. Every student should leave the fundamental college or seminary knowing God better, loving Him more, and obeying Him more devotedly.

### *Developing Unity Without Negating a True Biblical Separation*

Being a true Fundamentalist necessitates an active Christian separation. After fighting modernism within the denominations and losing battles, the early Fundamentalists withdrew and formed their own churches, publishing houses, and schools. A Fundamentalist does not simply affirm five fundamentals of the faith, but actively builds fences around these so the enemy cannot dilute and eventually destroy the gospel message. This is the threat of ecumenical evangelism that seeks to bridge and blend all the shades on the theological spectrum in order to evangelize a community. Separation bears the same relationship to the body of truth as sanitation and sterilization to the surgeon. The purpose is to keep the patient from becoming contaminated. True Fundamentalism requires Biblical separation.

But the New Testament sounds another note—the harmony of unity. God creates this unity (1 Cor. 12:13), but we are called upon to “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). While Fundamentalists must guard against the influences of spiritual adultery (apostasy), twin emphases must be maintained in fine balance: (1) the purity of the visible church, and (2) a love and oneness among true believers in Christ. The challenge is to practice simultaneously orthodoxy of doctrine (which results in the purity of the visible church) and an orthodoxy of community. Only the love of God shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5) can keep the two in balance.

The history of Fundamentalism demonstrates that too often, after we have separated from the real enemies of the faith, we turn inward and begin to fight bitterly those within our camp who differ from us in matters that are not at the core of New Testament Christianity. Romanism has a teaching magisterium that authoritatively sets forth correct doctrines for all Roman Catholics. Fundamentalists have no magisterium when it comes to debatable matters of faith which do not bear on the essential core of the Christian message.

### *Promoting Genuine Christian Community*

Each person comes to Christ individually, but once he does God makes him part of a community. There is no place in Christianity for “Lone Ranger” Christians who live their



lives in isolation from the remainder of the community. A spirit of individualism is characteristic of our western world, fueled by our early frontier movement as well as the spirit of democracy. By contrast, Christ gathered together the 12 and then for more than three years lived in community with them where He modeled His teachings. So when the early church moved out from the day of Pentecost, they knew what to do. They gathered in the Temple area to hear the apostles speak but then met house-to-house to apply the teachings of Christ and minister to one another.

The church today is not structured for genuine community. In our services we pass others like ships in the night, never stopping long enough to find the needs of people and to minister to them. What we term ministry is often engagement with housekeeping matters, such as serving on committees, rather than ministering personally to one another in a spirit of love.

In order for there to be community and ministry, we must release what we term the "laity" for personal involvement in meaningful ministry. This was the secret of the rapid expansion of the early New Testament churches. The concept was largely lost by the substitution of a clergy-laity hierarchy—a dichotomy between clergy and laity in which the latter became objects of ministry rather than ministers, consumers rather than producers. While the concept of the priesthood of all believers was recovered at the time of the Protestant reformation, it is rarely fully implemented in our churches. The Reformation gave the Bible back to the people; today we need to give the ministry back to the people

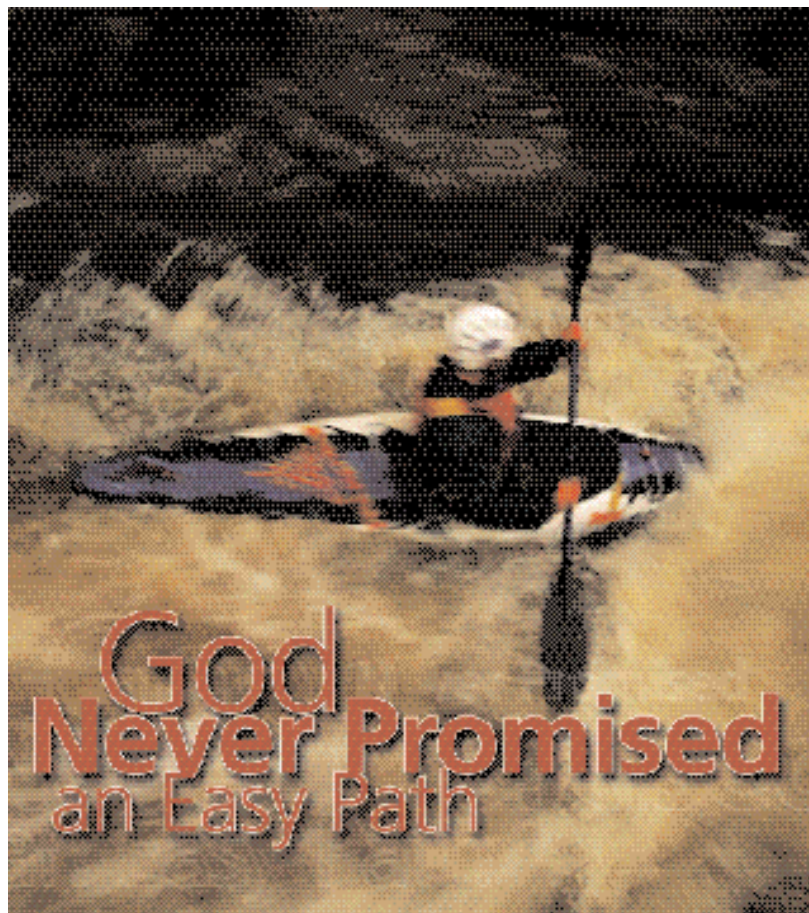
in a meaningful and significant way.

