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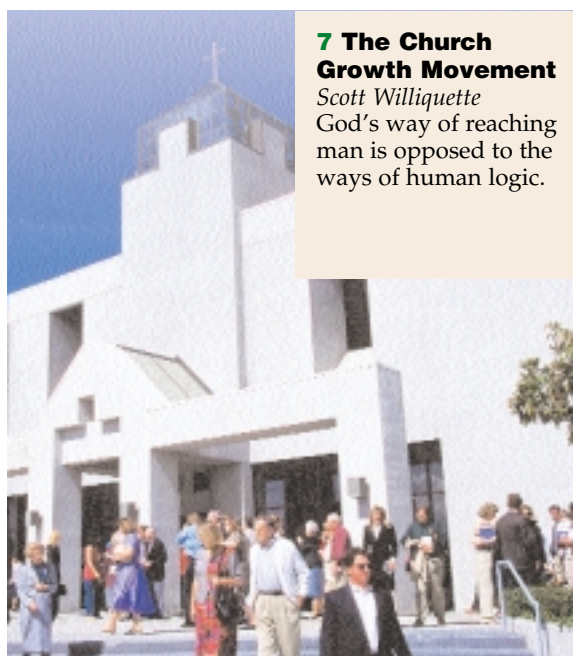
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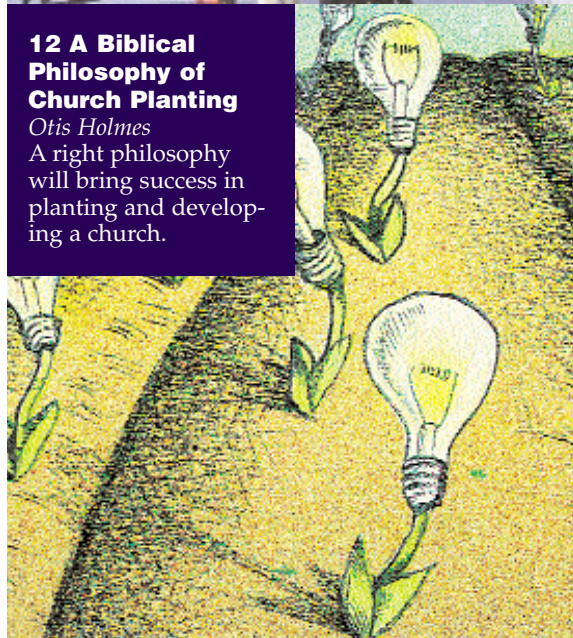
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I can't tell you how much I'm enjoying *Frontline*. Praise God, you "dare to be a Daniel." . . . Of particular interest in the Jan./Feb. issue were the articles "Kindling to Stoke a Burning Heart" (Dr. Mark Minnick) and "Barkless Dogs" (Dr. Phil Shuler).

Robert W. Browne
Georgiana, AL

I enjoy reading the magazine even more than looking at the pictures and advertisements—the whole is very nice. . . . I wouldn't know how to make it a better magazine, other than to continue praying for its usefulness.

Name Withheld
Waupun Correctional
Institute
Waupun, WI

As soon as I can find someone among my friends who doesn't already subscribe to *Frontline* I will be sending in a gift subscription for him. I love *Frontline*. I guess it is the only magazine I read cover to cover. Keep up the great work!

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Shannon, IL

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Thank you for all your work in putting out a quality Christian magazine!

Annie Johnson
Normalville, PA

Keep up the good work of informing about our Fundamentalist people and issues.

Rolland D. McCune
rmccune@dbts.edu

I just want to thank you for having such an encouraging web page. From time to time I go to your page just to read a sermon and be encouraged by other men fighting the same battle.

Pastor Scott Button
scotttb@worldpath.net

I have received *Frontline* since its beginning and look forward to every copy. Thank you for your hard work and excellent magazine.

Pastor Ken Foster
Antioch, IL

Let me tell you that you have wonderful magazine. God has helped me a lot [through *Frontline*].

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Hato Mayor,
Dominican Republic

So glad there are a few excellent magazines that will still print the Scriptural truth. Keep at it!

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I eagerly look forward to your magazine. The words have enriched my spirit. Thank you.

Mrs. Betty Wright
Fremont, MI

I like this magazine very much. There are many good articles and blessings and helps in these stories.

Tom Gardner
Isanti, MN

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Roman Catholicism: The Seduction Continues

Several months ago an associate and I attended a function held at Pat Robertson's [CBN/700 Club founder] Conference Center in Virginia Beach. In the course of conversation my friend asked me, "How does it feel to be in the bedroom of the whore?"

"I beg your pardon?" I asked, flabbergasted.

"Yes, that's what I call this place—the bedroom of the whore. You know, the Mother of Harlots in Revelation 17. The bedroom is where the seduction takes place and the liaisons are forged."

The seduction continues and liaisons are indeed being forged between those whom many Christians would suspect of being at least nominal Fundamentalists. This "Mother of Harlots"—the one-world religious system which will be used by the Antichrist to bring his quest for world dominance to fruition—is historically interpreted to be the global political/economic/religious system known as Roman Catholicism. Let's examine the method and some victims of her seduction:

Pat Robertson, ordained as a Southern Baptist minister in 1960 at Norfolk's Freemason Street Baptist Church, came to Virginia Beach several years ago as one of the early "televangelists." In addition to his broadcast empire, he led a movement for conservatism in political circles, the Christian Coalition, and eventually sought the Republican nomination for President. In

1988 (the year he ran for President) he formally resigned his ordination vows and asked not to be called "Reverend Pat Robertson." Though technically still a member of the Freemason Street [SBC] Baptist Church, he has been inactive for years, according to a church spokesman.

Robertson has become an icon for the ecumenical movement through a number of different venues.

He is well-known for his influence and endorsement of Evangelicals & Catholics Together (ECT), an ecumenical initiative jointly drafted primarily by Chuck Colson and Bishop Richard John Neuhaus (Archdiocese of New York). The ECT movement quickly became a spawning ground for ecumenism as Protestants, seeking

Rome's acceptance, found a means to embrace the "common elements" of each other's respective faith.

In an attempt to appeal politically to Roman Catholics, Robertson founded the Catholic Alliance, a grass roots organization similar to his Christian Coalition. However, many Catholics were uneasy about becoming identified with Robertson, and the organization folded.

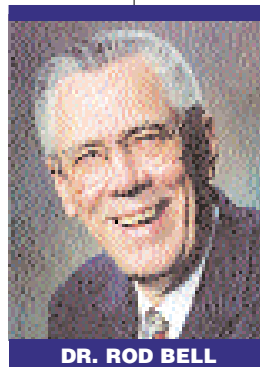
Robertson makes no pretense about courting the Church of Rome. In 1995 during the Pope's visit to New York, it was Robertson who led an ecumenical procession (consisting of five Muslim leaders and 27 Protestant and Orthodox

representatives) to the papal altar to participate in the Mass. The *New York Times* quoted Robertson: "We all admire the Holy Father tremendously. We all want to build bridges with the Catholic Church."

At Regent University, where Robertson is the chancellor, Roman Catholic mass is said on campus every week. A frequent leader of special masses is Bishop Walter Sullivan, head of the Richmond Diocese, whose motto is "To Unite All in Christ." (Of course, this "unity" only includes those who promote the one-world church. Bishop Sullivan's message when he spoke in Virginia Beach a few years ago at the Elizabeth River [SBC] Baptist Church was entitled "Rod Bell, the Bigot.") To this end he serves as the Bishop-President of Pax Christi USA (the national Catholic peace movement) and is outspoken regarding his support for ordination of homosexuals. Regent University's president is a Roman Catholic, as are several professors, including one who teaches a course on Catholic doctrine in Regent's Divinity School. During the recent media attack against Bob Jones University, Regent's administration was quick to distance itself, boasting that "Catholics have a place at Regent."

A few weeks ago, as part of his 70th birthday celebration, Pat Robertson "reaffirmed" the ordination vows he resigned in 1988. Six clergy representing various denominations and charismatic organizations presided over the ceremony. He was also feted by a gala birthday party in Washington, sponsored by several politicians and, notably, Jerry Falwell, who appears to be following the same

Robertson has become an icon for the ecumenical movement through a number of different venues.



DR. ROD BELL

path as Robertson. Though not embracing (as yet) the Roman system to the extent Robertson has, Falwell's Liberty University president is also a Roman Catholic who, when asked about evidence documenting his close affiliation with Rome, chose to evade the question. [See "Behind the Lines," *Frontline*, November/December 1998.] Liberty's football coach is also a Roman Catholic.

Seduction is usually accomplished incrementally. "Small talk" about things in common, reassurances of respect, and innocent motives serve to lower one's resistance. But ultimately, the violation of God's command to purity occurs. "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness" (Prov. 30:20).

As we approach the end of the age, let us beware of the Mother of Harlots' seductive charms. "... Her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell" (Prov. 5:3-5).

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The Church Growth Movement

by Scott Williquette

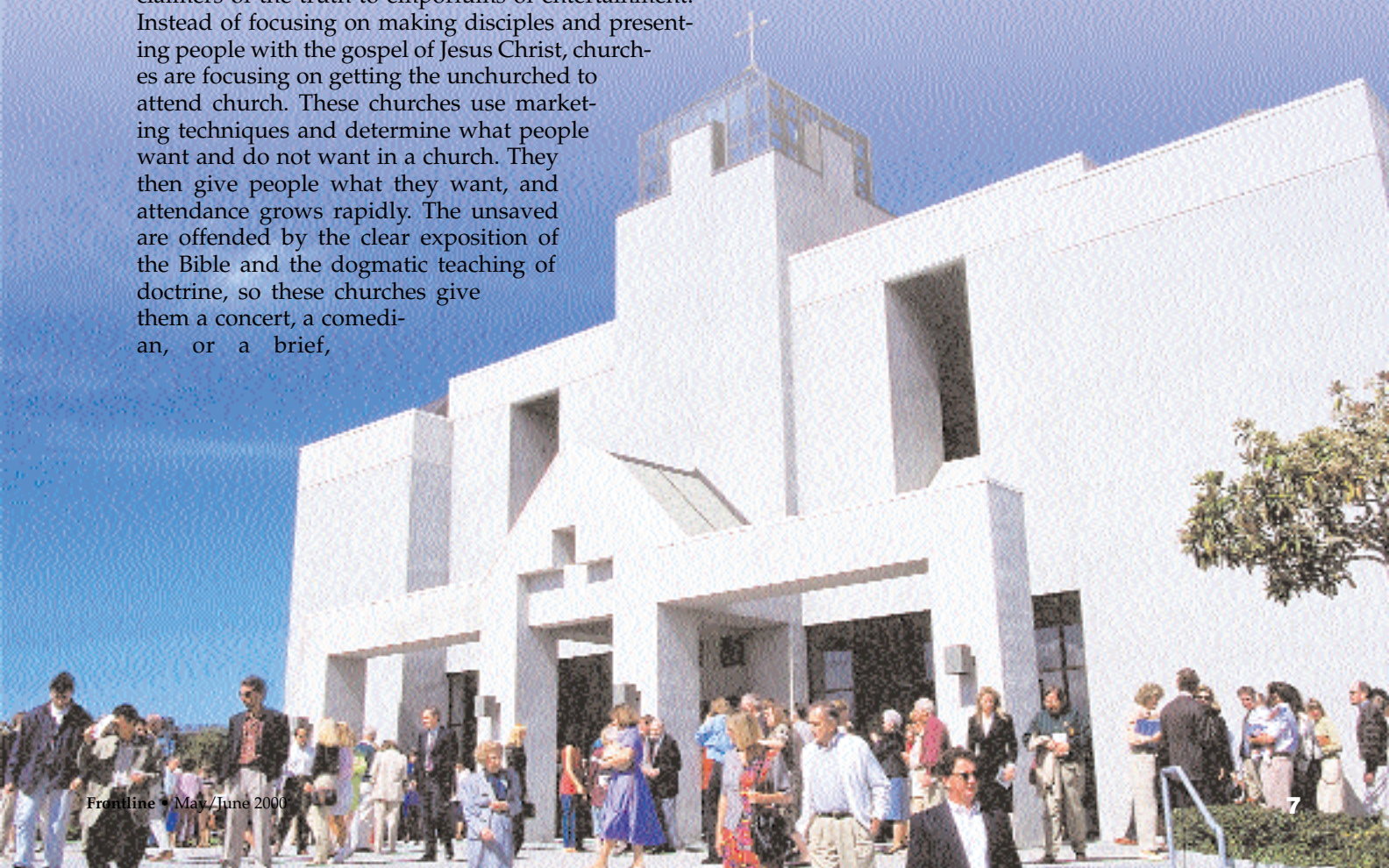
In Southern California, seismologists are interested in measuring the slightest drift of geological plates. The movement of these tectonic plates along fault lines causes earthquakes and will some day cause the "big one" as the coastal plate slides north along the continental shelf from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Consequently, seismologists at Cal Tech and the U.S. Geological Survey have installed sensitive laser instruments along the San Andreas (and other) fault lines to measure even the slightest movement. Detecting the slightest movement is costly and difficult, but it is essential because the welfare of millions of people is at stake.

Being able to detect theological drift, no matter how slight, is no less important. The eternal welfare of millions is at stake. Over the past 15 years or so, a shift has occurred in the evangelical landscape regarding the doctrine of the church. In an attempt to reach more people, churches have evolved from keepers and proclaimers of the truth to emporiums of entertainment. Instead of focusing on making disciples and presenting people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, churches are focusing on getting the unchurched to attend church. These churches use marketing techniques and determine what people want and do not want in a church. They then give people what they want, and attendance grows rapidly. The unsaved are offended by the clear exposition of the Bible and the dogmatic teaching of doctrine, so these churches give them a concert, a comedian, or a brief,

encouraging sermon sprinkled with pop psychology.

In her article "God For Sale" in the *Los Angeles Magazine*, Kathlene Neumeyer insightfully wrote, "It is no surprise that when today's affluent young professionals return to church, they want to do it only on their own terms—what's amazing is how far churches are going to oblige."¹ This aberrant movement within evangelicalism goes by many names: church growth, marketing the church, user-friendly church.

The premise of this movement is simply this—if you are going to reach people, you must give them what they want. George Barna, one of the proponents of this movement, says, "My contention, based upon careful study of data and the activities of American churches, is the number one problem plaguing the Church is its failure to embrace a marketing orientation in what has become a market-driven environment."² In other words, since successful businesses place on the market only that



which people want, the church must as well. This may seem well and good to Barna and others with a marketing orientation, but God's way of reaching man is opposed to the ways of human logic.

Contrary to Human Logic, God Targets Everyone to Hear the Gospel

Human logic drives a marketing approach to ministry. Such an approach dictates that if a church wants to grow, it must select target groups it desires to reach and then tailor its ministry to those groups. Rather than attempting to reach every group, it must focus on only a few.

Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Church, said it this way: "Generally a pastor can define his appropriate target audience by determining with whom he would like to spend a vacation or an afternoon of recreation."³ This ministry philosophy is absolutely contrary to that of the New Testament writers. Regarding his evangelistic ministry, the apostle Paul wrote, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to

the wise, and to the unwise" (Rom. 1:14). Speaking of Christian ministry, James says that we are not to show favoritism (2:1). Marketing logic may dictate a target approach to evangelism, but God's Word commands a "shotgun" approach.

Contrary to Human Logic, God Does Not Make the Christian Message Easy

In his book *Marketing the Church*, Barna writes, "Marketing is the process by which you seek to apply your product to the desires of the target population."⁴ Later in that same book he says, "This is what marketing the church is all about: providing our product (relationships) as a solution to people's felt needs."⁵ Is that what God commands us to do? Has God commissioned us to survey the community, determine people's desires and felt needs, and minister to them on that level? No! We are commissioned to give the gospel to a lost and dying world. No matter what desires and felt needs people have, the solution is the same—Jesus Christ.

The Christian message should not be diluted to gain a following (John 6:53–66; Matt. 19:16–21). The gospel is not what people *want*; it is what they *need*. What people want is the stroking of their egos and the soothing of their guilt. What people want is an "I'm okay; you're okay" message. We cannot give them that. We must confront people about their sin and give them the gospel. People are not okay, and if we care for them we cannot let them think that they are.

Christian commitment should not be minimized to keep a following (Rom. 12:1–2; Gal. 5:16–26; Eph. 4:1–3; Col. 3:1–14; Matt. 28:18–20). Many people are willing to be involved casually in worship, but real worship exacts a price of commitment that is altogether different. Real worship involves not just personal involvement, but personal sacrifice. It involves giving your life. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [your selves] a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1). Genuine Christianity is commitment. Salvation involves a life-changing and committed faith in Christ. Christian growth involves an ever-

growing commitment to personal holiness. Worship involves a humble commitment to bask joyously in the greatness and goodness of God.


Contrary to Human Logic, God Uses the Dogmatic Proclamation of Truth to Further His Goals

God uses the preaching of His Word, not depravity-driven myths (2 Tim. 4:1–4). The overriding command of this passage is "preach the Word." The word "preach" was commonly used to refer to a herald making a public proclamation on behalf of another. That is exactly how Paul used it here. He commands Timothy to proclaim publicly the Word of God. He is not to proclaim his own message, but the message of God as


Has God commissioned us to survey the community, determine people's desires and felt needs, and minister to them on that level? No! We are commissioned to give the gospel to a lost and dying world. No matter what desires and felt needs people have, the solution is the same—Jesus Christ.

found in His written revelation. Preachers have no right to teach their own opinions or even the opinions of others. They are commanded to teach God's message. Much of what is called "preaching" today is nothing of the sort. Genuine preaching is the passionate explanation and application of God's revelation.

