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# Frontline

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JULY/AUGUST 2000

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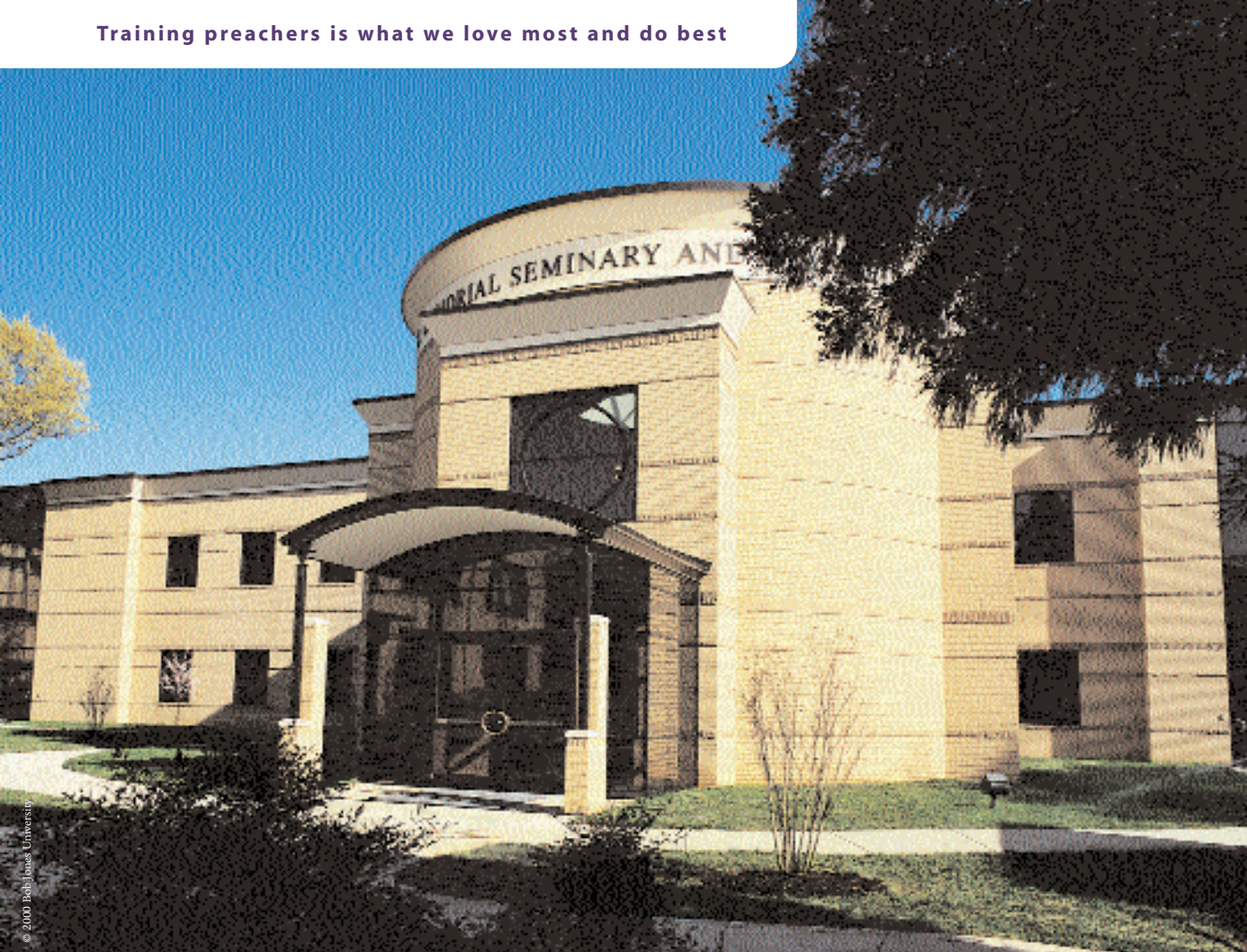
# Years

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## Christian Womanhood





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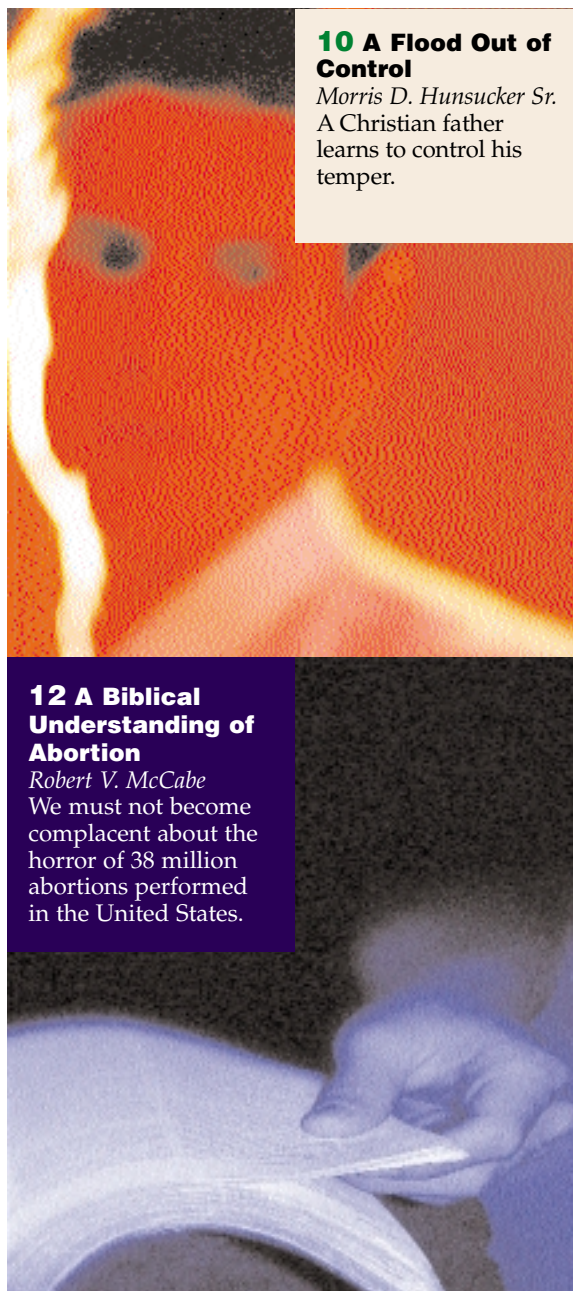
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# Mail Bag