### *Encouraging an Authentic Spirituality*

Tired of trying to find satisfaction in material values, the postmoderns have turned to the spiritual aspect of life. The challenge in impacting our culture is to avoid both legalism and license, to produce a living orthodoxy. The danger is that we minimize the propositions of Scripture in an attempt to attain this spirituality. This is seen in the writings of Stanley Grenz (professor of theology and ethics at Carey Hall, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia) who, while not abandoning Scripture, tends to displace it communal Christian experience as the foundation of Christian authority. Authentic Christian spirituality is always based on the propositional truths of the Word of God.

Charles Dickens opened his *Tale of Two Cities* with profound simplicity: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Postmodernism has created unique challenges for Fundamentalism in the new millennium, but also great evangelistic opportunities. David's cry in Psalm 11, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" is answered in verse four where we find God's sovereignty, in verse two where we find God in control, and in verse one where we are told that God is with us. May God make this Fundamentalism's finest hour!

Dr. James E. Singleton is Pastor-at-Large of Tri-City Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona, and serves as the FBF Southeast Regional Moderator.



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## A Cry for Help

Phil Shuler

I am a second generation evangelist. My father, Dr. R. P. (Fighting Bob) Shuler, spent his early ministry in the field of evangelism before going into the pastorate. His father pastored throughout his life, but the generations before him were circuit riders, so evangelism is in my blood. I can remember, as a child, Dad allowing me to sit on the front row of our church each time the evangelist came. H. C. Morrison, John Brown, Harry VomBrook, Merv Rossell, Hyman Appleman, and many more who stood in Dad's pulpit fascinated me with their ability to get the message across! And though I sometimes struggled to stay awake when Dad preached, no one ever had to poke me awake during a revival meeting!

Dad's church was a large congregation in downtown Los Angeles. I do not remember small crowds. Revivals were usually packed out. My natural instinct when entering evangelism after graduating from Bob Jones University in 1950 was to go into citywide meetings. My brother, Jack, had great success in such meetings, and I traveled with him for two years to learn that field.

It was in my last revival with Jack, in the Del Mar Auditorium in Corpus Christi, Texas, that God laid his hand on me and changed my goals in life. Evangelism, yes; citywide, no! I had booked eight months of citywide meetings while traveling those two years with Jack, but God laid the small, struggling church on my heart. Jack put me in charge of the soul-winning tent that we had behind the big one, and I began to notice that more than 85 percent of all converts, when asked what church they would like to attend, chose the larger churches in their denomination—First Baptist, First Methodist, etc. The Lord impressed upon my heart the need of serving these smaller churches that were putting everything into the larger meeting and receiving no prospects out of their labors. Jack loaned me \$50, and I put that into phone calls to cancel almost all of my meetings.

My wife, Marie, and I prayed that God would show me a sign that giving a portion of my church revivals to smaller congregations was His will for my ministry. Two months later, I received a letter from Norm Sorrenson of the Federated Community Church in Pioche, Nevada.

He said that his church had voted 100 percent that I be their evangelist. I found out that the entire congregation consisted of eight; the pastor, his wife, his son, his daughter, the sheriff, the butcher, and two old maids!

The first night I preached to nine people, the ninth being the Mormon bishop in town. He asked me if it would bother me if he brought his youth group out each night. He said that because I played my guitar and sang. I was the only entertainment in town! I said, "Bring 'em on!" In that week of meetings, 24 Mormons were saved, mostly teenagers and women. I noted to the pastor that there were no Mormon men present during the meeting, and he told me they were out working the sheep.

I went from that meeting to Holtville, California, and in the middle of that meeting, Norm called me and asked us to come back the next week. The men who had been in the field with their sheep did not believe that Marie could play the organ and the piano at the same time! He informed me that 102 Mormon men had signed a petition stating that they would all be there Wednesday night. We came back and saw 21 of those men accept Christ! My love offering was 18 silver dollars, but God had answered my prayer!

From that meeting until this day we save 12 weeks each year for churches of fewer than 50 in membership. This ministry is funded mostly by the surplus from my love offerings in larger churches. Our ministry goals in small churches are: (1) establish tithing, (2) get the pastor a salary that he can live on, and (3) go after the unsaved! I exhort Christians to bring the unsaved and trust that God will give that pastor babes in Christ to raise.

Now, my cry for help! I can usually take only 12 of these meetings a year. We need more evangelists to catch the burden of evangelism in small churches. Most of the men who have been in this field for many years have integrated smaller churches into their schedule. But I would appeal to those who are in our Christian colleges who feel that God is calling them into evangelism to start their ministry with the little, struggling churches.

Dr. Phil Shuler is an evangelist based in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. You can contact him by sending e-mail to [philshuler@juno.com](mailto:philshuler@juno.com).

*We need more  
evangelists to  
catch the burden  
of evangelism in  
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God communicated Himself to man in order to reveal Himself, not veil Himself. Consequently, He gave His revelation in a variety of literary forms common to normal human communication.

Since God gave the Bible to reveal Himself to man, and since He gave it in customary literary forms, our approach to understanding the Bible should follow the same principles we use when we approach literature—a characteristically literal interpretation. Hermeneutics is all about the science and art of correctly understanding and accurately applying God's Word.