This phrase "itching ears" is a figure of speech for "curiosity." It refers to the search for something new, something spectacular. It's clear from this context that this is a curiosity on the part of the hearers that is never satisfied. It involves an all-consuming and never-ending hunger for the new and the novel. According to Paul, this hunger for the new and the novel does not flow from the Holy Spirit. Paul states that this desire for novelty is "after their own lusts" (2 Tim. 4:3). It flows from man's depravity. In other words, these believers have made themselves the measure of who should teach them and what teaching is acceptable. The desires of the people, not the teachings and doctrines of the Word of God, are the controlling factor.



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Designer Community Church

Marilyn Janke

Man's hunger for novelty will drive him to exchange truth for error. The truth of God's Word will be disregarded, openly rejected, and exchanged for myths (4:3-4). In his book *Selling Jesus, What's Wrong with Marketing the Church*, Douglas Webster provides a helpful summary of what churches are doing to attract the baby boomers.

The baby boomer wants a warm, supportive, informal and positive atmosphere. Anything that distracts from this will be an instant turnoff, while anything that's done to make the atmosphere nonthreatening improves effectiveness. Sermons are short, simple, uplifting and personally inspiring. Topics are carefully selected to stress the personal over the doctrinal and the relational over the abstract. Sin and money are seldom mentioned. Entertaining features like drama, skits, and live music generate enthusiasm and excitement.

Can depraved man be reached using purely human methods? No! God uses the preaching of His Word, not persuasive tactics (1 Cor. 2:1-5). Is Paul saying in these verses that he is an unwise man, incapable of communicating in a wise fashion? Is he saying that his preaching is not meant to persuade people to trust Christ? No. What he is saying is that he does not preach the gospel in the power of his own persuasive skills. When he preaches, the primary persuader is the Holy Spirit. Paul is saying in essence, "I did not come to you utilizing persuasive tactics, but desiring the Spirit to show His power."

Charles Spurgeon once said, "The power that is in the gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be converters of souls; nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul."

The doctrine of the church must be guarded. We cannot give in to the temptation to dilute the gospel of Christ or diminish the importance of Christian commitment in order to see attendance grow. Our job as fundamental Baptist churches is not to grow at any cost, but to obey God by evangelizing and making disciples in a way that honors Him. We should not compromise the gospel or water down Christian truth just to be attractive to a fallen world. We should be faithful to our commission and trust God for the increase in His time. May we be faithful stewards and messengers of God's truth.

¹February 1989, p. 174.

²*Marketing the Church* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), p. 23.

³Quoted by Douglas Webster, *Selling Jesus, What's Wrong with Marketing the Church* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), p. 58.

⁴Barna, p. 23.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶Webster, p. 75.

Scott Williquette is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Rockford, Illinois.

Welcome to Designer Community Church. We want to envelop you with an aura of loving acceptance and to meet all your felt needs. Our homey, casual atmosphere and helpful, attentive staff will have you feeling right at home. The reasonable hours and friendly service ensure a delightful visit to our "salad-bar sanctuary."

Our music, with its subtle, harmonious blend of styles and moods, will tempt your musical palate. The versatile worship band is not limited by the stiff, narrow bounds of Ephesians 5:19, using "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Our worship teams streamline our 15-minute worship block, leaving an ample 15 minutes for the pastor's talk. Worried about bringing visitors? Rest in peace. They won't be able to distinguish our music from the world's. In fact, they won't even know they're in church!

Given the feverish tempo of our lives today, the following service times have been carefully selected (but without the guilt of "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together"):

Friday, 5:45 p.m.—for those wanting to take off for the weekend, but not wanting to miss church.

Saturday, 11:00 p.m. (right after the 9:00 p.m. movie, but ending before late-night TV kicks in)—This will leave you with a Sunday free to do whatever you like.

Sunday, 5:00 a.m.—for those planning an early fishing excursion.

Sunday, 8:45 a.m.—for those who like to get out early for Sunday brunch.

Sunday, 11:00 a.m.—for those wanting to sleep in and still get home before the roast burns.

Besides the choice of services, be grateful that there is no burden of a Wednesday night meeting. This should free you up for more quality family time, without the guilt trip of Luke 14.

We would never stoop to using the propaganda approach of name-calling set forth in Romans 16:17. You won't be embarrassed by hearing your favorite speakers mentioned from the pulpit, even if they do teach contrary to what we believe. We endeavor to cloak the body in unity, and wouldn't think of dividing our family, even though Scripture states that God's Word is first pure, then peaceable.

Bored? Check your calendar against ours:

November—Diet guru Cindee Lite—motivational speaker and author of *Be Flabullessly Fit—Pray Away Those Pounds*.

December—Christmas Concert—"The Singing Forest," the Zing Family Dancers, and mega-play "Mary and Joseph in the 20th Century." Tickets on sale at all Ticketron outlets.

January—Y-JO's Sunday (You, Jesus, Others)—Build your self-worth by putting yourself first.

Visit us soon! Plenty of free parking.

Marilyn Janke and her husband, David, are missionary church planters in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada.



A

Checklist for Choosing a Good Local Church

by Jim Hollandsworth

How should one go about choosing a good local church? Apart from a recommendation by a trusted pastor or friend, the process can be daunting, especially in this age of apostasy and evangelical compromise. Churches that once adhered to the fundamentals of the faith have departed. Multitudes of ministries have gone the direction of New Evangelicalism and lack any type of separational stand. Sadly, the name *Baptist* no longer guarantees that a church adheres to the historic Baptist distinctives.

What criteria should be considered in evaluating a church for prospective membership? Often the decision is made because of the great programs or professional literature or beautiful facilities or polished preacher. Well-meaning Christians sometimes choose a church because of the outstanding music or convenient location or size. While these may be commendable qualities, they should not be the sole basis for selecting a church.

The following checklist provides a means for evaluating local churches. The checklist is not exhaustive, but representative. Scripture references are not provided due to space constraints. However, each question has a Biblical basis, and the reader is encouraged to use the checklist as a Bible study tool for either personal or group study. A negative answer to any of the questions could be an indication that a church does not take a proper Biblical stand.

Prayerfully ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit while seeking answers to the questions. Most answers can be found by reading the church's literature (constitution, doctrinal statement, brochures) and by observing the church in practice (services, messages, programs, activities, affiliations). If necessary, schedule a meeting with the pastor to gather additional information.

Fundamental Doctrine

If the church does not believe and teach the great doctrines of Scripture, it is not Bible-believing and, therefore, should not be considered by the believer, even if the ministry is seemingly dynamic and growing.

Does the church believe and teach . . .

- that the Bible is God's complete and authoritative revelation to man, inerrant and inspired in the original manuscripts?
- the Genesis account of Creation and the Flood?
- a triune Godhead, including the deity of Christ?
- Christ's virgin birth, death, burial, and resurrection?
- that all are sinners and stand eternally condemned?
- that heaven and hell are literal places?
- that salvation occurs when a person, by faith, turns from sinful self-reliance (repentance) to Christ's blood atonement for forgiveness and eternal life?
- that believers are eternally secure?
- the personal return of Christ at the close of the Tribulation to establish His literal 1000-year reign?
- that abortion is murder, homosexuality is an abomination, and sexual activity outside of marriage is sin?

Separation

Separation from apostasy, ecumenism, and worldliness is a matter of obedience to the Word. History demonstrates that churches that are disobedient to the Lord in this area eventually become apostate themselves, often in a couple of generations.

Does the church believe and teach . . .

- that Christians are to be holy, separate from sin and worldliness?
- that church discipline is necessary for maintaining purity within?
- that the church should separate from affiliation with other churches, denominations, or organizations (including colleges and mission boards) that are not obedient to the Scriptures?
- that movements such as New Evangelicalism, ecumenism, and cooperative evangelism are in error and to be avoided (e.g., Billy Graham Crusades, Promise Keepers, and other inter-faith movements)?
- that the Charismatic movement is in doctrinal error?
- that contemporary Christian music and social drinking are contrary to Biblical principles?

Baptist Distinctives

Throughout history, many great men gave their lives in defense of Biblical convictions concerning the governance and structure of the church, the observance of ordinances, the position of the believer, and the relationship of church and state. But just because a church is called Baptist does not necessarily mean that it holds these convictions.

Does the church believe and teach . . .

- that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice?
- that governance is to be independent and autonomous?
- that only two ordinances are to be observed—water baptism by immersion following salvation and the Lord's Supper as a memorial of Christ's death?
- that the ordinances are not sacraments but simple acts of obedience?
- that only Biblically qualified men (not women) are to hold the offices of pastor and deacon?
- that the pastor is the loving overseer of the church?

- that only those who have been saved and Scripturally baptized are admitted into membership?

Ministry

Ministry is the practical application of theological truth. It is the carrying out of the commands and principles of Scripture. A church's philosophy of ministry will be evident in its practices.

Does the church believe and teach . . .

Evangelism

- that all Christians are to be faithfully sharing the gospel?
- that the primary mission of the church is to carry out the Great Commission?
- that God is glorified by obedience and faithfulness rather than by pragmatic results?
- that regular opportunities should be given in services and programs for the lost to receive Christ and be counseled Biblically?
- that missionaries should be sent out from the church to take the gospel to the world?

Edification

- the importance of identification with a New Testament local church?
- that regular attendance and fellowship with other Christians is vital to spiritual growth?
- that worship methods and styles should not be driven by marketing studies but by the pattern established in the New Testament?
- the Biblical principle of tithing?
- that expository preaching and teaching of the Word are of primary importance?
- that secular psychology has no place in Biblical counseling?
- that the duty of the pastor is to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry?
- that all members should be serving, using their spiritual gifts for the furtherance of the ministry?
- that the members should be unified, loving, giving, friendly, and hospitable?
- that the programs of the church should have as their ultimate purpose the salvation of souls and the edification of saints?
- that all things should be done decently, orderly, and excellently?

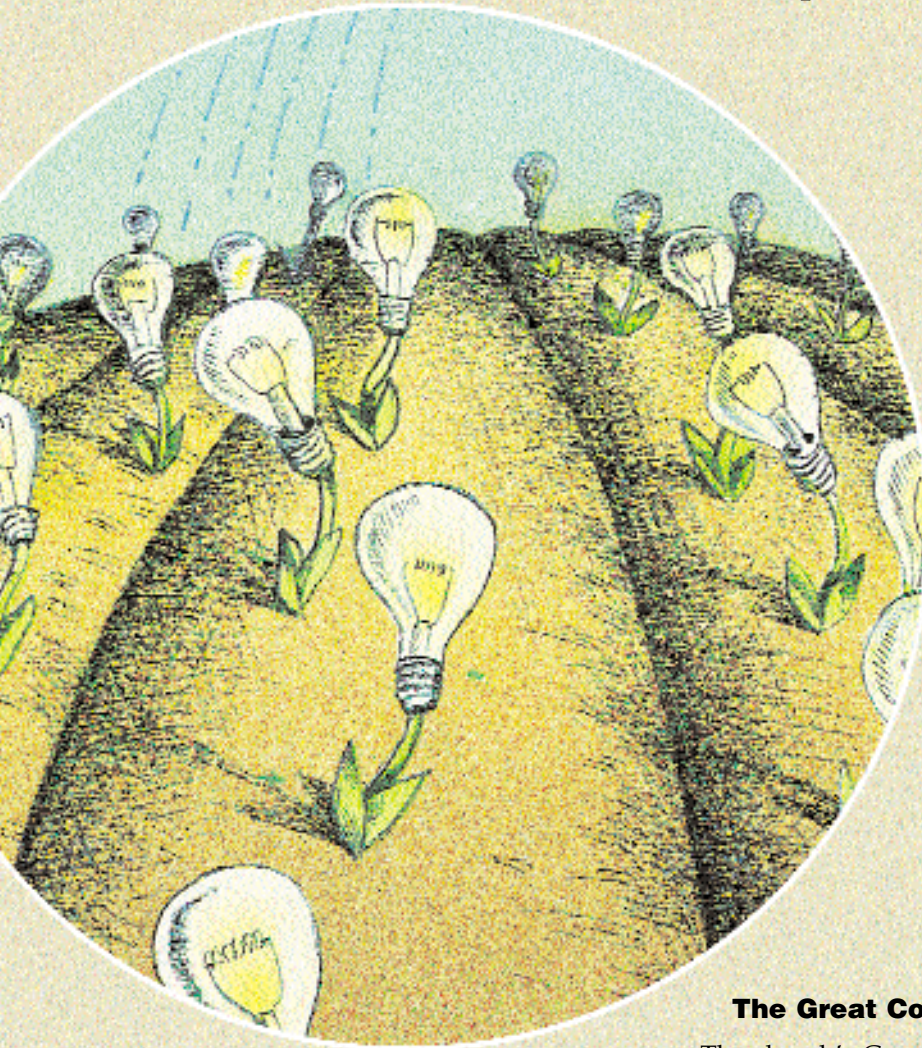
Personality

Every church has a personality, which is largely an extension of the pastor's individual personality, talents, gifts, goals, spiritual maturity level, and life experiences. Assuming the pastor is a godly man and the church is Biblically qualified, there are no right or wrong questions to ask about personality. This area is largely a matter of taste and preference. However, in this area, as well as each of those listed above, believers must prayerfully determine where God would have them unite for effective service.

Jim Hollandsworth is pastor of First Baptist Church of Berwyn in Berwyn, Pennsylvania.

Every subject has a philosophy. It may not be spelled out, but it is there just the same—whether good or bad, right or wrong.

Church planting has its own philosophy—godly or worldly. Of course, the true philosophy of church planting is to be Biblical. But what is the Biblical philosophy of church planting?



A BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING

The Great Commission

The church's Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus is found principally in Matthew 28:19–20. The proper balance of evangelism and edification is clearly set forth. Evangelism is displayed by the command to go, win (disciple), and baptize. Edification means to teach all that the Lord commands in the Word of God. A healthy balance between the two aspects must be practiced simultaneously. It is unlikely that any church planting situation will succeed or survive in God's sight without pastor and people consistently winning people to Christ and instructing them in the truths of God's Word—an overemphasis on either aspect will eventually prove fatal.

The Scriptural record of the first church ever planted indicates a proper balance between the two main elements of the Great

Commission (Acts 2:41–47). There was a strong element of soul winning as well as doctrine and fellowship.

Holy Spirit Control

No Christian and certainly no church will succeed for God unless there is the presence, power, and control of the Holy Spirit. The prophet Zechariah declared, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). On that day of Pentecost when 3,000 souls were saved and then baptized as believers, it was the Holy Spirit who filled the disciples with witnessing power (Acts 2:4, 17). When Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the price received from the sale of their land, they were guilty of lying to the Holy Ghost; they both died instantly at the hands of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1–11). As Christians in the young church at Antioch ministered to the Lord and fasted, it was the Holy Spirit who declared, “Separate [unto] me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Saul and Barnabas were not only called but also sent forth by the Holy Spirit as missionaries (Acts 13:1–5).

The Holy Spirit still employs similar methods today in enduing the Lord’s people with power to serve the living God. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:4). As there are diversities of service there are also diversities of servants (Eph. 4:11–12).

The church planter who serves primarily in the power of the flesh is doomed to failure—at least as God measures success and failure. Dr. Bob Jones Sr. once said, “A man is a fool if he resorts to the energy of the flesh when he can be supported with the arm of omnipotence.” To have the true power of God, he must do as the apostles and “give [himself] continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

United Leadership

Paul emphasizes the necessity of unity among the church membership (1 Cor. 3:1–4). Later he also belabors the fact that church leaders must be especially united in their effort (1 Cor. 12:25). When Paul and Barnabas were in disagreement, they recognized that they had reached an impasse and must go their separate ways. Two teams were then formed, each man becoming a leader of his respective team (Acts 15:36–41). Later Apollos, an outstanding orator, came on the scene. The Corinthians revealed their carnality when they were divided in their loyalty to him or Paul. Paul rebuked them and sought to settle the issue by writing, “Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one [united]. . . . For we are labourers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:4, 9).

It is imperative that there be only one head of any organization, especially the church. The Lord Jesus is the Head of the Body (organism). This should also be true with the local church (organization)—the plan of God is for Jesus Christ to be the Head of each local church also. Christ’s undershepherd, the pastor, is the one He charges on earth with leadership in His behalf.

Teaching and Preaching

The church planter who succeeds in building a solid ministry for the Lord must maintain a strong testimony in

preaching (evangelism and heralding forth) and teaching the entire Word of God.

The Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul both demonstrated and evidently maintained a perfect balance between preaching and teaching in their respective ministries. Christ practiced both simultaneously in His ministry: “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel” (Matt. 4:23). Paul did likewise as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and Acts 15:35.

The success of a church planter in reaching people will be a result of preaching. The success of holding people will be due to teaching. Both are vital and must be practiced consistently and simultaneously.

Independence

Each of the churches in the New Testament was strictly independent. There is no evidence of groups of churches known as an official denomination, association, or fellowship.

The churches to which most of the epistles were written were independent churches. The pastors (bishops and elders) and deacons were all officers in local churches. They were definitely not dictatorial leaders of church hierarchies. Manmade systems of church hierarchies are not found in Scripture. The New Testament churches were all composed of three groups of people—“saints in Christ Jesus . . . with the bishops [pastors] and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). Paul instructed Titus to “ordain elders [pastors] in every city” (Titus 1:5).

The incident recorded in Acts 15 has nothing to do with a hierarchical setup. The Lord’s apostles, along with the Jerusalem church elders (pastors) and brethren, verified to the church at Antioch that salvation was not found in keeping the law or observing circumcision, but through God’s grace and faith in Christ (Acts 15: 7, 9, 11). Simon Peter stated emphatically, “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we [Jewish Christians] shall be saved, even as they [Gentile Christians].” This matter was settled once and for all. No other such gathering is recorded in the New Testament. The congregation of each local church has been authorized to settle every issue within the confines of its own independent organization.