Two major keys we routinely apply in everyday interpretation are too frequently ignored in Biblical hermeneutics—*context* and *genre*. The previous column addressed the importance of context. Now we'll explore the variety of literary genres employed by the Holy Spirit and the important role genre plays in fully appreciating and properly handling God's Word.

### What Is Literature?

First things first. Literature is not merely the written communication of an act or truth or idea; a recipe is not literature. Nor is literature defined by length; a cookbook full of recipes is not literature. Nor is literature defined by lots of big fancy words; a dictionary is not literature.

"Great literature is that kind of writing which, in addition to whatever other purposes it may serve, is characterized by aesthetic and artistic qualities," writes Calvin Linton. "It is peculiarly fitting, therefore, that so much of God's Word to us should be beautiful as well as true—reminding us that God created man with the wonderful and mysterious"—and *unique*—"capability of responding with delight to beauty of many kinds," including literary beauty ("The Bible as Literature," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, I, 130–131).

The Bible is literature. It is not, as many have rightly observed, *merely* literature. But it unquestionably *is* literature. It is not merely a book, but a library of books. No one expects a library to be filled with only one kind of literature. Likewise, the Biblical library shelves a surprisingly wide variety of literary types, or genres.

### What Is Genre?

A literary genre simply refers to a type or style of literary communication. We are all familiar with many genres, and we understand instinctively that we do not handle or interpret them in the same way. We do not read a Shakespeare sonnet as we read a history textbook, nor approach a personal letter the same way we would a collection of pithy sayings. Similarly, different genres within the Bible require different approaches. When we fail to note the distinctive features of the genre we are in, misinterpretation can result. That is why genre is important to hermeneutics.

A first step to flawed hermeneutics (that is, mishandling the Bible) is the assumption that the Bible is a Systematic

Theology, a textbook of theology, a collection of sacred sayings and proof texts. When we use it that way, we reduce a God-given treasury of fine jewels and rare gems, vast in its variety and beauty, to a large box of very useful rocks. In the process, we often do violence to the text itself. God did not drop out of heaven a "book of sayings to live by." He sovereignly and wisely chose very human means through which to reveal Himself and in which to couch eternal truth. In terms of its *source*, the Bible is a *thoroughly divine* Book. In terms of its *form*, the Bible is a *profoundly human* book.

### Literary Similarity Between OT and NT

We tend to emphasize the theological dissimilarity between these two major divisions within our Bible. But consider the broad literary similarity between them.

Broadly speaking, God communicated the lion's share of His Old Testament revelation in two major literary forms: (1) Historical Narrative (Genesis-Esther), and (2) Prophetic Preaching (Isaiah-Malachi). It is worth pausing to note here that, in most cases, predicting future events occupies a relatively small proportion of the prophets; most of their ministry focused on preaching to God's people.

Likewise, God communicated the bulk of His New Testament revelation in two major literary forms: (1) Historical Narrative (Matthew-Acts), and (2) Prophetic Preaching (Romans-Revelation). Again, though we think primarily of Revelation when it comes to prophecy, many of the epistles are richly interspersed with prophetic material, even though their primary focus—like that of the OT prophets—is exhorting and instructing the people of God. The NT version of Prophetic Preaching takes the distinctive form of epistles, but their authors are the designated spokesmen of God addressing His people in very practical, down-to-earth, historically occasioned situations—just as the OT prophets were the designated spokesmen of God addressing His people in very practical, down-to-earth, historically occasioned situations.

### Variety of Genre in the Bible

The fascination and humanness of the Bible is magnified when one considers the variety of literary genres both within and in addition to these two major forms. Is it not a curious, intriguing, and delightful fact that God has chosen such a wide variety of human ways of communicating to us eternal truth?

In order to give His Word the widest possible appeal to the full range of human interests and conditions and situations, God employed nearly every available kind of literary genre: *narrative history, genealogy, chronicle, suspense, law, testimony, debate, poetry, proverb, philosophical treatise, love song, prophetic oracle, riddle, drama, novel, biography, autobiography, fiction (parable), discourse, personal letter, ecclesiastical epistle, sermon, theological treatise, allegory, hymn, creed, apocalypse*.

These are distinct genres with different characteristics that



## (PART 2): THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

often function in very different ways. Beyond the diversity of literary genre listed above, you also have countless figures of speech and a wide variety of literary devices to add even more color and texture to the final product.

Why would God employ such variety? These are devices and genres that we (and we *alone* of all creatures) have invented, precisely because we (and we *alone*) are replicas of God, fashioned in His own creative and imaginative image! He is the one who gave us the capacity to invent and understand and appreciate these literary genres and devices. And He has chosen to communicate Himself and His eternal truth to us in virtually every conceivable literary mode.

### Human Literature or Inspired Revelation?

The short answer to this question is a simple “yes.” As Fundamentalists, we are convinced on textual grounds of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit through human writers. That does not demand—and Scripture neither teaches nor evidences—a direct dictation theory of inspiration. The fact that a wide variety of human authors were “borne along” by the influence of the same Holy Spirit does not diminish the unique personality of the human instruments. Rather, it showcases their God-given individuality.

If all believers everywhere were equally sanctified and obedient, would that make us all identical? Hardly. If anything, it would only highlight our distinctiveness and uniqueness from one another even more! Being genuinely godly and Spirit-filled does not result in your being like everyone or anyone else, but in your being more fully everything that God has uniquely designed you to be as an individual member of the diverse Body of Christ. Any thoughtful comparison of the enormous variety displayed in the different books and genres of the Bible illustrate this same principle.

### How Should We Then Interpret?

The Bible evidences a beautiful creativity of expression and the adaptability of God’s truth to a variety of literary devices and genres. Reading the Bible for all its worth, therefore, demands of us as readers and interpreters that we read attentively with an awareness of these different genres, their distinctive characteristics, and their unique hermeneutical challenges.

How do these observations play out in handling specific literary genres within the Bible? Here are some keys to remember in approaching one specific and often challenging genre: historical narrative.

### Interpreting Historical Narrative

This genre constitutes the largest single segment of the Old Testament, though many other literary genres are folded into the large narrative sections of books such as Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles.

These narratives can be subdivided into two basic kinds of narratives: *event-oriented* stories and *person-oriented* stories. The two are frequently woven together. It is essential to remember, however, that *in all Biblical narrative, the real hero and central figure is not a human character—it is God*. He is always ultimately at the center of every narrative.

Classic examples of event-oriented narratives (such as the dividing of the Red Sea, the death of Ahab, Elijah on Mount Carmel, David and Goliath, or the confrontation between Hezekiah and Sennacherib) demonstrate that usually *the event itself is less significant than the theological point being made*. In each of these cases, the memorable event connected with each episode is recorded in only one or two brief verses.

The story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 is an excellent example. We all zoom in on the climax, even though it comprises less than four percent of the total narrative—only two verses out of 58. The climax itself is not the point of the narrative. How do you discover the point in narrative? Often by the *dialogue*. It is the conversations that reveal the motives and the real issues at stake. The slaying of a giant by a boy is no big deal for God to accomplish. It’s a very gratifying conclusion, but the event is not nearly as important as why and how the people in the story do what they do.

Hezekiah’s confrontation with Sennacherib is a similarly fascinating case-in-point (2 Kings 18:13–19:37; cf. Isa. 36–37). The talk goes on for two chapters, yet the final showdown culminates in a fleeting two verses (2 Kings 19:35–37). Never was a more unexpected and unimaginable miracle of intervention recorded in fewer words or a more matter-of-fact tone. The miracle itself is almost incidental to the narrative. The writer records the climax almost nonchalantly, as if to say; “By the way, this is what God did. You’re impressed? Are you surprised? That’s nothing. That’s a snap for God.” Granted, it’s the necessary capstone, but do you get the real point of the larger narrative? It’s to be found where the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to spend 57 out of 59 verses—the dialogue.

Other lengthy narratives, however, are more person-oriented. The story of Joseph is devoted to recounting Joseph’s experiences and observing Joseph’s actions and character, tracing his reactions and responses to outrageously unjust circumstances. In person-oriented narratives, dialogue is still important for determining God’s theological point. Another frequent element is the use of key words, phrases, or concepts. For example, dreams—God’s communication of His purposes to man—become a recurring literary focal point in the narrative.

Throughout the reading or teaching of any narrative story (or any other Bible passage), remember it is the Word of God. He is not only its Source, but its central Subject. The communication of His person and character is always the ultimate point of any story, the true aim of any passage.



## The Lighthouse Movement

Gerald K. Webber

I don't have the quote word-for-word, but I can at least attest to its dynamic equivalence. It's from the late Vance Havner, who said that the church has never been threatened as much by woodpeckers on the outside, as by termites on the inside. The problem with termites is they're so quiet and nice about it.

Could it be time to call the exterminator? Maybe. Be warned, however, that some of your friends and ministry acquaintances will not be thrilled to hear that something as "quiet and nice" as the Lighthouse Movement could be any kind of a threat.

The Lighthouse Movement seems to have great appeal. If Mission America, the program's parent, realizes its objective, 3,000,000 Christian homes will become places of prayer for the salvation of neighbors, as well as "lighthouses" to get the gospel to "every man, woman, and young person in America by the end of the year 2000." The goal is commendable, and the effort praiseworthy. If everything seems so right, what could possibly be wrong?

The official promotional materials (on the web site at [www.lighthousemovement.org](http://www.lighthousemovement.org)) declare, "When you join The Lighthouse Movement, you will be part of a nationwide network—people and organizations who, like you, are committed to be bright beacons, guiding others to Christ. Never before has there been such an opportunity for oneness within the body of Christ in this country" [emphasis added].

What kind of a "network" is this? "Oneness" with whom? The list goes 12 double-spaced pages, including more than 350 denominations and organizations. Here is a sampling of them: Assemblies of God, American Baptist Churches USA, Campus Crusade, Christian Reformed Church NA, Christianity Today, Church on the Way, International Pentecostal Church of Christ, Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference, Worldwide Church of God, AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, Navigators, Promise Keepers, U.S. Center for World Mission (Fuller), and Willow Creek Association.