Fundamentalism

What is a Fundamentalist? “A Fundamentalist does not merely describe a man who is Biblically orthodox. Many New Evangelicals are Biblically orthodox in terms of the theology they preach, but they are New Evangelicals because of their lack of separation. Separation is a Biblical doctrine found from Genesis to Revelation. ‘Fundamentalist’ describes those who are anchored to the Book, who are bib-

A God-called church planter must make up his mind that the Lord will be pleased only with a Biblically sound, separatist church ministry.

licists" (Bob Jones III, *What Is a Fundamentalist?*, 1, 6).

Many voices are clamoring for attention today regarding Fundamentalism. The various camps of Fundamentalists spend much time arguing and vying for attention and followings. It will not do for anyone to stick his head in the sand and shy away from the battle. The Bible is clear in its teaching on the necessity of the believer's separatism from the influence of the world (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 1:9; James 4:4), from false teachers (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 6:20-21; Rev. 2:2, 6, 14-16), and even from disobedient Christians (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15).*

A God-called church planter must make up his mind that the Lord will be pleased only with a Biblically sound, separatist church ministry. He will find himself in a position "outside the camp," but he will realize that he is in the blessed presence of the Son of God (Heb. 13:13).

Discipline

The practice of discipline in modern churches is all but absent. A church today is the easiest thing to get into and the hardest to get out of. Sad to say, the names of many remain on the church roll regardless of the condition of their souls, habits, attitudes, or actions. No discipline is ever applied. This is not God's intended practice for His churches.

The Bible gives all the instructions necessary for discipline in the church. First Corinthians 5 is a chapter that gives an example of the type of discipline God intends for the church to follow. Paul concludes by stating in verses 12 and 13, "For what have I to do to judge them that are without? Do not ye [church members] judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Some churches, even in fundamental circles, will never remove any person from the roll unless so requested by the individual. People can commit almost any kind of sin and yet remain in good standing. This is not pleasing to God, healthy for the Body of Christ, or satisfactory to His cause. God intends that the local church follow His admonitions. When a member goes contrary to His clear teachings and the clear standards of the church, he is to be disciplined. If discipline does not suffice, then the offending person should be removed from the membership. When there is true repentance and he requests reinstatement, the church should consider the matter seriously and do as the Lord directs.

This is by no means a full account of the Biblical philosophy of church planting. It would require many more paragraphs to cover the subject adequately. However, if a church planter determines to carry out these given phases faithfully, he has great chance of success in planting and developing a church for the glory of the Lord and the good of His people.

Endnote

* For an excellent treatment of these passages and the issue of separation, see Mark Sidwell, *The Dividing Line: Understanding and Applying Biblical Separation*, Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1998.

Dr. Otis Holmes is a former pastor and Christian college professor living in Greenville, South Carolina.

Keys to Responsible Stewardship in Church Building Programs

by Don Dobbs

A building program is an exciting event in any church. Plans are made, expectations are heightened, and excitement soars. The most important tool in a building program, however, is not the blueprints, the bulldozer, or the hammer. The most important tool is good stewardship with the resources God provides. When using a team approach for expansion, the church, the architect, and the construction firm are involved with the master plan and phase one floor plan so that the church's needs can be balanced properly against the limits of the budget. The philosophy of ministry and goals of the church should be well established before the start of a building program so that the facilities can complement them. Church committees (e.g., long-range planning, building, or finance) need to understand these goals in the same way so they can work together to achieve them. Here are seven keys to responsible stewardship that can be used in any church's

building program.

The first key to responsible stewardship is wisdom in creating the master plan or design for the property and facilities. Included in this is selecting a certified architect who has extensive experience in the development of ministry facilities. The fact that an architect is reputable in commercial or industrial design does not necessarily mean that he will be able to design a facility that is effectively suited to the needs of a particular church. For example, in the creation of the master plan, one consideration might be the age of the congregation. If the church is an older, established church comprised mostly of middle-aged people, the desires for immediate facilities might be much different than those of a new, growing church with younger adults and small children.

The next key to responsible stewardship is establishing a budget. Many churches know exactly what they want in a facility, yet they have no concept of what it will cost or how much they can afford. Others may not be sure what they want or might underestimate costs. It is very important to establish a budget before discussing plans for the structure and to review the budget throughout design and construction. Too often churches fail to plan and budget sufficiently and end up exceeding their financial limits, thus hindering the ministry. The consideration of statistics regarding space planning, building costs, and fundraising will help in developing an appropriate preliminary budget—and therefore will enhance the ministry.

The third key is protecting the established budget. The average church is ten to twenty percent over budget at the end of a building project. This problem can be avoided if the building committee, architect, and construction firm work together from the very beginning to avoid over-budget designs. Also, during construction the construction company can supply the church with a monthly itemized billing that reviews actual costs compared to estimated costs. This keeps the committee informed of every step in the construction process.

The fourth key, safeguarding design integrity and job quality, is very significant, especially in consideration of our testimony as Christians. The first step is to start with an architect possessing the qualifications mentioned previously. Then, all federal, state, and local building codes should be not only met but, in some cases, exceeded. The architect should make scheduled site inspections to be certain that those doing the construction are upholding the quality of the design. Placing a competent project manager or supervisor on the site for the duration of the project also helps ensure that construction flows smoothly.

The fifth key to responsible stewardship is developing and keeping deadlines. One scheduling tool is the Critical Path Method (CPM), which sets deadlines for individual parts of a project, identifying which tasks must be finished before others can be started. Stewardship of time is crucial, because pastors and lay leaders cannot afford to waste it. The church's existing ministry should not be hurt because the pastors or lay leaders are busy with changes to or exigencies in the building program. The wiser the planning at the beginning, the less time will be wasted during construction.

The sixth key is communication. The congregation needs to be informed both of the process and of the progress of the project. A representative of the construction company should give formal presentations at congregational meetings or simply be available for question-and-answer sessions. In this way, the congregation not only is familiar with the workings of the building program, but also knows better how to pray for the project. Bulletin announcements or reports during the construction process also help in this regard.

The final key is the funding of the building program. The funding process may be approached in several different ways. For example, a third-party consultant might be used to question the members of the congregation before the building process is begun. The consultant may be able to determine how much potential support for the project exists in the congregation. (Often individual members of a congregation are more open with a consultant than they might be with a pastor or board member who is asking for their opinion.) Effective fundraising depends largely on effective planning and proven capital gifts concepts. Therefore, many congregations utilize three-year programs that produce commitments up to four times the church's annual income for construction—in addition to their regular giving! And, of course, with effective fundraising efforts, the church avoids much debt and large amounts of interest costs. Even if the church begins fundraising at the time of early design, a good response will help keep debt to a minimum.

A building program should be a joyous time in a church, yet it can cause a certain amount of stress. Church congregations consist of all types of people with different maturity levels and perspectives. These can produce conflicts which in some cases can become detrimental to both the building program and the people. However, when everyone works together for the best interest of the ministry, much of the conflict is eliminated. While there will always be diversified opinions, there can be harmony and peace when members maintain their focus on ultimate goals and ministry objectives rather than personal preferences.

Good stewardship is just as important today as it was when Solomon built the temple. When God commanded that the temple be built, He ordered only the finest materials and the most qualified craftsmen. The structure was impressive and without flaw. The temple was a place for worship; it was the house of God Himself. Today as well, our church buildings are places for worship; and while God has chosen to dwell in the hearts of His people and not in buildings, we believe our church buildings should glorify Him by being the best quality possible for the budget allotted. Our churches are also places for evangelism, edification, and fellowship, and should show forth the holiness and orderliness of God. There is no question about the importance of cost. But we should ask ourselves these questions regarding the costs of a building program: Is the Lord more interested in how much money we save . . . or is He more interested in how wisely we invest it?

Don Dobbs is president of Teamway Builders, Inc., of Greenville, South Carolina, a company that specializes in managing church facility development and construction.

It won't happen." "No one ever attempts such a thing." "I have never heard of a church doing anything like this. Are you certain a minister promoted it in his church?"

Statements like this had been firing around the Miami Valley for several weeks. Only the event's actuality could bring our congregation to grips with one of God's miracles of love.

Five years is a long time for any congregation to endure internal strife and external aggression. God's ways are past finding out; our ways often get us into trouble. First Baptist Church in Germantown, Ohio, is a living example of both of these truths.

Bitterness, envy, discontentment, the desire for power—these spirits had invaded our fellowship, leaving a trail of tears and trauma. The congregation had no choice but to invoke church discipline. Nothing short of this could preserve our church from self-destruction.

A lawsuit followed. We were taken to civil court by a former minister. The church's trust and reverence had been betrayed by one who had been its spiritual guide. Four years passed and still the litigation dragged itself across the threshold of our lives.

Front-page attention in the local paper shamed our

membership. Word of the suit kept visitors away. Notices, affidavits, court summonses, attorneys, courtrooms—these and more oppressed me as pastor and harassed our people.

Legal defense for the church recommended a countersuit. God forbade it. "It is better to suffer loss" was heaven's counsel. Our decision therefore was simple: we would obey God's Word.

To do so was not a panacea. Not everyone who enters the lion's den returns unscratched. Even the apostle Paul experienced abandonment by the Christian community in his hour of need.

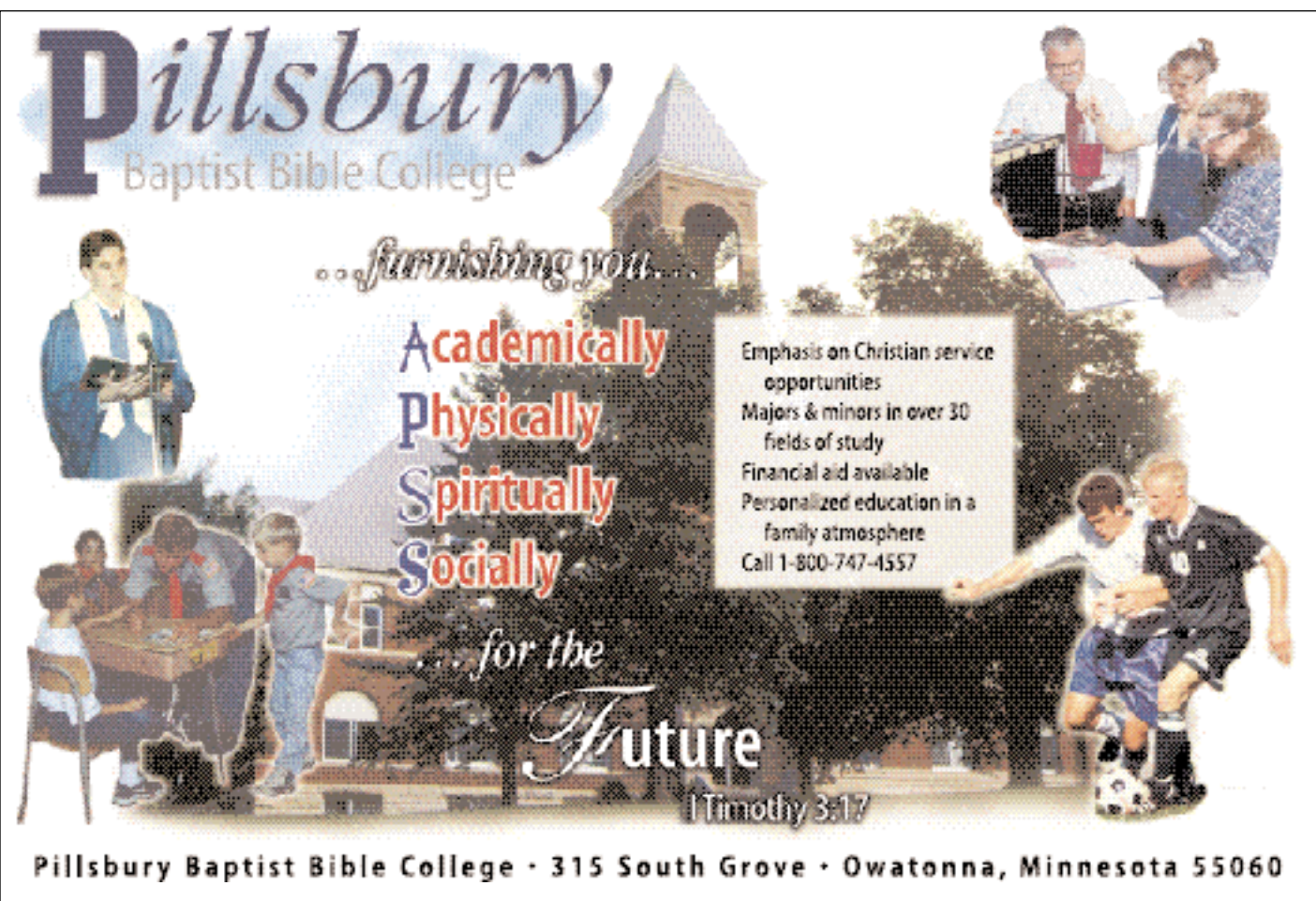
We watched sister churches close their eyes to what was happening to us. One pastor asked his people to pray for the judge to rule in favor of the one suing our church. Those who sought our church's demise canvassed

our membership in an attempt to persuade families to leave the church. The stress of the litigation pushed our nerves to the brink, made some bolt for the door, and generally drained our emotional stamina.

Against all odds, First Baptist Church survived. But like a weary soldier who has lived through an engagement only

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to lie weak and helpless on the field of battle, First Baptist needed refreshment and renewal. "God, does anyone care?" This question was raised by many faithful, humble saints.

In August of 1992, a minister from Troy, Ohio, learned of our circumstances. Rick Arrowood picked up his phone and dialed the church office.

"I'm sorry," my secretary responded. "The pastor is not in. May I take a message?"

Pastor Arrowood asked if she would inform me of his concern. "I am praying for God to strengthen him and your people as well," he explained.

This conversation, however, did not satisfy his sense of compassion. Although he was not personally acquainted with either me or the congregation of First Baptist, Pastor Arrowood was determined to speak to me. Two additional long-distance calls were placed before his desire was gratified.

In our initial conversation a seed of friendship was planted. The years have watered it with love. When the suit finally reached an end, we met to pray.

"I wish I could do something to encourage your people," Rick declared.

"Why don't you?" I replied. Leaning forward, I asked, "Brother Arrowood, what would you think of preaching for us, bringing your choir, and holding a protracted meeting?"

Without hesitation the response came. "Let's do it! This will be great. You know, our people have been praying for you all so long. I think this will be just the thing to give us an opportunity to really minister. Pastor Frank can marshal the choir. Brother, you won't believe how they can sing! We can load up our church bus each evening. We'll cancel our midweek service and tell everyone that we are having it in Germantown. How's that?"

I couldn't believe my ears. Pastors don't close their own church to help another. But Pastor Arrowood did.

Most choir directors would be delighted if their members would show up for practice. It would be beyond hope to think a choir would rearrange its schedule for an entire week just to meet the needs of strangers. But this choir did.

Church members don't drive an hour and 15 minutes

cross-country to a congregation they aren't acquainted with. But the people from Troy Baptist Temple did!

"You mean these people are driving all the way over here just to encourage us?" a member asked, puzzled. The rest of the statement, though unspoken, could almost be heard: "I don't get it."

"I can't get over this," a lady said as she looked around at the new faces entering the auditorium.

"Pastor Wisehart," a mother called as she walked briskly toward me, "do you know what those ladies from Troy did? They came into the nursery and volunteered to take our places. 'Our sole purpose in being here is to encourage you all,' they said. 'Go out there and enjoy the service! Leave this to us.' Can you believe that?"

"This is the most remarkable expression of Christian charity I have witnessed in years," I agreed. "I want all of you from the Troy Baptist Temple to know that words cannot express our deep feelings. Knowing you care means more to us than we will ever be able to tell you."

It seemed as though the entire congregation from Troy participated. Men and women turned down overtime to come. Some people took vacation time. Mothers prepared early suppers. Children did homework before the church bus had to leave.

Pastor Arrowood arranged a special treat: a professional actor who had trusted in Jesus Christ did a dramatic presentation of the Epistle of James. His delivery in costume held the entire assembly spellbound.

I could never have predicted the results that these meetings would have. It is certain that the people of First Baptist in Germantown will long remember the warmth and love of Pastor Rick Arrowood and the saints of God he leads.

In the words of one Sunday school teacher, "It only makes you wish that we had thought of doing this for someone else." If that kind of spirit is taking root, God be praised!

Today Mickey B. Wisehart serves as pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Valdosta, Georgia. First Baptist Church in Germantown, Ohio, continues to prosper under the leadership of pastor Ted Ricci.

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FBF NEWS AND EVENTS

Bob Whitmore, Managing Editor

Meeting Change

In the January/February issue, our report on last year's Caribbean Region meeting said that this year's meeting would be held September 18-21, 2000. This meeting, however, has been cancelled. Instead, the Caribbean FBF will join in meeting with the Sword of the Lord Conference to be held in October at Puerto Rico Baptist College in Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting

The following report was submitted by Rev. Phil Golden, pastor of Bible Baptist Church in Carnegie, Pennsylvania, and a state representative for the FBF:

"Confronting Our Culture for Christ" was the theme of the FBF Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting held March 6-7 at Faith Baptist Church in Morgantown, West Virginia. Speakers included Dr. Tim Jordan, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania; evangelist James Jones of Lindsie, West Virginia; Rev. Glenn Stevenson, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Fairmont, West Virginia; Rev. Wade Kuhlewind, pastor of Church of the Open Door in Connellsville, Pennsylvania; Dr. Rick Arrowood, pastor of Troy Baptist Temple in Troy, Ohio; and Rev. Terry Hagedorn, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Reedsville, West Virginia.