I don't judge the motives and intents of these organizations and/or their leadership. No doubt many, if not most, sincerely see this as an effective means of getting the

gospel to the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time—a worthy objective. One has to wonder, however, which "gospel" is the source of the "oneness" referred to. Is it a gospel requiring tongues-speaking as a sign of authenticity? Is it a gospel mandating water baptism in order to be complete? Is it a diluted gospel acceptable to Roman Catholics and evangelicals alike? Is it a gospel available only to those in "covenant" relationship? Will this gospel require recipients to keep the law in order to be saved? In Galatians, Paul cites more than one kind of "gospel," but only one is genuine.

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One has to question the propriety of a true Biblical Fundamentalist "joining" that broad a movement. I cannot. My understanding of the Word restrains me. My separatist convictions constrain me. My heritage restricts me. None of my predecessors at Continental Baptist Missions would have given a moment's thought to such liaisons. Arthur Glen founded this mission in the 1940s because he couldn't remain in similar yokes. Fundamentalist forebears like R. V. Clearwaters and R. T. Ketchum paid too high a price for withdrawing from the doctrinal compromise of their day for me, their spiritual offspring, to dishonor them by returning to it now. It's hard to argue the truth of one of the sayings of Bob Jones Sr.: It is never right to

do wrong in order to get a chance to do right.

Pastor, missionary: what if your people want to get involved in praying for their neighbors and being gospel "lighthouses"? Just encourage them to do it—all by themselves! This program is as simple as they come, and there is no copyright on the idea. Design your own alternative and give it its own name (anything but Lighthouse Movement). Get your people praying and witnessing, and watch God save their neighbors. You don't need the Lighthouse Movement. After all, movements don't win people—people win people.

It can be exciting to be part of something really big. Exciting, but unnecessary. Remember Gideon. Do the right thing in the right way, and let God be responsible for the results.

Dr. Gerald K. Webber is president of Continental Baptist Missions in Comstock Park, Michigan.



## Exxon/Mobil Rejects "Domestic Partner" Benefits

At their annual meeting last May, more than 94 percent of Exxon's shareholders rejected a measure that would have extended benefits to the domestic partners of homosexual employees. Mobil decided to drop the plan after the two oil companies merged in December. In April of 1998, a letter sent to Mobil and signed by leaders of a coalition of family groups representing 25 million Christian conservatives asked that same-sex partner benefits be discontinued. (AFA 12/9/99)

## Evidence of "Catastrophic Flood"

A front-page story in the *Washington Post* November 18, 1999, cites the discovery of "dramatic new evidence of a sudden, catastrophic flood around 7,500 years ago—the possible source of the Old Testament story of Noah." An undisturbed coastline 550 feet deep in the Black Sea was discovered by explorer Robert D. Ballard, the *Post* recounted, and scientists have determined that "freshwater mollusks subsequently dredged from the ancient beach date back 7,500 years." (Baptist Press, 11/18/99)

## Religious Leaders Endorse Homosexual Unions

More than 850 religious leaders have endorsed a

declaration sponsored by the country's primary sex-education organization calling for same-sex unions, ordination of homosexuals, and abortion rights. Unsurprisingly, leaders from liberal religious groups dominate the endorsement list, which contains a large number of Unitarian Universalists, mainline Protestant ministers, and Jewish rabbis. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 1/23/2000)

## Child Molester Uses Library Computers to Find Victims

According to the *L. A. Times* online news wire, registered sex offender Jack Hornbeck, 46, was sentenced to 3 years and 8 months in prison for trafficking in child pornography and arranging to have sex with children. Hornbeck used the library computers at the Los Angeles Central Library to commit the crimes, which are felonies. (AFA 1/21/2000)

## House Subcommittee OKs Ban on Internet Gambling

A House of Representatives subcommittee has approved legislation outlawing gambling on the Internet. The subcommittee voted 5-3 November 3 in favor of the Internet Gambling Prohibition Act. It appears the full committee, however, will not take up the bill until sometime this year. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 11/8/99)

## Liberals Exhibit Religious Intolerance

Washington Democrat congressman Jim McDermott threw himself into the recent controversy over Southern Baptist prayer guides for the conversion of Hindus, and he even put the weight of his congressional office behind his mission. In an October 28, 1999, "Dear Colleague" letter distributed to all 434 of his fellow House members, McDermott charged Southern Baptists with "an aggressive, intolerant approach" and "an intolerant view that has inflamed Hindu communities worldwide." Mr. McDermott's letter, sent on official congressional stationery, called on fellow House members to join his effort to urge Southern Baptists to "end your conversion campaign directed to members of the Hindu faith." On November 5, the congressman sent another letter, signed by six other members of Congress, to Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, saying, "We cannot understand how men and women, raised and educated in the world's bastion of religious freedom and tolerance, can characterize another religion as spiritually dark and false." Mr. McDermott is a 1958 graduate of Wheaton College. (*World*, 12/18/99) Two Southern Baptist congressmen have demanded the resignation of presidential press secretary Joe

Lockhart. Reps. J. C. Watts and J. D. Hayworth were incensed by Lockhart's suggestion that Southern Baptist efforts to reach Hindus, Jews, and Muslims "perpetuate religious hatred." (*What in the World*, Vol. 27 No. 2)

## Problems in Mormon Country

Mormon media ad campaigns promise better lives, yet in Utah, where 70 percent of the population and 95 percent of legislators are Mormon, suicide rates are surpassed only by Nevada among the elderly and only by Minnesota among youth. Four hundred locations in Salt Lake County openly sell drugs. The murder rate for children is five times higher than the national average. Fifty percent of Utah's births are to teen girls, and seven out of ten are illegitimate. Salt Lake County's divorce rate is almost 50 percent higher than the national average. (*Baptist Bulletin*, November 1999)

## Great Britain's Clergy in Spiritual Darkness

More than 97 percent of church leaders responding to a survey in Great Britain say they do not believe in the literal Biblical account of Creation, while 25 percent do not believe Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. The BBC radio survey received responses from 103 church leaders and did not claim to be scientific. (*What in the World*, Vol. 27 No. 2)

## **Egyptian Officials Investigate Attacks on Christians**

Investigators from the state security prosecutor's office in Cairo have begun official inquiries in Al Kosheh, where at least 20 Christians were killed in the worst sectarian violence to hit Egypt in two decades. According to media reports, the violence that began on New Year's Eve resulted from a financial dispute between a Muslim and a Christian shopkeeper in the village. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 1/7/2000)

## **Loggers Sue Environmentalists on Church-State Grounds**

A group of 125 Minnesota logging companies filed suit against two environmental groups and the U. S. Forest Service. The groups' philosophy of "deep ecology," loggers say, is "a religious belief that man should not harvest timber—that it is something sacred." "It's an earth-centered religion," said Larry Jones, executive director of the Associated Contract Loggers. "They believe trees and man are equal." The loggers charge that the Forest Service violated the First Amendment by favoring the "religious" groups. (*Christian News*, 1/3/2000)

## **Amazon.com Pulls "Kiddie Porn" Book**

Amazon.com will no longer sell or stock *Varieties of Man/Boy Love: Modern Western Contexts*, a book that promotes pedophilia. Amazon.com's spokesman claimed that the company was originally not aware of the book's content. (Baptist Press, 1/19/2000)

## **NOTABLE QUOTES**

**A**mongst the Heathen, in the New Hebrides, woman is the down-trodden slave of man. She is kept working hard, and bears all the heavier burdens, while he walks by her side with musket, club, or spear. If she offends him, he beats or abuses her at will. . . . Oh, how sad and degraded is the position of Woman, where the teaching of Christ is unknown, or disregarded though known. It is the Christ of the Bible, it is His Spirit entering into Humanity, that has lifted Woman, and made her the helpmate and friend of Man, not his toy or slave.—John G. Paton, 19th-century missionary to cannibals

**S**omewhere along the line, the feminist criticism of patriarchal institutions derailed into a real, visceral, and frightening antagonism toward men and a consequent intolerance toward women who insist on associating with them.—feminist Daphne Patai, author of *Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment the Future of Feminism* and a professor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst

**F**or who doth not perceive that when those that sit aloft [in positions of high authority] are vile and corrupt themselves, they corrupt the whole region and country where they are?—John Bunyan's *Holy War*

**M**y responsibility is to preach the gospel to everyone and let them choose their own church, whether it is Catholic or Protestant or Orthodox or whatever it is. And to me that's between an individual and a church and God.—Billy Graham, in an interview with religion writer Patricia Rice, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 10, 1999

**W**hen men are self-conceited enough to believe themselves infallible in judgment, and take their own opinions for tests of orthodoxy, they conclude they are doing God service, in vindicating His truth; while they are only contending for their particular tenets. By this gross mistake, the Christian world is filled with polemical divinity.—Baptist pastor John Leland (1754–1841)

**T**ruth mixed with error is equivalent to all error, except that it is more innocent-looking and, therefore, more dangerous. God hates such a mixture! Any error, or any truth-and-error mixture, calls for definite exposure and repudiation. To condone such is to be unfaithful to God and His Word and treacherous to imperiled souls for whom Christ died.—H. A. Ironside

## **Indonesian Muslims Call for "Holy War" Against Christians**

Tens of thousands of Indonesian Muslims demonstrated in Jakarta in early January, calling for jihad (holy war) against Christians. Clashes between minority Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas (Moluku) islands have cost thousands of lives since the beginning of last year. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 1/10/2000)

## **TV + TBN = Resurrection?**

On Trinity Broadcasting Network's "Praise the Lord" program, October 19, 1999, Benny Hinn told Paul Crouch that the time is coming in which thousands of dead will be raised when their bodies are put in front of television sets while TBN is broadcasting. Said Hinn: "It's going to be so awesome . . . that people around the world—maybe not so much in America—people around the world who will lose loved ones, will say to undertakers, 'Not yet. I want to take my dead loved one and place him in front of that TV set for 24 hours.' . . . People are going to be canceling funeral services and bringing their dead in their caskets, placing them . . . before a television set, waiting for God's power to come through and touch them. And it's going to happen . . . so much it's going to spread. You're going to hear it from Kenya to Mexico to Europe to South America, where people will be raised from the dead. So much so that the word will spread that if some dead person be put in front of this TV screen, they will be raised from the dead and they will be by the thou-



sands. . . ." (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, 12/2/99)

### **Tipper Gore Apologizes**

Tipper Gore, wife of Al Gore, has apologized to West Coast entertainment executives for her crusade a decade ago to require warning labels on raunchy rock records. Al Gore raised more funds from the entertainment industry last year than any other presidential candidate. (*Baptist Bulletin*, December 1999)