Each speaker dealt with different aspects of the theme. Attendance was the best ever for the regional meeting with all of the mid-Atlantic states represented.

Case Books Update

Our thanks to several readers who responded to our appeal for Dr. Tulga's "Case" books in the last issue. We now have what we believe to be the entire set.

Meetings

June 13-15

National Meeting
Faith Baptist Church
500 West Lee Rd.
Taylors, SC 29687
(864) 322-0700

August 1-3

Alaska Region
Hamilton Acres Baptist Church
138 Farewell Ave.
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
907-456-5995

October 30-31

Satellite Meeting
Bible Baptist Church
3109 Sweeten Creek Road
Asheville, NC 28803
(828) 684-1397

November 2-3

Southwest Region
Northwest Baptist Church
402 San Clemente N.W.
Albuquerque, NM 87107
(505) 450-2556

November 9-10

California Region
Calvary Baptist Church
160 Seaside Court
Marina, CA 93933
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California Region
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A portrait of Kim Stegall, a woman with curly blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a grey sweater with a white collar and a small yellow flower pin on her left shoulder. The background is a chalkboard with some faint writing.

Kim Stegall
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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

Still More Kindling for Preaching Christ

Generally I don't divide this column between two subjects, but this time it's nearly unavoidable. In the last two issues we've considered outstanding volumes on the life of Christ in order to encourage more preaching on this most superlative of all themes.

Yet the most important aspects of this subject are still not covered. So the first portion of this column will recommend titles on Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Then we'll turn to the life of a missionary who followed in the Master's footsteps.

Works on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ

The single most moving work ever done on Christ's passion has to be Friederich Krummacher's *The Suffering Saviour*. Krummacher, sometimes called the German Spurgeon, preached these 53 meditations in three subseries titled "The Outer Court" (progressing from the anointing in Bethany to the Upper Room), "The Holy Place" (covering Gethsemane to Golgotha), and "The Most Holy Place" (from the crucifixion to the burial). Here's an example of the deeply spiritual insight he evidences throughout.

"Hail Master!" exclaims the traitor. These words are like two poisonous daggers in the heart of the Holy One. He calmly accepts them, nor does He refuse even the kiss itself. . . . Angelic meekness would not have stood the test of that flagitious

crime; but here is more than angelic meekness, forbearance, patience. It is a testimony to the divine endurance of the Lord Jesus; for the traitor would not have chosen this as the signal for betraying his Master, had he not been aware of the latter's boundless long-suffering. Thus, with the very kiss with which he delivered Him up to His captors, Judas was compelled to glorify Him, and only enhance our ideas of the infinite condescension and love with which he had been favoured by the Saviour; for he never would have ventured to disguise his villainy under the mask of intimacy, had he not been emboldened by the infinite and oft-experienced kindness of his Master.

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

For many years it was nearly impossible to obtain this precious work. My own copy, read each Lord's Day afternoon before observing the Lord's Table, is a pre-Civil War edition. Thankfully, Kregel has reissued an attractive edition that includes the valuable biographical preface by Wilbur Smith. Some ministers testify to reading it on their knees.

The second most valuable help in this area is James Stalker's *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*. A slim volume of under 200 pages, it nevertheless more than lives up to its subtitle of "A Devotional History of Our Lord's Passion." I especially like Stalker's coverage of Christ's six trials and his warm, reverent treatment of the seven sayings from the cross. His observations are simple but full of suggestiveness.

Then there is *The Shadow of Calvary* by the 19th-century Scottish preacher Hugh Martin. It leads the reader from Gethsemane to the condemnation of the Sanhedrin, stopping short of the actual crucifixion. The work includes striking applications, such as this one on our Lord's admonition to the disciples to "watch and pray" lest they enter into temptation.

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There is a lesson in this. For in the decay or slumber of your Christian life, it is not something new that is to revive you; not some novel doctrine; not some unheard of, or lately discovered Christian exhortation; not some singular and striking advice, prescribing some royal road different from that in which the usual footsteps of the flock are marked, not prescribing even any means or method of revival hitherto unknown to yourself. No; there is a great snare hid under any such expectation as that. You are to stand in the beaten path, and inquire for the good old ways you trod before, if you would find invigorating grace and rest unto your soul.

For expertise on the trials of our Lord, try *The Trial of Christ* by Alexander Innes and Frank Powell. Both were believing lawyers who felt that the facts surrounding the trial of Jesus Christ ought to be examined from a careful blend of both Biblical and historical evidence combined with the light of Jewish jurisprudence. The result is a work of extraordinary value.

The lesson is, not to be too constantly and too anxiously tracing and retracing the evidence of the glorious fact of the Resurrection, vitally precious as that evidence is, and not to stay pondering and enjoying that fact for one's self only . . . but to carry on to others the light and blessedness of the fact, of the truth, that He is "risen indeed". . . .

Cyril Barber, author of *The Minister's Library*, actually says that no serious student of the Scriptures can afford to be without it!

A lesser-known but blessed work is *The Day of the Cross*, a series of sermons on the men and women and some of the notable things connected with the crucifixion, by W. M. Clow. For help on the seven crucifixion sayings, A. W. Pink's *The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross* is full of good things, and Russell Jones's *Gold from Golgotha* provides additional insight. Wilbur Smith calls the latter "the finest work on this particular subject that has been published in English during the last twenty-five years" (1920–1945). One other work that bears mentioning is the genuinely helpful *Six Miracles of Calvary* by William R. Nicholson. This is the only work of which I'm aware that deals exclusively with the miraculous darkness,

the rending of the veil, the miraculous earthquake, the opened graves, the undisturbed graveclothes, and the resurrection of Jerusalem saints.

Turning now to works on the resurrection, let me recommend first of all the insightful work by Brooke Foss Westcott titled *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*. The author explores each of the ten pre-ascension resurrection appearances (and the one to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus) in order to display the distinctive revelation of Christ in each one. The treatments are reverent, reassuring to the spirit, and spiritually suggestive. It would be a dull preacher indeed who could read this work without being moved to worship.

A second work of a similar nature is *Jesus and the Resurrection* by the Cambridge scholar and pastor H.C.G. Moule. Dealing only with those appearances recorded in John 20–21, Moule displays both the exacting exegesis of a reader in the Greek New Testament and the warmth of a soul who knows how to apply what he discovers. Note how he handles the Lord's words to Mary Magdalene, "Touch Me not," and "Go to My brethren."

We observe that the Greek verb is in the present, or continuing, imperative, not in the aorist subjunctive; *mh mou aptou*, not *mh mou ayh*. Accordingly, by familiar laws of Greek usage, it conveys an order not to forbear touching Him at all, but to forbear a longer, a prolonged touching. She is not to linger over it; it is enough; let her remove the hand which feels the sacred limb. . . . May we not paraphrase the purport of the words of Jesus somewhat thus? "Do not linger here, touching Me, to ascertain My bodily reality, in the incredulity of your exceeding joy. I am in very fact before you. . . . And, moreover, there is another reason why not to linger thus; I have an errand for you, Mary. I desire you to go hence, and at once, for Me; to go to my brethren, and to tell them that I am about to go up thither. . . ."

Now for the scholar's application.

The lesson is, not to be too constantly and too anxiously tracing and retracing the evidence of the glorious fact of the Resurrection, vitally precious as that evidence is, and not to stay pondering and enjoying that fact for one's self only . . . but to carry on to others the light and blessedness of the fact, of the truth, that He is "risen indeed."

A third work on the resurrection that is extremely helpful, though in a different sort of way, is *Easter Enigma* by John Wenham. Subtitled *Are the Resurrection Accounts in Conflict?*, this work is an attempt to harmonize what appear to be inconsistencies and variations between the Gospel records of the resurrection. Whether or not one comes out where Wenham does, the exercise of thinking with him through the problems is very useful.

Before closing these recommendations, two further works ought to be mentioned because of their treatment of the often overlooked historical event of the ascension. Though infrequently preached, this is a facet of our Lord's earthly life that is rich with suggestiveness and subsequent significance. William Milligan's *The Ascension and Heavenly Priesthood of Our Lord* is a thorough treatment of nearly 400 pages that lifts the reader up into the heavenlies where Christ sits in priestly session for His own. A briefer work is *The Ascended Christ* by Henry Barclay Swete.

I regret having to leave so many really choice titles about the earthly life of our Lord unmentioned. But if the Lord might be pleased to use what has been recommended to stir our hearts for more of the knowledge for which we ought to count all things but loss, perhaps those other titles will turn up in the natural course of our quest to "know Him."

One Who Followed the Master

Other than Scripture itself, probably nothing is more stimulating to spiritual growth than the example of saints who have gone before. We truly tread the path the saints have trod. Recently I spent an evening thumbing through three biographies of one who is, unfortunately, little known today. Barely past 30 when he entered the Lord's presence, he nevertheless left a legacy of selfless devotion to Christ's cause. I trust that what was done merely for my own inspiration might prove to be a towering example for some young missionary or pastor reading this column today.

Of less than average height and given to passionate extremes of emotion, Henry Martyn (1781–1812) went up to Cambridge before he was 17 and there distinguished himself as an exceedingly quick student in both mathematics and literature. During his academic career he won Cambridge's highest honors in both subjects after easily outstripping what was said to be an unusually brilliant class. "I obtained my highest wishes," he testified later, "but was surprised to find that I had grasped a shadow."

Under the influence of both his younger sister's concern as well as a professor's kind guidance, Martyn began seriously reading the New Testament and was soundly converted after the Christmas season of 1799. Later he could observe, "The work is real. I can no more doubt it than I can my own existence. The whole current of my desires is altered, I am walking quite another way, though I am incessantly stumbling in that way."

The new "way" included sitting underneath the impassioned preaching of Charles Simeon, minister at Holy Trinity. Simeon's evangelical preaching was hotly opposed by Cambridge academia. For years, in fact, his own church members resisted him, even locking the pews so that no one would be able to hear him comfortably. But the minister's holy life and devotion to Christ's service endeared him to the young student, and in time the affection was reciprocated.

During the summer vacation of 1802, spent on a walking tour of Wales and a holiday in his sister Laura's beautiful Cornish home, Martyn poured over the Book of Isaiah, passing what he called some of the sweetest moments of his life. The upshot was a decision to accept an invitation from Simeon to become his assistant at Holy Trinity. That first fall with Simeon he discovered Jonathan Edwards's biography of David Brainerd and found the example that would mentor the remainder of his life. In the months to come, Brainerd's name found its way again and again into Martyn's journal.

I thought of David Brainerd, and ardently desired his devotedness to God and holy breathings of soul. . . . Read David Brainerd today and yesterday, and find as usual my spirit greatly benefited by it. I long to be like him; let me forget the world and be swallowed up in a desire to glorify God. . . . Read Brainerd. I feel my heart knit to this dear man, and really rejoice to think of meeting him in heaven.

Later he could observe, "The work is real. I can no more doubt it than I can my own existence. The whole current of my desires is altered, I am walking quite another way, though I am incessantly stumbling in that way."

Three years previous to this a small group of Simeon's acquaintances in London had founded a tiny missionary society called The Society for Missions to Africa and the East (later known as The Church Missionary Society). But no Englishman had offered himself to it for overseas service. Now, in the fall of 1802, just about the time he began to read Brainerd, Martyn overheard Simeon exclaim one day about the good that just one missionary in India was doing. The missionary to whom he referred was William Carey, the cobbler from Moulton, whose accounts from Serampore were being earnestly read by Simeon.

As the last leaves were falling from the elms that year, Martyn determined to follow Carey to India and there to emulate Brainerd's sacrificial example. Not only did the decision startle the academic community of Cambridge, but it was difficult for Martyn himself. To his younger sister, Sally, he confided in a letter,

The thought that I might be unceasingly employed . . . amongst poor ignorant people, is what my proud spirit revolts at. To be obliged to submit to a thousand uncomfortable things that must happen

to me whether as a minister or a missionary is what the flesh cannot endure.

But Martyn resolved to teach himself the self-denial that would be necessary to survive in India.

How mortally do I hate the thought, yet certainly I will do the will of God, if I be cut piece-meal. I resolved on my knees to live a life of far more self-denial than I had ever yet done, and to begin with little things. Accordingly, I ate my breakfast standing at a distance from the fire, and stood reading at the window during the morning, though the thermometer stood at freezing point. . . . I rejoiced that God had made this life a time of trial. To climb the steep ascent, to run, to fight, to wrestle was the desire of my heart.

“In truth,” said the royal letter of appreciation, “through the learned and unremitted exertions of the Reverend Henry Martyn it has been translated in a style most befitting sacred books. . . . The whole of the New Testament is completed in a most excellent manner.” God’s tasks for Henry Martyn were completed.

By 1805 Martyn had obtained a chaplaincy position with the East India Company and after a nine-month voyage was on the field in Calcutta. There he met Carey and his colleagues at the Serampore mission, John Ward and Joshua Marshman. Marshman, he wrote, “made my heart burn within me.”

Though the Serampore trio attempted to persuade him to remain with them, Martyn’s heart was set on evangelizing farther into the interior. In October 1806 he traveled by houseboat six weeks up the Hooghly River to Patna and its military settlement at Dinapore. On arrival he wrote,

Let me be torn to pieces . . . or let me labour for fifty years amidst scorn, and never seeing one soul converted. . . . Though the heathen rage and the English people imagine a vain thing, the Lord

Jesus, who controls all events is my friend, my master, my God, my all.


At Dinapore Martyn preached in the streets and evangelized in homes. But above all, he translated. With the skills born of his exacting Cambridge studies, in just a little over two years he put the entire New Testament into a Hindustani version of such accuracy that it has served as the foundation for all subsequent Bible translation work in this tongue.

Much of Martyn’s work was done in consultation with Mohammedan scholars. These contacts, issuing sometimes into conversations that often lasted late into the night, fired the young missionary’s soul to put the New Testament into Arabic and then into Persian as well. Following an almost miraculous completion of these tasks in 1811, he conceived the plan of placing two exquisitely penned and beautifully bound copies of the New Testament into the hands of the Shah of Persia and his heir, Prince Abbas Mirza, in order to obtain the respect yielded to a book approved at court. These he attempted to transport across Persia himself in the fall of 1812. The journey wasted his already fragile health, but he lived to see the British ambassador present his precious copies to the Shah and to receive a gracious letter in reply.

“In truth,” said the royal letter of appreciation, “through the learned and unremitted exertions of the Reverend Henry Martyn it has been translated in a style most befitting sacred books. . . . The whole of the New Testament is completed in a most excellent manner.” God’s tasks for Henry Martyn were completed. The dying missionary’s last journal entry, penned just ten days before the end, dwelt on the bliss to follow.

Oh, when shall time give place to eternity!
When shall appear the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness! There shall in no wise enter in anything that defileth: none of that wickedness which has made men worse than wild beasts shall be seen or heard of any more.

Ten days later, on October 16, 1812, Henry Martyn succumbed to fever and tuberculosis and entered that place where nothing defiles. He was 31. His earthly body was buried at Tokat, in Pontus, Turkey.

After Martyn’s death, his portrait hung in Charles Simeon’s dining room over the fireplace. Simeon often used to look at it in his friends’ presence and say, “There, see that blessed man? What an expression of countenance. No one looks at me as he does. He never takes his eyes off me and seems always to be saying, ‘Be serious. Be in earnest. Don’t trifle. Don’t trifle.’” Then, smiling at the picture and gently bowing, Simeon would add, “And I won’t trifle. I won’t trifle.” 



Dr. Mark Minnick is the pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, where he has served on the pastoral staff since 1980. He speaks frequently in churches and at conferences across the nation and ministers regularly on mission fields around the world.

Bring . . . the Books

C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography*

Will anyone ever know how many biographies of Charles Haddon Spurgeon have been issued? Lewis Drummond, who authored the massive *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, lists nearly 40 in his bibliography, including the autobiography that Spurgeon himself started and his wife and secretary, Joseph Harrald, completed.

As I write this, the four large (9 x 13 inches) quarto volumes of that autobiography sit before me. First editions issued successively from 1897–1900, their 1500 gilt-edged pages bound in cardinal red cloth with goldleaf Victorian decoration, hold pride of place among my preacher biographies. The nearly 300 illustrations and photographs are alone worth the price of one of these rare sets.

For over half a century, most preachers were denied these volumes by the reticence of publishers to risk a work of such bulk and expense. But in 1962 Banner of Truth Trust issued a superb revised two-volume edition. It includes almost all of the material that was actually biographical (omitting, for the most part, only some of the additional work of the editors). The second volume actually incorporates additional details gleaned from Spurgeon's magazine, *The Sword and Trowel*, and several other sources. And nearly 75 of those rare photographs and illustrations are included.

One of my favorite chapters is "The Pastor's Fellow-Workers." Never one to seek honor for himself, Spurgeon relates delightful anecdotes about various elders, deacons, and other church members that endear them to us over a century later. One or two of his elders, he says, "made it their special work to 'watch for souls' in our great congregation, and to bring to immediate decision those who appeared to be impressed under the preaching of the Word. One brother has earned for himself the title of my hunting dog, for he is always ready to pick up the wounded birds."

A deacon receives touching tribute for loving ministry to his pastor during a time of special crisis. While ill, Spurgeon became very anxious about money matters. The deacon attempted to comfort his pastor with the assurance that he would do something, and true to his word, returned a short time later with all the stocks, shares, deeds, and available funds that he possessed. Putting them on the bed he said, "There, my dear Pastor, I owe everything I have in the world to you, and you are quite welcome to all I possess. Take whatever you need, and do not have another moment's anxiety." Spurgeon, of course, did not take so much as a penny of what was so graciously offered, but he never forgot the great kindness.

Another favorite chapter is the one describing the tireless pastor's labors—"A Typical Week's Work." Spurgeon once said, "The man who finds the ministry an easy life will also find that it will bring a hard

death." Spurgeon's was a hard life, and if the converse of his dictum is also true, then he must have enjoyed an easy conscience at death; his typical work week almost baffles belief. I have sometimes read this chapter's description of the fearful demands upon this poor man's time and almost wept with vexation over what was heaped upon him. It does me good, though, to read and be shamed at how easily I'm bowed down with not a tithe of what Spurgeon shouldered.

One other delightful chapter that I must mention is "In the Study at Westwood." It describes Spurgeon's library (over 12,000 volumes) and his lifelong love affair with books. When he first moved into the Westwood home there were many empty shelves, in spite of the immense size of his library. So Spurgeon had dummy volumes made by his bookseller to fill the


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

Spurgeon's one hobby was his books. He invested all that he could spare in them . . .

spaces and amused himself by creating fictitious titles and authors for them. One he titled *Wretched Scandals* by the Talkers' Sisters. Another he called *Mischief* by Boys, another *Windows Ventilated* by Stone, another *Hints on Honey Pots* by A. B., and still another he entitled *Sticking up for One's Self* by Pole. Was this man a wit, or what?

Spurgeon's one hobby was his books. He invested all that he could spare in them, especially the old leather-clad works of the Puritans. These he lovingly arranged in a little room off his study that he affectionately called "the den." The biography includes a picture of a corner of it where the shelving comes together to form a little nook where he placed a leather armchair to which to retreat among his beloved authors. Happy were the precious moments he was able to redeem to spend in quiet there.

Spurgeon once told the legend of an earthquake that swallowed up a village, along with its church, and buried them beneath the ground. But at Christmas, so the story went, the old church bells could still be heard pealing from deep down under the earth by anyone who put his ear to the ground. So, Spurgeon said, "those preachers whose voices were clear and mighty for truth during life, continue to preach in their graves!"

I, for one, am grateful to be able to pick up these two volumes of autobiography and put my "ear to the ground" for a trace of this great and godly man. 

—Mark Minnick

The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14). This first reference to David in the Bible has been popularly enshrined in inspiring devotional terms.

"A man after his own heart"—we tend to isolate that famous phrase and take it to mean that David was a man who pursued after God's heart, or that David loved and valued the same things God does. Certainly the spirit of David's Psalms testifies that he was such a man. But is this what that clause means in its grammatical context? First Samuel 13:14 seems to be communicating something rather different than what we have come to assume.

When Israel first demanded a king (1 Sam. 8:5, 20), they wanted one "like" all the other nations so he could judge them "like" all the other nations, and so they could be "like" all the other nations. In these verses, the word "like" translates a one-letter Hebrew preposition attached as a prefix to the word "all." Literally, they wanted a king "according to" what the other nations had.

That kind of king is exactly what God gave to them—the best Israel had to offer that would be "like" or "according to" all the other nations. And we all know how that turned out! When Saul sinned by failing to keep the commandment of the Lord (1 Sam. 13:13, 14), God announced: "Thy kingdom shall not continue. [This time] the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people." The word "after" is precisely the same Hebrew construction as in 8:5, 20. The same prepositional prefix ("like" or "according to") is attached to the one compound Hebrew word translated "his own heart." It would be more clearly translated, "the Lord has sought a man for Himself according to His own heart."


The contrast between Israel's desire for a king "according to" all the other nations and God's appointment this time of a man "according to" His heart seems clearly intentional in the grammatical context. In this case, the phrase "after" or "according to His own heart" would not function as an adjective modifying the word "man" (referring to David as a man after God's heart); rather, it functions adverbially, modifying the Lord's seeking and appointing a man "according to" His wishes. At least one other version takes the grammar this way: "The Lord has looked for the kind of man he wants" (NCV).

This interpretation is suggested not for novelty but solely out of regard for the Spirit-inspired grammar of the text. But if this is actually the intended meaning

here, it would be nice if there were some other corroborating use of this phrase elsewhere, right? In fact, 2 Samuel 7:20–21 duplicates precisely the same Hebrew construction (except the pronoun is "your" instead of "his"), where David exults in God's gracious choice of him and his house: "according to thine own heart hast thou done all these things." Clearly here it is God's act of *choosing* David, not David himself, that was "according to His own heart (desire)." (See also the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 17:18–19.)

Does this reading rob us of a precious devotional description of David? Not really. As already conceded, David was a man "after God's own heart" in the traditional sense. But that is not really what is being communicated in the verse from which that cherished phrase is taken. What, then, does the statement that "God chose David according to His own heart" communicate to us? I think it is even more revelatory of God and more immediately relevant to us than the traditional understanding.

The historical picture is much bigger than merely David and Saul. The broad picture includes a lesson to the people of God. We don't need to be, and shouldn't want to be, "like" all the nations! When that is our goal, our ambition, our rationale for personal choices or ministry methods, we err. We don't even need to be "like" all the other Christians! We ought to be content—indeed, we ought to be *insistent*—that everything in our lives be appointed "according to" God's heart, that God be allowed to order our affairs "according to" *His* will, *His* desires, and *His* timing.

Israel's request for a king was not, in itself, wrong. But their insistence (despite the warnings of God through Samuel) and their motive (the desire to be "like all the other nations") is what displeased God and twisted that request into a rejection of Him (1 Sam. 8:7). Clearly, the monarchy was part of God's plan all along, but it was not yet His timing. And they would not have had to wait long. Only ten years after Saul was crowned at the people's insistence, David was born. Samuel was still around when God's choice "according to His own heart" came along. So why did they need Saul so badly? They didn't! What heartaches, sins, and rivalries God's people might have been spared, had they only waited for God to seek out and appoint a man "according to His own heart" to be their king, instead of insisting on *their* will, *their* way, *their* timing, and *their* desire for a king "like all the other nations." 

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

Our loving Heavenly Father was so missions-minded that He “sent His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). When Christians consider the matter of missions they consider a matter dear to the heart of God.

The power of the American passport and American purse is a tremendous responsibility sadly forgotten by many American Christians. “According to the 13th edition of the Mission Handbook, the ‘bible’ of missionary analysis, America ranks 16th per capita in the list of countries sending missionaries overseas. That’s right. Sixteenth! In ratio to the national population, America ranks behind Ireland, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Canada, France, Switzerland, New Zealand, Norway, West Germany, Australia and Sweden” (Woodrow Kroll, *The Vanishing Ministry*, pp. 25–26).

Just as the student must travel to northern Minnesota to discover the first springs of the mighty Mississippi, the believer who would have a mind for missions must trace a path to Acts 13. The story begins in Antioch. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2–3).

The Missions-Minded Are Mindful of People

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul” (Acts 13:1). What an extraordinary group of people! Barnabas, a Levite from the Isle of Cyprus (Acts 4:36), was a man who sweetly sacrificed his land holdings for the work of His Lord. Simeon, the man called “Niger” or “black,” was quite possibly the man who bore the Savior’s cross (Mark 15:21). It may well be that Lucius of Cyrene was brought to Christ by Simeon who also came from Cyrene (Mark 15:21). Manaen was “brought up with Herod the tetrarch.” Historians have identified Manaen as the foster brother of Herod Antipas, the ruler who required the head of John the Baptist and tried the Lord Jesus Christ. Saul, the former Pharisee from Tarsus and persecutor of the church, also called the church at Antioch home. The people in the church of Antioch had something special. They had “the grace of God which bringeth salvation” (Titus 2:11). They knew the blessings of Christian fellowship and edification (Eph. 4:11–12).

The church at Antioch began when unnamed evangelists from Cyprus and Cyrene came bearing the gospel (Acts 11:20–21). As the number of disciples multiplied in Antioch, the Lord filled their minds with the matter of missions. It would seem only natural that their first concern was for the people of Cyprus (Acts 13:4–5). The people of Cyprus brought the gospel to the people of Antioch. Now the people of Antioch would carry the

gospel to the people of Cyprus.

When Adoniram Judson, America’s first foreign missionary, picked up his quill and began to scratch a note requesting the hand of Miss Ann Hasseltine, his thoughts moved beyond the bliss of matrimony and encompassed his burden for missions. Adoniram wanted to share the believer’s benefits with those who were perishing without the gospel. After prayerfully considering the need to bring a wife with him to the field, Judson wrote,

“To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, ‘A window shalt thou make in the ark.’”

Charles Spurgeon

I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next Spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure for a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the sultry clime of India; to every kind of want and distress, to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left his heavenly home, and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from heathens saved, through her means from eternal woe and despair? (*Burma’s Great Missionary. Records of the Life, Character and Achievements of Adoniram Judson*, Fletcher Co. of New York, 1854, p. 39).

Ann and Adoniram were married February 5, 1812. Judson was ordained to the gospel ministry the next day. Just 12 days later the newlyweds would leave the safe harbor of Salem, Massachusetts. The Judson’s 114-day honeymoon cruise would bring them to Calcutta because they had a heart for people who were “perishing.”

If the church would be missions-minded, the church must be mindful of people. “The unreached peoples of the world are categorized into 16,750 people groups. These groups represent 59 percent of the world’s population” (Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*, p. 199). Studies indicate that less than one percent of Japan’s population claims Christianity (Kroll, p. 19). India is home to nearly one billion souls, only three percent of whom are Christians. “Europe today has been accurately described as being a secular post-Christian society. More than a third of Europeans overall do not believe in God” (ibid., p. 21). People are perishing. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14). The church

at Antioch saw the need to bring the blessings that they enjoyed to those who were without hope.

The Missions-Minded Are Mindful of Prayer

The mother church of the missionary movement “ministered . . . fasted . . . and prayed” (Acts 13:2–3). According to Henry Martyn, missionary to India and Persia, “the spirit of Christ is the Spirit of missions and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become” (Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Vol. I, p. 456).

Our Lord has instructed us to “look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). But experience teaches us that the fields are only seen by those who bend the knee in prayer (Matt. 9:38) and look through the glass of the Spirit.

In 1723, Count Zinzendorf of Saxony along with another nobleman and two Lutheran pastors established the “Covenant of the Four Brethren” for the propagation of the gospel throughout the world. Within four short years, several hundred Brethren had gathered on Zinzendorf’s estate; so Count Zinzendorf and the Brethren established a community that they would call “Herrnhut” (Lodge of the Lord). Herrnhut was home to the Moravian pietists.

At Herrnhut the members of the community were divided into sections for devotional purposes, and times for prayer were so arranged for each that no intermission of petitions to the throne of grace might occur. As early as 1728 plans for missions to Mohammedans and heathen were being laid, and visits were made by members of the organization to Turkey, Africa, St. Thomas, Greenland, Lapland, Georgia and Surinam. . . . Pennsylvania was entered in 1735 (Albert Newman, *A Manual for Church History*, Vol. II, pp. 536–538).

“The Moravian Prayer meeting which began with the spiritual awakening of August 13, 1727, in Herrnhut . . . lasted for one hundred years, the first quarter of which saw the sending forth of more than one hundred missionaries” (J. C. Macaulay, *Expository Commentary on Acts*, p. 135).

Most students of the history of American foreign missions would say that America’s involvement in foreign missions began in 1812 with the sending out of the Judsons and the Newells. Though such a date would be factually true, it fails to consider that it was in a prayer meeting that the matter of missions began to matter to Americans.

One hot, humid Saturday afternoon in August of 1808, Samuel Mills led five students in a prayer meeting in a Maple Grove known as “Sloan’s Meadow,” between [Williams] college and the Hoosac River. They had scarcely assembled when a thunderstorm broke. . . . The only shelter was a haystack in a clearing in the grove; they took refuge . . . under its overhanging sides. . . . While lightning flashed and thunder cracked overhead, four of the five enthusiastically approved a proposal “to send the Gospel to the pagans


. . . to the dark and heathen land” (Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore*, p. 61).

Samuel Mills and James Richards, who participated in the haystack prayer meeting, were soon to enroll at Andover Seminary where their zeal for missions would influence Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell, and countless others. Before going to proclaim, there will always be groaning in prayer.

The Missions-Minded Are Mindful of the Prize

While proclaiming the good news on the Isle of Crete, Paul and Barnabas encountered satanic opposition. A false prophet named Bar-Jesus withstood the work of the Lord (Acts 13:6–8). Satan’s strongholds will not yield without a struggle. Whether the messenger is on the Isle of Crete in the first century or in the streets of America in the 21st century, opposition ought to be expected. Paul “set his eyes on” his enemy (Acts 13:9). The false prophet was blinded (Acts 13:11). “Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord” (Acts 13:12). Those who are sent of the Lord will see beyond the opposition to the prize. There are souls to be won.

In August of 1999 my daughter and I traveled to Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus. At a service in a small Belarussian village the Lord taught me an invaluable lesson. Almost 30 souls gathered to sing and listen to the sermon. The evening was hot. The villagers were tired from their farm labors. We met outdoors on plank benches next to an old thatched-roof house. When the invitation was given, amazingly, more than half of those assembled made professions of faith in Christ. As the congregation began to disperse, I noticed that an elderly woman was simultaneously weeping and smiling. Approaching the dear lady, I sought the assistance of an interpreter to learn her story. I discovered that the weeping lady was 88 years of age. She was married in the 1930s. Shortly after her marriage her husband served with the Polish as they tried in vain to resist the advances of Hitler’s German Army. In 1939 the Germans seized Belarus. The soldiers fled. Her husband sought refuge in England. When World War II ended, Lenin took control of the Belarussians. Her husband knew that any return to Belarus would certainly mean imprisonment if not death. Lenin did not tolerate nationalistic fervor.

When the Iron Curtain came down a call came from England. After all these years, her husband was still alive. Sadly, he was now too aged and frail to travel. Though they had not spoken since 1939, love burned through the phone lines as husband and wife shared their joys and sorrows. The greatest joy was that the faithful wife had led both of their children to Christ. As we stood talking, the woman of God said to me, “All of my prayers have been answered! I prayed that I would hear again from my husband and God granted my request. For 60 years I have prayed that someone would come and preach the gospel in my village. Tonight, you are the answer to my prayers.” That night I came to understand that those who are missions-minded are mindful of the prize. 



1999-2000 Bible faculty, from left to right. Back row: Steve Hankins, Tony Miller, Mike Barrett, Mark Minnick, Bruce McAllister, Randy Jaeggli, Royce Short, David Shumate, Bob Wood. Front row: Gary Reimers, Dick Gray, Jim Bellis, Stewart Custer, David Beale

pastors & teachers

Many of the BJU Bible faculty are not only teaching, they are preaching as well. During this past school year, BJU had six Bible faculty members pastoring in local churches, and eight more who have pastored churches in the past. Serving in the pastorate provides them with hands-on experience that helps them to prepare the ministerial class for the challenges they will face as they get out into the ministry. This is just another example of BJU's dedication to the local church ministry. For more information about how BJU prepares our ministerial students for their future ministries, call **1-800-BJ-AND-ME**.



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—Tim Bixby, senior Bible major

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Does God Have Your Attention?

Marie A. Bedics

It was a cool summer morning. You know the type—a soft breeze blowing in the window, making you want to lie there the entire morning, breathing in the fresh, cool air. The children were sleeping in and my husband was leaving for work early. It was difficult to get up and get moving. So I took advantage of the opportunity to lie there and take in the fresh sounds of summer.

Just as I was praising the Lord for the peacefulness, a voice broke through the silence. My neighbor was leaving for work. Her father comes to her house to watch her two-year-old while she works. She was trying to say good-bye.

"Good-bye, honey. Good-bye, Devon. Honey, good-bye! I love you. Mommy loves you, good-bye! Good-bye, Mommy loves you! Mommy loves you, honey, good-bye! I love you!" As her voice got louder and louder, it became more and more obvious that her son was ignoring her.

Finally, in what sounded like total frustration, she shouted, "I hate you!" Now that she had her son's attention, she very calmly said "Good-bye, honey. I love you. Have a good day with Pop-pop."

As the shock of the situation wore off, the sadness of it all sank in. She had had to say she hated him to get his attention! The Lord quickly used this moment to impress upon my heart the magnitude of His love toward us. We serve a God who will continually say,

"I love you," no matter how hard we try to ignore Him when He reveals our sin to us. Maybe it starts with a thought. "Was that sin?" And God says, "Yes. But I love you." Then a family member notices and makes a comment about our sin. And God says, "I love you." Next, your dearest friend mentions it and suggests some verses to study. And even though you continue to ignore all the evidence of your sin, God still says, "I love you." Then there is that pang of conviction you feel during a message. And you may even cry unto the Lord, "Why are You putting me through this?" But what is God's answer? "I love you. I loved you so much that I gave My Son for you (John 3:16). And no matter what you do, I will always love you (Rom. 5:8). I am putting you through this because I love you (Prov. 3:12). And when you are ready to confess this sin, I will be here to forgive you (1 John 1:9). Then we can have sweet fellowship together again (Psalm 51:12)."

How wonderful! Our Lord never says "I hate you." In all He does, He shows His love. Even when we are not paying attention, He continues to love us.

It was a refreshing morning after all. *Thank you, Lord. I love You too.*

Marie A. Bedics is a freelance writer living in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where she and her family are active members of Airport Road Baptist Church.



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The Silver Dollar

Robert D. Vincent

A curious package awaited me as my wife and I returned home from out of town recently. As I opened the envelope, dozens of images flashed across my mind in a moment. I saw myself sitting in Junior Boys Sunday school class . . . 25 years ago. Tripp, Kevin, Jeff, and my fiercest competitor, my brother Milton, all sitting with me in metal chairs in a trailer behind the local union hall where we met for church in Albany, Georgia. Others were there, but their faces are less distinct. Each week our teacher began by listening to us quote our memory verses, then allowing us to compete to see who could repeat the verse the fastest. The winner received a shiny silver dollar.