### **Spanking Banned in South Africa**

On August 4, the High Court in Port Elizabeth upheld a ban on the use of spanking in private Christian schools. Rejecting arguments from the book of Proverbs which requires spanking, the judge said, "After a few thousand years of development of civilisation, the guidelines to parents found in certain bibli-

cal passages are no longer appropriate nor do they form part of Christian religious doctrine." (Ecumenical News International, 8/9/99)

### **The Episcopal Plan to Exalt Homosexuality**

An Episcopalian bishop has proposed a plan that gives homosexuals civil rights status. The plan, called the Cambridge Accord, was authored by Bishop Steven Charleston, president of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It has been sent to the 800 Anglican bishops around the world, and 35 of them have already expressed support. These include bishops from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Scotland, Ireland, Honduras, and Brazil. Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, while not specifically signing on to the Cambridge Accord, stated

recently that "there should be no debate among us about human rights for all people." He was referring to homosexuals. (Ecumenical News International, 10/11/99)

### **Methodists Threaten Boy Scouts**

The United Methodist Board of Church and Society has called for the Boy Scouts of America to end its policy of excluding homosexuals from its ranks. Otherwise, the social action agency of the 8.2-million-member denomination implied, Methodists should consider ending ties to Scouting. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 10/18/99)

### **Anglicans and Lutherans Approve "Full Communion"**

Anglicans and Lutherans in Canada have approved plans to achieve "full communion" in the year 2001. The Anglican Church of Canada approved the plan in 1998,

and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in July 1999. The plan is called the "Waterloo Declaration." "Full Communion" is not a merger of the two denominations, but means they will recognize each other's ministries as interchangeable. (Ecumenical News International, 10/12/99)

### **Saudi Arabia Police Raid Christian Worship Service**

Saudi Arabia's vigilante religious police raided a private Christian worship service in Riyadh on January 7, arresting 15 of the estimated 100 persons gathered in the private home, including the small children of two families. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 1/10/2000)

This news is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship.

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## “Just Like He Loves Us”

**F**rontline is often called a magazine for preachers, but it is more than that; it is for all Bible-believers. This issue offers a number of articles about and for Christian women. In deference to women this column addresses one of the most important things a Christian husband can hear: the importance of loving the woman God has given him. It might be possible to hear a message on Ephesians 5:25–32 every Sunday and come under conviction every time. Probably no other area of a man’s life is more likely to reveal his failure in Christlikeness than this one—loving his wife as Christ loves him.

Hardly a week goes by that we don’t read somewhere that someone’s anger is rooted in a poor self-image. “You can’t love others until you learn to love yourself” the self-styled psychologist assures. Really? Did Christ really say that in Matthew 22:39? Of course not. The commentary on His statement is in Ephesians 5:29–30, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Christ was not telling us we can’t love others until we love ourselves, but that we should love others as we love ourselves. In fact, He said, “He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (vs. 28b).

Nor did He promote the selfish, demanding arrogance of carnal self-love condemned in Scripture.<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that men should love others with the same tender care they show their own bodies. I heard a

statement of affection recently that makes the point well. At the beginning of a service I was sitting on the platform with a dear friend of many years. My wife has not been well this past year, and he commented on how nice she looked. I agreed and commented that the years had been good to him and his wife. He said of his own wife, “I think she grows more lovely every year,” then added, “I know they seem prettier as our love grows, but I think our love really does make them prettier.” He is a wise man.

Paul would agree. His whole point is that the sanctifying grace of Christ’s love for the church, through which he “present(s) it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or

any such thing,” is the standard by which a husband’s love is gauged. Jay Adams makes the application more directly, “Where there is no love in a home, it is the husband’s fault.”<sup>2</sup> Thankfully, there are some men who love their wives in a Christlike way from the very beginning and grow more Christlike over the years. Others live like the sons of Adam they are, offering as their first line of defense for every failure, “the woman thou gavest me. . . .”

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if every married man would focus more on the undeserved love his Lord bestows on him instead of what he considers the undeserved love his wife needs from him? Among the many reasons God hates

divorce are the lessons of Hosea unlearned by those who selfishly walk away. No doubt there are self-centered women—sadly some of them profess Christianity—but it is probable that any Christian woman who would pick up this magazine and read it is the kind of woman who would respond Biblically to Biblical love from her husband. It is more likely for a godly woman to be married to a boor than for a godly man to have to live with a fishwife. What is so heartbreaking in Bible-believing churches is not that God does, indeed, require husbands to follow Hosea in loving an unlovely woman, but that so many husbands take for granted their truly lovable wives.

Even the logic of loving your wife for practical reasons can degenerate into selfishness. It is possible for a man to be faithful, tolerant, and civil in order to safeguard the ministry he loves more than her. The fact that a wife needs and deserves love from her husband is reason enough to give it, but even then it can be a sacrifice instead of the spiritual fruit of obedience to Christ. Christ did not tell us “act like you love your wife.” He commanded us, “husbands, love your wives.” How? Just like He loves us.

<sup>1</sup>Ed Bulkley, author of *Why Christians Can’t Trust Psychology*, asserts that “the genesis and taproot of sin is self” (p. 246). His explanation

points out that Isaiah 14 records the story of Satan’s fall through self-love; he shows that the classic passage abused to justify the need for self-love (Matt. 22:36–40) does not command self-love, it assumes it; he further demonstrates the primacy of self-denial as Paul taught in Philippians 2.