You can imagine the diligence with which we pursued the prize. All of us wanted to win. Each week the competition seemed to stiffen. Yet it seemed that nearly every week the competition came down to two finalists, my older brother and me. Every week my brother would triumphantly brandish his silver prize. That is, every week but one.

It was the Sunday of the week of our nation's bicentennial celebration. For the first time, after weeks of trying and lots of practice, I had, to my own amazement, finally spoken faster than my brother. As I prepared to receive the coveted prize of the silver dollar, our teacher announced that in honor of the country's birthday he was going to do something different. Instead of giving the usual silver dollar, this week he would give a silver bicentennial half-dollar.

My childish, ungrateful heart struggled with the substitution. My brother's face across the room haunted me. I had finally won, but I had gotten less. I tried not to show my disappointment and to be content with the lesser prize. After all, 50 cents in those days still went pretty far.

Within a few days I spent that 50 cents on some frivolous pleasure. That coin was the only thing of monetary value I ever received from my Junior Boys Sunday school class. Not too many years passed, however, before I realized that the most valuable thing I received that day was not the coin I had held in my hand. The most valuable reward was the privilege of receiving it from the hand of my teacher.

My teacher, "Brother Huey," was the first person I had ever consciously witnessed being transformed as a new creature in Christ. I knew him only briefly before he was saved, and he was a totally different man afterward. When I think of those years at Circle

Baptist Church, my most prominent memory outside of my own conversion is the astounding changes in lives that God wrought through that young ministry. Seeing people transformed by the grace of God, to my young mind, seemed to be the norm. We were learning firsthand from one of those transformed men.

Brother Huey was a Marine and a member of the military police—a tough, rough-hewn, fearless man whose heart God had broken and softened with a burden for young boys. He was intent on making us memorize verses in the Bible, the very tool God had used to change his own life. The life of this teacher made an impression on me far deeper than any coin or reward ever could. Over the years in his class, he gave me something far more valuable than a 50-cent piece. I saw a transformed life investing itself in seeing other lives transformed. Though the coin disappeared, the memory and impact of my teacher never did.

Recently, I saw Brother Huey again. I had seen him only a handful of times during the intervening 25 years, though I occasionally heard through others how the Lord had been using him. We talked briefly about the days at that little church in Georgia, and I related my memories of those days in his class.

On New Year's Day 2000, I arrived home from a trip to find the package in our mail. Imagine my surprise and delight when I opened it to discover a letter from Brother Huey, along with a bicentennial silver dollar and a certificate commemorating the original event.

For nearly a quarter century, I have savored the memory of Brother Huey and his spiritual interest in me during my childhood. I enjoy revisiting memories of those days from time to time and am increasingly grateful for the privilege that was mine to sit under this man in those impressionable years. I learned more from what God did in his life than I could ever relate. For years the memories of the silver coins reminded me not only of his changed life, but of the fervency of his desire to see our lives changed. Now, 25 years later, I have a visual memento. I won't spend this one. Its real worth lies in its reminder of the lessons I learned about the Lord from my teacher's life.

Robert Vincent is an assistant pastor at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

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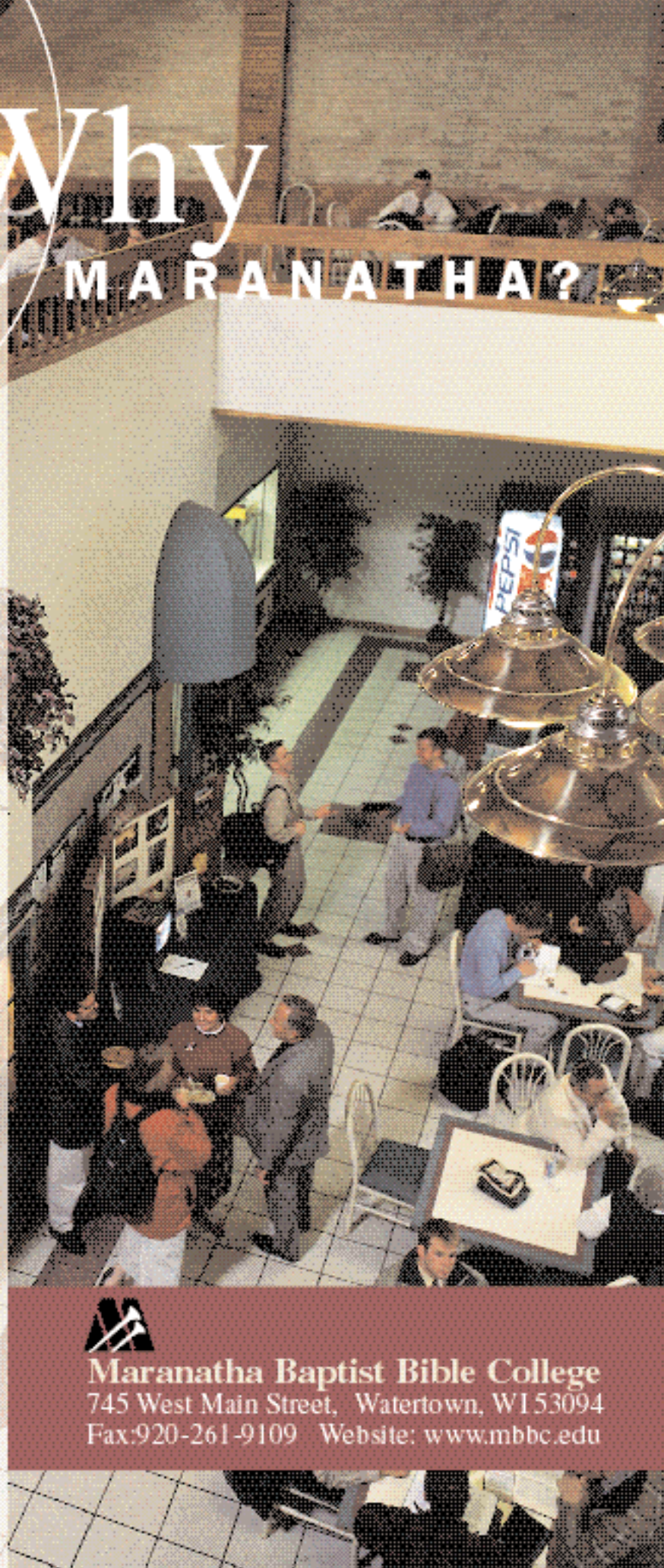
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If the pastor of the smallest church in North Carolina became president of the United State, he'd be stepping down.
—Vance Havner

I am leaving the ship of the Church in a storm; but whilst the Great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable.
—John Owen

Let "wrath deserved" be written on the door of hell, but "the free gift of grace" on the gate of heaven. —a Puritan

Certain it is that the reason there is so much shallow living, much talk, but little obedience, is that so few are prepared to be, like the pine on the hilltop, alone in the wind for God.
—Amy Carmichael

Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without.
—Edmund Burke

No man is poor who has a godly mother.
—Abraham Lincoln

Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.
—Samuel Johnson

One way to curb delinquency is to take parents off the street at night.
—Morrie Gallant

The pessimist's epitaph: "Just what I might have expected."
—Unknown

He who no longer reads should get out of the ministry.
—John Wesley

Never allow the thought, "I am of no use where I am." You are certainly of no use where you're not.
—Oswald Chambers

Speakers are a lot like mushrooms. You never know if you're getting a bad one until it's too late. —Bob Orben

If you want to save face, trying keeping the lower end of it closed.
—Unknown

Fathers have very stout hearts, so they have to be broken sometimes or no one would know what's inside.
—Unknown

I do not truly love a man if I love his sin. —John Duncan

Abandon your animosities and make your sons Americans!
—Robert E. Lee

The price of greatness is responsibility.
—Winston Churchill

Trust is one of the sublimest forms of adoration.
—Charles Spurgeon

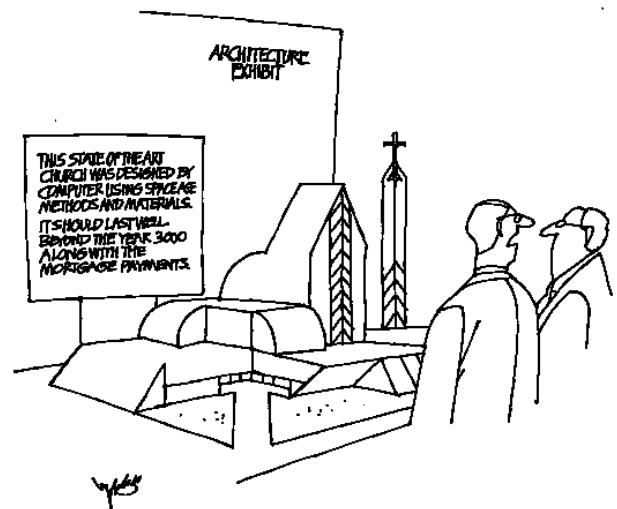
One leak will sink a ship, and one sin will destroy a sinner.
—John Bunyon

Truth has no responsibility to make us comfortable.
—David L. Russell

Ingratitude is the daughter of pride. —Unknown

The holy man is not one who cannot sin. A holy man is one who will not sin.
—A. W. Tozer

The strength of a man's virtue should not be measured by his special exertions, but by his habitual acts.
—Blaise Pascal



"... that last paragraph bothers me . . ."

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



Guardian Angels on Overtime

Robert W. Browne

*"Take heed . . . in heaven their angels do
always behold the face of my Father"
(Matt. 18:10).*

Rufus Perry and I were playing marbles in the shade of a large pecan tree. I should have picked another of the 10-year-old boys as an opponent. Rufus was an expert—he already had a pocket full of my marbles he'd knocked out of the ring drawn in the red clay. On this summer of 1934, at the Baptist Orphanage in Troy, Alabama, we were completely absorbed in the game at hand.

Suddenly, the sky above the pecan tree seemed to explode around us! Awestruck, Rufus and I watched as a large biplane roared over at treetop level and slowly disappeared over the horizon.

I turned to Rufus and excitedly said, "Rufus, I'm going to fly one of those some day!" I guess that biplane had about a 500-horsepower engine. Little did I realize that just ten years later I'd pilot a large four-engine bomber with about ten times as much horsepower as that noisy biplane.

I praise God for the good Christian leaders at the orphanage who led me to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and taught me that prayer (talking with God) and Bible study (God talking to me) were essential for victorious Christian living.

After high school graduation in June 1942, six months after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, one of the very kind matrons at the orphanage lent me a small sum of money to go to Mobile, Alabama, to seek a job. I was 18 years old. I'd heard that the Mobile shipyards were desperately seeking workers.

About a week later, I was still waiting for word from the shipyards. My money was gone. Seated on a bench in Bienville Park in the heart of Mobile, I was in despair. I had eaten only a Hershey chocolate bar in three days. I bent my head in fervent prayer to my Lord.

An elderly man was seated on a bench nearby, feeding peanuts to squirrels. I recall thinking, *I'll watch where the squirrels bury their peanuts and dig them up when the old man leaves the park.* He never left.

I could wait no longer. I finally walked across the park to one of the storefronts where a large red, white, and blue sign stood. It boldly proclaimed, "Uncle Sam Needs You," emphasized by Uncle Sam's long bony finger pointing straight at me.

Just inside the storefront a smartly dressed sergeant sat at

a large wooden desk. With a kindly voice he said, "Son, you look hungry." That had to be the understatement of the year! "Come on in."

The sergeant soon handed me a bologna sandwich and a paper cup full of milk. The way I devoured the food no doubt prompted him to offer me seconds. I earnestly thanked the good man (and the Lord!).

Then the sergeant said, "Son, your draft board will be looking for you soon, and they will put you anywhere they wish. But if you enlist now, you can pick any one of many schools the Army has to offer." He opened a large three-ring binder as he spoke. My eyes were quickly riveted on one of the school titles: Aircraft Mechanic. I signed the paper thrust at me and was informed that I was now in the Army Air Corps and destined for the school the next day.

After graduating from the Aircraft Mechanic School, things really started popping: I was accepted in the Aviation Cadet Pilot Training Program—12 months, four locations for preflight, primary, basic, and advanced flight instruction.

Those 12 grueling months of ground and flight school finally paid off—on May 14, 1944, I received my silver pilot's wings and gold second lieutenant's bars—a very exciting moment!

Soon after my graduation from advanced training, I was assigned to the B-17 "Flying Fortress" Combat Crew Training Center at Ardmore, Oklahoma. Three months later I was assigned to the Eighth Air Force, 487th Bomb Group, at Lavenham, England.

I flew 35 combat missions with the 487th Bomb Group. On many of the missions my "Fort," named *Fearless Fosdick*,* received battle damage, but none of the damage was serious and none of the crew was injured. The following is an example of how the awesome hand of God worked on one of my missions.

The target on November 30, 1944, was the oil refineries in Merseburg, Germany, a target we knew would be well-protected by enemy fighters and antiaircraft guns, which we referred to as "flak."

We made several course changes on the way to our target in attempts to confuse enemy fighters being directed to attack us. After what seemed an eternity in enemy territory, we heard that ominous voice from bomber command, "I. P. five minutes." I. P. stood for *initial point*, at which all bombers turned toward the target ten miles away.

When I completed the 90-degree I. P. turn, I looked ahead in awe. The sky was almost obscured with the density of flak

bursts! And through the black 88mm bursts ahead, getting closer by the second, a literal curtain of B-17s could be seen going down in flames! During that ten miles, I prayed as I never had before that God would deliver my crew and me from the carnage I saw ahead.

One flaming bomber after another left our formations. Flak tore apart men and machines. Both enemy and friendly fighters steered clear to escape the flak the bombers must endure to release bombs on the refineries below.

"Bomb doors open!" came the command. Ugly black bursts were now all around us. I sat with every muscle tensed, expecting searing hot pieces of steel to tear into me at any moment. Suddenly our orderly formations turned to chaos! The Fort on my left wing turned away, its number three engine flaming all the way to its tail. A Fort from a squadron high above went straight down in front of us, both wings on fire. Another Fort ahead went into a steep dive. Probably both pilots were killed by shrapnel. Many parachutes could be seen below on both sides of us. Most would live to become prisoners of war. A Fort on our right pulled away from formation, trailing smoke. He dove at about 45 degrees with cowl flaps open, the standard procedure to put out a fire forward of the engine firewall. The white trail of smoke suddenly became a huge white cloud. The Fort had exploded. The pilot must have misjudged—the fire had to be behind the firewall, adjacent to the main fuel tank. There were no survivors.

An upward surge of *Fearless Fosdick* indicated that our bombs had been released. All around us Forts were releasing their bombs. But there were many gaps in our formations where Forts used to be. Perhaps even more conspicuous would be the empty seats at the officers' mess where the aircrews always dined at the same table.

Over Merseburg, lead Forts began making steep turns to the left. Then our turn came. From our group's lead Fort came the familiar voice, "Let's get out of here!" We banked steeply as we followed the leader.

Suddenly we were in an unbelievably serene sky, heading home. The "second shift" of our fighters, "little friends," arrived to protect us from enemy fighters. The German Focke Wulf-190s (FW-190s) and Messerschmidt-109s (ME-109s) had circled around the massive flak concentrations to wait for us on the other side. Our escorting P-51 and P-47 fighters kept the enemy fighters too busy to inflict damage except on a few unfortunate damaged Forts that could not keep formation. Ball and tail gunners were excitedly reporting that great billowing columns of smoke were pouring out of Merseburg.

We received reports that 63 Forts and 34 of our fighters were lost. Some 80 percent of our bomber division aircraft that managed to return were either scrapped or required weeks of repair. I reflected on the fact that my bomber had not received even one scratch! Often I've talked with my Heavenly Father with much rejoicing and thanksgiving because of His great love, mercy, and amazing grace shown in sparing my life when so many others perished.

There were numerous occasions during flight training and in combat when I sought wisdom and safety through our awesome, loving Father in Heaven. Providential help was always there! God never failed! "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (Psa. 145:18).

*Fearless Fosdick was a character in a well-known cartoon strip.

After World War II Robert W. Browne became an aerospace engineer and artist. He retired in 1992 and now is a freelance writer living in Georgiana, Alabama.

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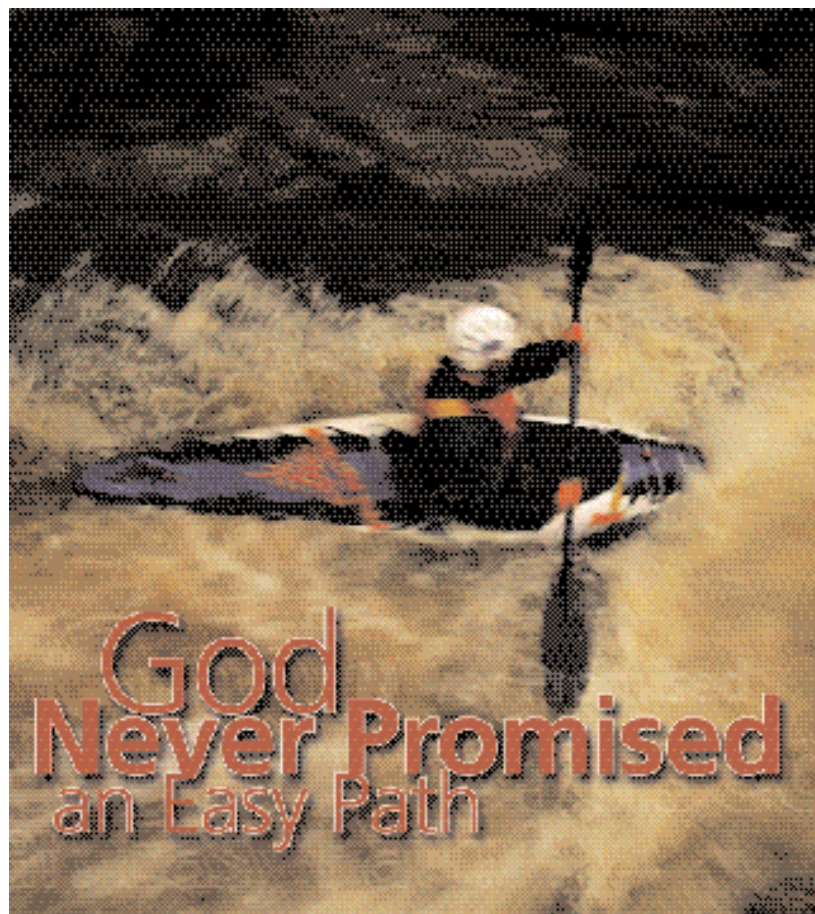
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"Tell Me . . . Where Thou Feedest."

Phil Shuler

*"Tell me . . . where thou feedest, where
thou makest thy flock to rest at noon"
(Song of Sol. 1:7).*

I have never seen the time that I could not eat anything set before me. Once when in Singapore, we attended a Chinese dinner. Among other things, they served us a boiled goose egg, with the baby goose about two days from hatching. The other Americans shrank back, horrified, while Evangelist Bill Hall and I cut one in half and ate it, feathers, legs, head, and all!

Our text, however, refers to food not created by culinary artists, but by the One who created everything, saw that it was good, watched it go bad, and determined to redeem it for Himself. Solomon speaks here of the Bride and the Bridegroom, as the New Testament speaks of the Church and Christ. Every believer in Christ is His church and is the concern of the Bridegroom, who purchased our dowry on Calvary's brow. His request is pertinent for for this day of grace: "Tell me . . . where thou feedest." The majority of church members in America will be forced to reply: "In front of the television," or "On the Internet," or perhaps "At my job." While Americans eat themselves into an early grave, they starve their souls by withholding from it heavenly manna that is no farther away than their Bible.

"Tell me . . . where thou feedest." Allow God to answer that question. Because the moment of salvation ushers us into a direct access to God Himself, we should feed by way of family devotions.

No one has served in the armed forces of our country without knowing that all orders are passed down from the top to the bottom, for without those orders, there would be confusion. Every Christian should get his orders daily from God Himself. "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy might be full." This is God's request. "But . . . ye have not because ye ask not." We just

expect God to throw things our way, as one who scatters feed to the chickens. We neglect a time of prayer and Bible reading and expect to know the will of God for our lives. We deceive ourselves by thinking longevity in the Christian life negates the need of devotion time with our Lord.

We also feed by Bible reading and study. Dr. Ian Paisley told me that he reads his Bible an hour a day and studies it two hours a day. This man is a pastor and member of Parliament in England who maintains an extremely hectic schedule, but his first meeting each and every day is with his Lord in Bible reading and in prayer. As soldiers of the cross, where could we better receive His orders of the day, than from the General Himself?

We are raising a generation of children who are starved each day of spiritual food at home and are left for the church and Christian school to feed. Christian friend, do not neglect your devotional time with God before your children. That will be among the most precious memories they will have when they are adults.

We feed also on illustrations that remind us of His teaching. Christ used parables on this earth that illustrated His point. "He spake not unto the multitude except by parables"—illustrations, reminders, probes of thought that bring you to the answer.

"Tell me . . . where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." Have you ever seen the placid view of cows under a poplar tree at noon, lying in the shade and chewing? They have already grazed. They have watered. But now they rest, but in resting they chew the cud. You see, cows have two stomachs. They fill one with grass, and later they bring the grass up in pellets and slowly chew them. In other words, at rest they still feed and gain nourishment. The Word of God is not merely literature; it is constant food. It gives constant energy. It allows us to fight the fight and gain the victory. Without it, we will lose more battles than we will win.

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

Interpreting the Bible: A Tale of Two Questions

Accurate Bible interpretation starts with asking two questions—and asking them in the right order.

❶ What did it mean for them [the original recipients]?

This is *always* the *first* question. This is where *exegesis* comes in. Exegesis has reference, literally, to drawing or pulling out of a text the meaning inherent in that text within its context. This practice requires that the diligent Bible student or Bible reader pay attention to the following areas.

Literary Context

All communication occurs in some kind of context. The context is what gives any text meaning, and distinctive contexts give a communication distinctive meanings. A writer (Biblical or otherwise) expects the reader to understand any part of the communication in light of the whole context. When we isolate a phrase or verse from its context, the number of possible interpretations (and consequently, applications) increases. But we don't want to increase the number of interpretations. We want to reduce the possibilities, by paying attention to the context, in order to discern the author's original intent.

For instance, a word may have several different meanings. Insert that word into a sentence and the number of possible meanings decreases. Place that sentence in a paragraph and the number of possible meanings for that word decreases still further. The same holds true for a sentence. By itself, a sentence could be ambiguous or seem to imply a particular meaning; but placed in the context of a paragraph, the ambiguity is reduced, and placed in the context of a document, it is reduced even further.

"Just as a stone thrown into a pond causes ripples to move away from the center with increasing area, so must the context-sensitive interpreter move away from the text to its immediate context, to its book context, to its context in the particular Testament, and finally to its context in the whole of Scripture" (Michael Barrett, *Beginning at Moses*, 251-252).

Historical Context

God gave His revelation in a certain (ancient and oriental) historical context which necessarily shaped many of its topics and idioms, and even sometimes its literary structure. If we wish to understand accurately what *is* meant, we must first understand clearly what *was* meant. To do that, we must take the time and make the effort to understand something about that historical context. This has to do with considerations of the history, culture, archaeology, authorship, date, purpose, and circumstances behind any given passage or book. A careful investigation of the historical context can dramatically affect—and correct—our interpretation

and, therefore, our application of a passage.

Linguistic Context

God gave His revelation in the then-current human languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—so that man could understand it. Linguistic context has to do with the study of these languages and their vocabulary, grammar, figures of speech, and literary devices. This is the area in which the average layman is most restricted in his study of the Bible, but a number of helps are available.

Theological Context

God's revelation to man is essentially and primarily *self-revelation*. He is the center. He is the focal point. He is the primary subject. Because the Bible is God's Word, it cannot be self-contradictory; it is totally unified in its overall message as well as its individual revelations and communications. Its revelation is progressive (that is, the level of revelatory detail increases throughout the Bible), but not contradictory.

❷ What does it mean for us?

This is *always* the *secondary* question. This is where *exposition* comes in. Exposition has reference, literally, to positing a truth directly out of the text. This involves discerning the *timeless, universal principles* communicated through the time-bound, localized immediate context of the original writing.

A Scripture passage addresses a specific historical situation, but in so doing it provides a basis for addressing other situations. When we face "new" situations that are not directly addressed in Scripture, we seek to discern those underlying, timeless principles to guide our actions and decisions. "All Scripture . . . is profitable" for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction for all men of all ages. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the farther our applications wander from the original intent apparent in the context, the less certainty and authority they carry.

Teaching the Bible: Asking the Right Question

What is the difference between an invention and a discovery? **Invention** is *creating* (from existing materials) something that didn't exist before, at least in that form. **Discovery** is *finding* something that has been there all along. These words describe two very different approaches to how we handle, teach, and preach God's Word. These approaches can be summarized, again, in the form of two questions.

What Can I Say About This Text?

This is, perhaps, the most natural question that pops up when we have occasion to preach, teach, or simply give a devotional. This is the approach of *invention* or *fabrication*. The focus is on me, what I can think up, what I can figure out to say about God's Word. It often produces an artificial

KEY QUESTIONS IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION

or manufactured authority—"this is true because I'm saying it about God's Word." This is exactly the wrong question to ask as we approach a passage of Scripture.

What Does This Text Say?

This is the harder, more demanding question to ask ourselves when we are asked to handle God's Word on any level. This is the approach of *discovery* or *exposition*. The focus is on God, what He has said, what words He has chosen, and how He has chosen to phrase it. It produces a natural authority that arises from the text itself and who said it—"this is true because this is what God says." This is the only *right* question to ask as we approach a passage of Scripture.

This approach is what differentiates exegesis from eisegesis. *Exegesis*, you remember, is *drawing out* of a passage the meaning that is inherent in the text within its context. *Eisegesis*, its opposite, is *dragging (reading) into* a passage of Scripture a meaning that is actually outside its context and, therefore, foreign to its intended meaning. The authority of God's Word resides in the text as understood in its context, and in an interpretation of the text that stands firmly on accurate exegesis. The following principles are applicable to our handling God's Word because they are applicable to our accurate and appropriate handling of any kind of communication.

Be careful not to read theological presuppositions into a passage. The text should shape our theology, not vice versa. If the clear meaning of a text does not square with our theology, guess which needs to be adjusted?

Be careful not to assume an "obvious" or traditional interpretation—especially one based on the phraseology of a single, particular translation—without thorough investigation. The January-February 2000 column listed several examples of this kind of mistake.

Be careful of an interpretation that "no one else has ever thought of." There may be a good reason for that! "Interpretation that aims at, or thrives on, uniqueness can usually be attributed to pride . . . a false understanding of spirituality . . . or vested interests" (Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 14). Novelty may be a virtue in the creative arts, but not in theology or hermeneutics.

When and Why We Differ

If God gave the Bible to reveal Himself clearly to man, why are there so many interpretational problems and differences among God's people? And if the principles of interpretation are essentially self-evident and universal, why are there so many different, often equally viable, interpretations of the same passage? Why doesn't everything in Scripture fit together with ease, without question, without paradoxes—or, if there is a difficulty or paradox, why can't there also be an inspired explanation?

God has chosen to test our faith by leaving certain ambiguities and difficulties of interpretation unresolved. Several factors contribute to our differences of opinion.*

Theological Predisposition

Our theological starting point inevitably influences our interpretation. Ideally, exegesis of the text should dictate one's theology, not vice versa. But once you have settled your theological framework, even on textual grounds, you will invariably come across texts that seem to contradict the theology you have already established. It is easier to adjust the interpretation of an isolated verse or passage than to restructure the whole framework. This is not an excuse; merely an explanation.

Differing Degrees of Giftedness

Different people bring to the task of interpretation different levels of ability. But remember, giftedness itself is not a guarantee of accuracy. A gifted theologian or commentator or preacher is just as prone to human flaws as a less gifted one, or may be swayed by a vested interest or a theological system.

Differing Perceptions of Authorial or Literary Intent

Different people also bring to the task of interpretation different views of a sacred writer's intent or point of emphasis.

Presence of Real Ambiguity

Frankly, there are a number of passages that are truly obscure—whether because of our difficulty in translating the language (Hebrew poetry, for example, is often notoriously difficult), or in understanding the ancient cultural/historical context behind a passage, or in simply deciding a grammatically ambiguous phrase which could have more than one viable possibility. The last point raises one final question: why are there so many seeming ambiguities in the Bible?

Why God Put Ambiguities in the Bible:

- To force us to search the Scriptures
- To help us personalize truth because we have to search it out
- To prompt our meditation on and preoccupy our minds with God's words
- To measure our interest in and love for God's words
- To provide reward for those who make the effort to search out God's words
- To test and cultivate our maturity, charity, and unity when we disagree

Endnote

* I am indebted to Dr. Mark Minnick for the lists of reasons for our differences and reasons for ambiguities in the Bible.

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Historic BBF Church Drops "Baptist" from Name

Following the teaching of Bill Hybels and Rick Warren, many Baptist churches of all stripes are dropping "Baptist" from their name. Temple Baptist (near Detroit) is the latest casualty. Its new name is NorthRidge Church. This is the Baptist Bible Fellowship church once pastored by G. Beauchamp Vick. (*Calvary Contender*, 3/15/2000)

Baptists in Scotland Approve Ordination of Women

The Baptist Union of Scotland has voted by a greater than a two-thirds majority to allow member churches to ordain women. (*Sword of the Lord*, 2/18/2000)

What Apology?

On March 7, the Vatican Press Office released a document titled "Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past." Much has been made of this apology from Rome to those she has tormented and wronged, but there is nothing of real substance to these "apologies." Even by the Catholic Church's own standards for confession of sin, these apologies are without substance. The Catholic sacrament of Confession requires that the sins be stated specifically. There is no specificity whatsoever, though, to the papal "apologies." Note the fol-

lowing plain statement: "The purpose of the text is, therefore, not to examine particular historical cases but rather to clarify the presuppositions that ground repentance for past faults." Even secular newspaper reporters saw through the Pope's apology. The Associated Press report for March 13, titled "Pope Seeks Pardon for Catholics," observed the lack of specificity, noting that the Pope "spoke mostly in general terms, not mentioning the holocaust, the inquisition or crusades by name and listing few specific groups."

The Pope has not confessed the bloody and horrible 600-year inquisition against humble Bible-believing saints, which was instigated formally by Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) and was conducted mercilessly by the popes who succeeded him, century after century, until finally Rome was no longer politically capable of sustaining it in the late 1700s. The Inquisition, set up in the name of Christ, resulted in the torment and murder of millions of Christ's own humble servants, whose only crime was a rejection of Catholic heresy and a commitment to follow the Bible as their sole authority for faith and practice. The Inquisition covered much of Europe and England and other parts of the world in a great darkness of unspeakable fear which lasted for more than six centuries. The inquisition was not a "mis-

take" or mere error of the times or an isolated error or the problem of a mere handful of "bad popes." It was the formal and official policy of the highest levels of Roman Catholic authority for centuries on end. John Paul II has not confessed the Inquisition; he has not labeled his fellow popes the murderers they were. (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, 3/22/2000)

Baptist Missionary Banned from Notre Dame

Missionary Steve Giegerich, Baptist Mid-Missions campus missionary at Notre Dame University, received the following letter from a school official. "I am requesting that you no longer enter upon any University property or enter a University residence facility to speak with students or distribute materials on behalf of Campus Bible Fellowship or any other organization. . . . Should you continue to engage in the activities not permitted by University policies, procedures or regulations, I will be required to issue you a trespass letter. The issuance of such a letter would . . . result in your arrest for criminal trespass if violated." (Fellowship of Missions, Winter 2000)

Las Vegas Nights at Catholic Church

Las Vegas Nights, offering games of easy craps,

black jack, roulette, a money wheel, and an hourly raffle, were held October 1-2 at St. Theodore Catholic Church in Westland, Michigan. Beer and refreshments were also available. St. Edith Catholic Church in Livonia has also had Las Vegas Nights, reports the *Detroit Free Press*. (*What In The World*, Vol. 27 No. 3)

The Magnificat Movement

Growing numbers of women are being baptized in the Holy Spirit through involvement in the Magnificat movement. Richard DiGiulio, director of charismatic renewal for the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, New York, says there are at least 1000 charismatic Catholics attending 55 prayer groups in the area. The quarterly Magnificat breakfast in December attracted its largest attendance ever of 479 women who sang, spoke in tongues, and prayed. (*Charisma*, March 2000)

Pentecostal Denomination Embraces Homosexuality

A Pentecostal denomination founded in 1980 teaches that homosexuality is not a sin. The National Gay Pentecostal Alliance (NGPA) claims to offer the same lively worship and spiritual gifts found in traditional Pentecostal denominations. But NGPA churches are made up of, though not limited to,

homosexuals. The denomination has spread to nine states and eight countries. The denomination's web site claims it preaches "the full Bible standard of salvation, repentance, water baptism by immersion and receiving the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking in tongues." (*What In The World*, Vol. 27 No. 3)

PCUSA To Split?