<sup>2</sup>Adams, Jay E., *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973. p. 152.

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DR. JOHN C. VAUGHN



# What's on the Web

Bob Whitmore

I love to get things for free. If you do too, you'll be interested in the sites we'll consider this issue. First, check out the Ages Software, Inc., web site ([www.ageslibrary.com](http://www.ageslibrary.com)). The purpose of this site is to sell the company's software, but you can download a free demo! Unlike many other demos, this freebie is actually useful. In addition to the King James Bible, the demo contains *Vincent's New Testament Word Studies* (Vols. 3 and 4); Luther's 95 theses; *Prevailing Prayer* by Dwight L. Moody; and *Biography of John Wesley* by B. Dobree.

The next site we'll consider is one of those mega sites—one where you can spend many hours or even days. The Ecolé Initiative ([www2.evansville.edu/ecoleweb](http://www2.evansville.edu/ecoleweb)) is a "hypertext encyclopedia of early church history." It consists of five sections—Documents (translations of Judeo-Christian and Islamic primary sources to 1500), Glossary (short essays on numerous topics), Articles (long essays on major topics and figures), Images (Judeo-Christian iconography and religious art), and Chronology (a timeline with geographical cross-index). The Glossary alone contains more than 500 short articles of 100–200 words, mostly about historical figures—Nestorius, Origen, Polycarp. Any lover of church history will devour these short biographies. The Images section contains hundreds of .jpg files of religious paintings and icons. Art lovers could spend a considerable amount of time viewing these beautiful works. The Chronology page contains a map of Europe and the Middle East. Clicking on any country will produce an extensive chronological list of events, persons, and places pertinent to early church history. All sections are fully searchable for ease

in finding specific topics.

In addition to the encyclopedia itself, the site has an extensive list of links, among them links to sites such as the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit (Library of Congress) and Diocletian's Palace at Split. The Ecolé Initiative is truly an interesting and noteworthy web site.

Another organization dealing with historical works is the Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., "a non-profit, tax-exempt, charitable organization established to reprint and distribute again some of the more rare, conservative, evangelical Christian books that were first published 1600–1900." After arriving at [www.standardbearer.com](http://www.standardbearer.com), I counted 78 titles listed under headings such as The Baptist Commentary Series, The Baptist Biography Series, The Baptist Distinctives Series, etc. Among the authors are John A. Broadus, B. H. Carroll, John Gill, William Cathcart, and Isaac Backus. There is also planned a section containing free (there's that word again!) materials consisting of historical sermons and essays.

The last web site we'll consider is <http://unbound.biola.edu>, the Unbound Bible site. In addition to useful study tools such as *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, *Nave's Topical Bible*, and *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, the site contains downloadable Russian and Hebrew fonts. Or you can download a Greek or Hebrew text, and even the Latin Vulgate. A Greek lexical parser is useful to those of us whose Greek is rusty (or perhaps I should say those of us who struggled with it 25 years ago!). Also downloadable are Bibles or parts of the Bible in about 30 languages, from Albanian to Tagalog. Oh, and did I mention that all of these downloads are free?



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## Enough is Enough!

**D. A. Stertzbach**

think it is high time that our fundamental Baptist pastors say, "Enough is enough!" The confrontation that some education institutions have over the versions of the Bible is affecting every local church to its core. Brethren, these things ought not to be! Every ministry, whether it is a church, a Christian school, a Bible college, or a seminary, has a right and a responsibility to have its own definitive position on the Biblical issues of inerrancy, infallibility, preservation, and ultimately preferred versions of the Bible. But the current controversy has gone beyond that and is taking a great toll on our movement and on the cause of Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church "that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:25-26). Although this is written to the local church, its application certainly extends to the body of Christ and to believers who are brethren and family members in general. In my opinion it is high time that pastors take their rightful positions, and that churches tell our educational institutions that they are not in control of our movement.

The Biblical mandate and authority is with the local church and not our educational institutions, as fine as they may be. I love them all and have young people in many of them, but I am weary of the video tapes, the public denunciations, the open letters, and the general ongoing critical spirit that is not only un-Biblical but in some

cases unethical.

I want to be clear. I am not speaking to one side of the version issue or the other. I love people on both sides. And the problem does not just involve one or two schools—it has permeated several different areas of Fundamentalism and is tearing apart both fellowships of individuals and associations of churches.

Pastors, I think that we should join in saying, "Enough is enough! I am not going to allow a school to be represented in my church that continues in these un-Biblical actions. We will not invite college representatives or ensembles, or display promotional materials, from a Christian college that displays an un-Biblical, unethical, and unspiritual attitude toward other fundamental institutions." If that means that we need to start local church Bible institutes, then so be it. If that means we need to pull away from a certain institution, even if it is our alma mater, then so be it. But we must be men of God like the prophets of old, who pointed their fingers at sin, called it what it was, and said, "Stop!"

We preach that it is important for our people to be in harmony with one another in our local churches. A critical spirit is not allowed to run rampant in our churches, so why do we allow it among certain Fundamentalist leaders and institutions? Let's put an end to the hostility, public name-calling, critical spirit, and hidden agendas. Enough is enough!

Dr. D. A. Stertzbach is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Williston, Vermont, and serves on the FBF Cooperating Board.

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