The general assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) will be asked to consider a series of resolutions this year declaring that "irreconcilable" differences exist within the denomination over the ordination of homosexuals. One proposed resolution would allow liberal Presbyterians who support such ordinations to leave the denomination and take church property with them. (*Christian News*, 3/6/2000)

Jeb Bush Appoints Homosexual Judge

Florida governor Jeb Bush named openly homosexual judge Victoria Sigler to the state's 11th Judicial Circuit Court. Sigler is a long-time participant in homosexual activism and received financial support from the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund when first elected in 1994. She was reportedly one of a dozen openly homosexual elected officials who met with President Clinton at the White House to discuss federal and state legislation for "gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered youth and public health policy." (*National Liberty Journal*, March 2000)

That Inflammatory Religion

On March 6 the Georgia Supreme Court overturned the death sentence of

NOTABLE QUOTES

I can't imagine that I would vote to confirm such a nominee.—First Lady and Senate candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton, when asked about voting for a judicial nominee known to have pro-life views

I would look for justices of the Supreme Court who understand that our Constitution is a living and breathing document, that it was intended by our Founders to be interpreted in the light of the constantly evolving experience of the American people.—Democrat presidential candidate Al Gore

The abandonment of original understanding in modern times means the transportation into the Constitution of the principles of a liberal culture that cannot achieve those results democratically. . . . Either the Constitution and statutes are law, which means that their principles are known and control judges, or they are malleable texts that judges may rewrite to see that particular groups or political causes win.—Judge Robert Bork, in his book *The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law*

I ask pardon of our Catholic homosexual and lesbian members when the church has appeared to be non-supportive of their struggles or of falling into homophobia.—Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony, in a seven-page apology issued March 6, 2000

The implication of all of the indignation over . . . "religious intolerance" is that a Baptist who wants to bring a Jew or a Catholic into his church is somehow an example of hatred. But if conservative Protestants try to convert Catholics, it is also true that conservative Catholics try to convert Protestants, as is evident every night on EWTN, Mother Angelica's television network.—Gene Edward Veith, writing in *World*

Expressing . . . disdain for evangelical Christians is the last permissible bigotry in American public life.—Catholics William Bennett and Michael Novak, in a recent letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert

That book [the Bible] is the Rock upon which our republic rests. . . . I hope and trust to meet you all in Heaven, both white and black. . . . The Bible is true. . . . I bequeath my body to the dust whence it comes, and my soul to God who gave it, hoping for a happy immortality through the atoning merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Andrew Jackson, general and president, just before he died in 1845

Anthony Carruthers, convicted of murder in 1995. The reason: During closing arguments in the penalty phase of the trial, the assistant district attorney cited passages from Genesis, Matthew, and Romans and told jurors "all they who take the sword shall die by the sword." Georgia Presiding Justice Norman Fletcher wrote that such references "inject the often irrelevant and inflammatory issue of religion into the sentencing process and improperly appeal to the religious beliefs of jurors in their decision on whether a person should live or die." A new jury will now have to decide whether Carruthers lives or dies. (*World*, 3/18/2000)

Colorado City Extends Legal Protection

The city of Boulder voted in February to include transsexuals in its anti-discrimination ordinance. Groups currently protected under Boulder's Human Rights Ordinance include women, racial minorities, homosexuals, and bisexuals. As of March 1, it is also against the law in Boulder to discriminate against transsexuals in housing, employment, and public accommodation. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 2/6/2000)

Omni Hotel Chain Pulls Plug on Porn

USA Today reported recently that the Omni hotel chain went against the trend of many other national hotel/motel chains by saying a resounding "No" to pornography. . . . The chain has begun phasing out adult movies—a moneymaker at hotels and motels nationwide—and plans to eliminate them at its 30 Omni-owned locations by June. (*American*

Decency Update, March 2000)

Christianity Today Writer Promotes Promiscuity

Lauren Winner, a staff writer for *Christianity Today*, has written "Sex and the Single Evangelical" on Beliefnet.com. Miss Winner says that the church is in denial about how single evangelicals are involved in immorality. Miss Winner has also been listed as writer-in-residence for *Christianity Today's* sister publication, *Books and Culture: A Christian Review*. (World, 2/19/2000)

California Votes for Traditional Marriage

Golden State voters overwhelmingly approved (61 to 39 percent) Proposition 22, an amendment to the state constitution that reads, "Only marriage between a man and a woman is recognized or valid in California." Democrats and leaders of the state's mainline Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches opposed the proposition. California became the 31st state to pass a measure that effectively bans same-sex marriage. (World, 3/18/2000)

The "Piltdown Chicken" Has Scientists Eating Crow

Imaginations certainly took flight over a birdlike fossil that was spirited out of China, "discovered" at a Tucson, Arizona, gem-and-mineral show last year, and displayed at the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. Some 110,000 visitors saw the exhibit, and mil-

lions more read about the find in November's *National Geographic*. Now, paleontologists are eating crow. Instead of a missing link, the fossil has been found to be a fake consisting of two animals pieced together. "The public is being completely bamboozled," says Storrs Olson, curator of birds at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. The bird-like fossil is hardly the first "missing link" to snap under scrutiny. In 1912, fossil remains of an ancient hominid were found in England's Piltdown quarries, and the "Piltdown Man" was quickly dubbed as one of man's apelike ancestors. It took decades for scientists to discover that Piltdown Man was a hoax. (U.S. News & World Report, 2/14/2000)

Majority of Americans Support Teaching Creationism

According to a new study released by the liberal People for the American Way Foundation, approximately four out of five Americans believe that both creationism and Darwin's theory of evolution should be taught in public schools. While 83 percent of the Americans polled said they generally supported the teaching of evolution in public schools, another 79 percent said creationism also should be offered to public school students as an alternative belief. (Maranatha Newswatch, 3/15/2000)

Book of the Millennium

Since 1455, when the first Gutenberg Bibles

came off the first press with movable type as the first ever printed book, an estimated 6 to 8 billion copies have been printed of the sacred Scriptures. That first Bible, 47 copies of which survive in their original Latin language, marked the beginning of book publishing in the Western world. (*The Eagle's View*, Winter 2000) Only about 366 of the almost 6,500 languages of the world have a complete Bible. Another 928 have at least the New Testament, giving 80 percent of the world some portion of God's Word. What is left are those 4,300 languages spoken by small population groups that probably will go out of existence before obtaining any portion of the Bible. (*Around the World*, Number 00/91)

We are grateful to Current Trends and Updates for portions of this news. CNT is a fundamental e-mail news service. Contact CT_N_U@dmci.net for more information.

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

Teachers Needed

Friendship Christian Schools, a ministry of Friendship Bible Church, Independent Baptist, is looking for preschool and elementary teachers. Several positions from K3 to 6th grade need to be filled. The school is on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. Please contact Mr. Chip Van Emmerik by phone, fax or mail for more information.

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Laboring in the Larger Field

You may be aware of a nationwide effort underway to promote local and regional conferences this year called "Outreach 2000." Perhaps your church is involved. In our area a large group of pastors are meeting to pray and plan for this effort. As we have prayed and led our people in "Evangelistic Prayer Bands," God has been moving in hearts. At first, our prayers were directed mostly toward the salvation of the lost, and we have seen some saved and others under conviction.

As we became burdened for our people to become more concerned for the lost, we prayed for them to be delivered from complacency and temporal distractions. Again, God is moving, but in a way we didn't expect. God has been answering our prayers by bringing brokenness to pastors. We are coming to realize our own complacency and sometimes not-so-subtle spirit of competition. Like those in other parts of the larger field, we pastor in a place where it is possible to build a church without ever winning a soul to Christ.

This issue of *Frontline* is scheduled for distribution near the time of our annual National Meeting and the distribution of the new 2000–2001 FBF directory. These events ought to be part of what the Lord is doing in the hearts of fundamental pastors as reported above. The FBF exists so that those who know that the Word of God presents fundamental truth for the salvation and sanctification of fallen men, who believe the most accurate and effective expression of

that truth is in and through local Baptist churches, may gather together for edification and encouragement—fellowship—as we seek to fulfill our God-given, Biblical mission without compromising it.

If that purpose is to be realized, it must be done by God's grace and not our own efforts. Like a well-run evangelistic outreach that is more program than power, the meetings of the FBF could be nothing more than another attractive burden on our schedules. Unless we are planning meetings, printing directories, and publishing magazines with a view to the larger field, they will never play a significant part in the harvest. Those on the periphery may fail to appreciate the value of this magazine and particularly the FBF directory to impact those beyond their reach, but it is possible for separatists to work together. "Uncompromising cooperation" is not an oxymoron.

For example, a recent call to our office helped a reader find a fundamental church for a friend in Iowa. His comment was, "You have no idea what an encouragement this is." A pastor visiting in the area walked into our office, saw the literature on display, joined the FBF, and talked about how many pastors feel that they are all alone. We explained that one of the goals of the fellowship is to increase communication among affiliates—some don't yet realize there is a brother with the same convictions not too far away. This man was

thrilled that we have an up-to-date directory that he and others can use for referrals or to find new friends.

We regularly hear stories like this. But in order for these tools to have maximum effectiveness, we need to have as much accurate information about like-minded ministries as possible. With the institution of a membership fee this year, renewals have been slow, and we have had to make a decision about the directory, which is technically a listing of individuals who are members of the FBF. In an effort to continue to provide the benefit to others of listing like-minded ministries, for this year only we have identified those whose membership is current differently from those listed just for information. In other words, unless an affiliate has indicated the desire not to be listed, the information from last year is included with an asterisk. All new members and renewals are listed without an asterisk.

We need our directory to be both accurate and up-to-date, but we are reluctant to remove the much needed information for which so many have been so thankful. Printing deadlines are a reality, and therefore, membership renewal deadlines are a reality. We sincerely hope no one was left out of the directory who wants to be identified with the FBF, or that no one who wanted to be removed was left in. Next year we hope to offer a package to include membership in the FBF, a subscription to *Frontline*, and a copy of the annual directory for a reduced price than they currently cost separately. Our hope is that this will continue to promote the important purpose of getting in the harness together as we labor in the larger field that is, indeed, white unto harvest.

A pastor visiting in the area walked into our office, saw the literature on display, joined the FBF, and talked about how many pastors feel that they are all alone.



DR. JOHN C. VAUGHN

What's on the Web

Bob Whitmore

Are books and libraries becoming obsolete? I don't think so, for my middle-aged eyes prefer reading from a printed page rather than a computer monitor. Yet there are circumstances when I don't have access to books, or it's simply inconvenient to go to a library, or I need information quickly. That's when I go to the Internet, and the Internet Christian Library (www.iclnet.org) is a great place to start.

This is another of those mega-sites containing "one of the largest and most complete archiving of 'classical' Christian materials available on the Internet." The site contains "guides," consisting of "hotlinks," to other web sites. Topics include missions, Christian resources, Christian literature, and early church documents. Each topic includes an extensive list of resources. I can get lost for days reading through some of these hard-to-find works. Then there is a "reading room," a software library, and a directory of Christian organizations and educational institutions.


Another large library of hotlinked electronic texts is located at www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~lipton/texts.html. This Religious Studies Web Guide is maintained by Sandra Lipton at the University of Calgary in Canada. This is not a Christian site, although it does list some Christian texts. Under the Christian heading you can find links to everything from Catholic to cultic sources, along with links to works by Calvin and Luther. The site also includes links to works from the world's major religions—Buddhist, Islam, Hindu, Jewish, Taoist, Zoroastrian, and others—which should prove useful to missionaries or anyone else wanting to know more about these religions. There is even a "General" category of hotlinks to sites containing secular books online.

I have enjoyed immensely the Hall of Church History web site (www.gty.org/~phil/hall.htm). Among the headings are The Church Fathers, The Medieval Churchmen, The Heretics, The Catholics, The Reformers, The Puritans, The Anabaptists, The Arminians, the Cultists, The Unorthodox, The Baptists, and The Recent Stalwarts. Each shaft of this mine is full of nuggets.

In addition to many good articles, The Baptists section contains hotlinks to sites containing the writings of renowned Baptists such as John Gill, James Pettigru Boyce, B. H. Carroll, Isaac Backus, A. T. Robertson, and others. Under The Recent Stalwarts you'll find hotlinks to sites with sermons and writings by John Newton, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Thomas Boston, A. W. Pink, G. Campbell Morgan, Asahel Nettleton—the list goes on.

On a more practical note, youth pastors especially will enjoy the web site for Youth Imperative (www.youthimperative.net), a "group of fundamental youth leaders networking to reach the next generation." The site contains resources, news, and discussion groups of interest to youth workers. Our thanks go to FBF board member Dr. Gerry Carlson, who suggested this site to us.

And finally, here's a site to help those busy church secretaries who every week turn out a church bulletin. Independent Baptist International Ministries' web site has a page with downloadable clip art especially for church bulletins. The site contains clip art relating to many holidays and other special occasions, such as birthdays and weddings. The art is free and can be found at www.bfree.on.ca/comdir/churches/ibim/clip01.htm.




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Musings of A Right-Wing Fundamentalist

Don Haines

It's not easy being a member of the most hated group in America. Indeed, it's getting to be a little scary. I've read what it was like for the European Jew in the 1930s. The vitriolic tirades first to condition the people. Then laws to curtail their rights. Then, the third step—a knock on the door in the middle of the night. I shake my head. Ridiculous! Stop thinking like that—it could never happen here—could it?

I find myself asking that question more frequently these days. I watch the talking heads literally hiss as they spit out phrases like “narrow-minded bigot” or “mean-spirited Christians.” I'm linked with David Duke and the KKK, though I've never seen Duke except on TV, and I've never known a Klansman. Still, I cringe when I hear these things, because I know that if a lie is told often enough, it will soon be seen as truth. Those who spread the lie know what they're doing, but still they go on, harangue after harangue. Carville, Dershowitz—they know. I see the hate in their eyes while they call me a hater. Their drumbeat goes on, day after day. They're very effective when it comes to fooling those who don't know any better.

I'm pro-life, so in the view of those who hate me that means I'm sexist and I hate women. Actually, I'm pro-life because I saw a life taken by abortion. I was repelled by it, and I knew I could not stay true to my Savior and accept such things. So I speak out. The pro-abortion people don't understand my view on the holocaust that is abortion. To them, I'm just an ignorant right-wing nut. So be it.

I believe that homosexuality is a sin, so I oppose special privileges for gays. I'm called a hater for this too. But my Savior, who inspired all the Scriptures, tells me I'm not. I live my life by the Scriptures. I read Leviticus and Romans and I take my stand. To those who hold an opposing view, my stand on homosexuality is narrow-minded. In a sense this is true, I suppose. But the living God has laid down certain

guidelines. Does this make God narrow-minded? The homosexual lobby is gaining power, so the day will undoubtedly come when I will pay a price for my position. But I will not yield. Those who hate me should understand that. To do otherwise would mean being unfaithful to my God.

In the 1940s and '50s, too many Christians deserted the public square. “We will stay in our churches,” they said. “Politics are of the world, so we will not participate.” Then they stood and watched as our society fell apart. In the 1970s we decided we had made a mistake. We reentered the public debate. We made quite a stir. Those who had ignored us while we stayed in our churches were taken aback—“Who are these people?” In the 1980s we began to have an impact. We spoke out against what we perceived as evil. That's when the hate began. We'd upset the timetable of those who thought the culture war had been won. We became a thorn in the side of the pro-abortion people. We began throwing around a strange word—*sin*! The homosexual lobby didn't like that, so the campaign began. We had to be demonized; society must realize we were the cause of all the trouble. It was a well-orchestrated campaign, and it worked.

I'm a registered Republican. I usually vote that way. So do most of my Christian brothers and sisters. Our opponents seized on that. Our movement wasn't really about Christianity at all—it was about politics!

They know better. They know we vote Republican because Republicans usually reflect our views on the social issues. They know too that if the two parties reversed their views overnight, we'd become Democrats overnight. But they don't say that. They have much more guile than we do. They also understand, however, that now that we have returned to the public square, we intend to stay. They're having a hard time dealing with that. Their hatred grows by the day.

I'm a descendant of a white European male. That would

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make me suspect even if I weren't a Fundamentalist Christian. Those of us who have the wrong ancestry and the wrong religious faith are doubly hated.

I believe in the Biblical concept of family. This view is contrary to what many on the other side of the culture war believe. When we speak out about this, the homosexual lobby and many in the women's movement become apoplectic. The vitriol will get even nastier, but we can counter only by continuing to speak the truth.

Truth is almost an alien word these days. Words like "parse" and "spin" have taken its place. Certain words and phrases are used to cover up what's really going on. One of the more benign is "revenue enhancement." Either way, our taxes will be raised. An abortion is called a "procedure." Either way, a child dies. Homosexuality is called an "alternative lifestyle." Either way, it's a sin.

The drumbeat goes on, and we who stand in the gap and say, "Stop! These things aren't true!" are vilified. How long will it be before they realize they

can't destroy us with words and therefore must take stronger action? Not long, I suspect. They're already in positions of power in our universities. They're gaining power in our government and judiciary. They run roughshod over the Constitution because in their words, "it's a living document."

They're not ready to strike yet. They need more people on their side or at least people who will turn their heads like the "good Germans" did in the 1930s. People who will say, "It has nothing to do with us—they're just getting rid of some of those crazy right-wingers—they're just rubbish anyway. Good riddance!"

Can't happen here? It's already begun. Right-wing Fundamentalists are the punching bag of our society. Go ahead—take a shot at us. There will be no hue and cry from the media who pontificate about fairness. They'd like us to go away. They think we're just a blip on the screen of history. We have crazy ideas—like stopping abortion and calling homosexuality a sin. We

actually take the Bible literally and call it the Word of God. Don't we know the world has passed us by? Our ideas are archaic. No one of any intelligence believes that stuff anymore!

Ah, but we do believe, and our belief comes from the Word of God. We know that we can never convince everyone that we are right. But we will have—will *demand* a voice in the affairs of our country. Our spiritual ancestors were here in the beginning. We have no intention of standing aside and letting their grand idea be destroyed. No amount of name-calling, threats, or intimidation will keep us from our duty. We may experience fear, but we will never experience cowardice.

I am a right-wing Fundamentalist. I didn't give myself that title, but I accept it. I know the day will come when standing up for what I believe might cost me my life. But I'm a child of the living God. I have beliefs, I have responsibilities, and most of all—I have faith.

Don Haines is a freelance writer living in Woodbine, Maryland.

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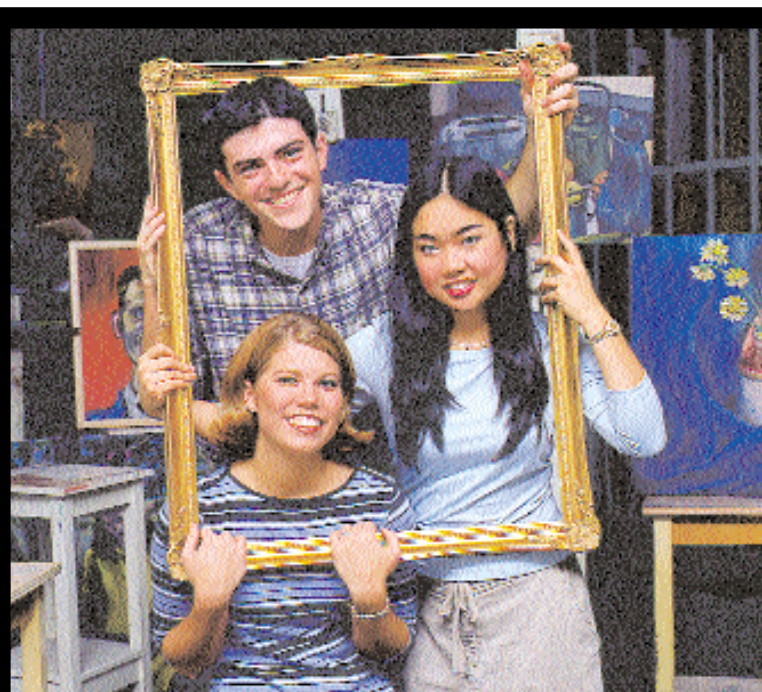
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