I appreciated Dr. Stertzbach's "As I See It" (March/April 2000). Enough is indeed enough regarding the version issue, and yet, we expect that even mentioning the matter may seem controversial to some. The autonomy of the local church, as well as the freedom of an individual, deserve to be respected and maintained. When one's version becomes the first and foremost test of fellowship, someone has crossed the line. I personally use the KJV, but know it was not the first version and may not be the last. Let's be honest and fair in brotherly love.

Dr. Gordon E. Hanson  
Stewartville, MN

I appreciated your recent short article in *Frontline* magazine, "Enough Is Enough" ("As I See It, March/April 2000). You were right on target and perfectly stated the attitude of Ambassador Baptist College. I detest the division that has yet again been fostered in Fundamentalism. . . . We do not need a seminary or a college to determine whether or not we have an inerrant Bible. . . . May God use [your article] to open the eyes of some who seem intent upon dishonoring our Lord and degrading the testimony of Fundamentalism by their divisive spirit.


Ron Comfort  
Lattimore, NC

Please continue to send the *Frontline* magazine.

**We want to hear from you!**

Let us know what you like or don't like about *Frontline*. Address your comments to **Managing Editor, Frontline**, 500 West Lee Road, Taylors, SC 29687. You may also fax your comments to (864) 322-6856 or send them by e-mail to [FBFLINE@aol.com](mailto:FBFLINE@aol.com).

You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.



I read it and rejoice in its ministry. . . . Dr. Chester Tulga, . . . productive writer and defender of the faith, would be very pleased.

Rev. Paul B. Campbell  
Omaha, NE

*Note: Rev. Campbell is the son-in-law of Dr. Tulga, who died in 1976. Dr. Tulga served as Research Secretary of the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, the forerunner of the FBF, from 1945-1956.*

I enjoy your magazine but feel I must make one comment about the March/April 2000 issue. When I pulled it out of my mailbox and looked at the cover, all I could see was white "Christian Womanhood." My church has ladies from Cameroon, Mexico, Ivory Coast, Puerto Rico, and even white Yankee folk like me. . . . How about a little more sensitivity and diversity, especially since you emphasize missions so much? God makes Christian women in

many colors, ages, shapes, and sizes!

Dorothy Connally  
Austin, TX

Our family has been receiving *Frontline* magazine for about a year now. It has greatly enriched our lives in the Lord. I praise the Lord for enabling the publication of this magazine. I am very grateful for your uncompromising stand on the fundamental doctrines of God's holy Word.

Doug V. Sondergaard  
[saintdoug@juno.com](mailto:saintdoug@juno.com)

I want to get the *Frontline* magazine. . . . I remember my dear husband Archer . . . thought a lot of Dr. Bell. God bless you all.


Mrs. Irene Weniger  
Lucerne, CA

We really enjoy reading *Frontline*. Keep it coming!

The Foxes  
Missionaries to France

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## Frontline Is Born

In 1990 Dr. Frank Bumpus and I were talking about the need to strengthen fundamental Baptist homes, through the local church, across America. After much discussion and prayer about the need to “bring the truth home,” *Frontline* was born. We decided first, it was not going to be a scandal sheet or a “rag”—but a first-class publication that would be a blessing and encouragement to the family, local church, and school; a magazine that would meet the need for the teenager, the teacher, the pastor, and so on. It was to be informative, with news and issues, but it was to be more: it was to be a commentary for the busy pastor. It must be high-quality—*par excellence*!

Dr. Bumpus and I researched several successful national organizations and found they had three common, distinguishing characteristics: (1) a philosophy, (2) a “prophet” or proclaimer of their philosophy, and (3) a periodical. The periodical was the “glue” that pulled together the grass roots and “brought the truth home.”

Our philosophy: We were fundamental Baptists. Our “prophet”: The preachers in our Fellowship were the proclaimers of that philosophy. The periodical: *Frontline* would strengthen the homes of the fundamental Baptist churches in America.

One day I asked Dr. Bumpus,

“What does the title ‘publisher’ mean?” He snapped, with a smirk on his face and a sparkle in his eye, “You pay all the bills, you take all the cussing, and the buck stops with you! Can you take the heat?” Needless to say, I have not had to pay all the bills nor take all the cursing by myself. God has called dedicated men and women to help bear the load sacrificially to get the magazine published on time.

One of the core principles we try to maintain is to be fair, honest, and courageous, and to have the integrity to correct a misstatement should any occur.

*Frontline* is the voice of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship to keep the people informed of the theology and issues of the day. But it is more than that: its primary purpose is to be a blessing and inspiration to all God’s people.

*Frontline* was to be the head, eyes, heart, and show-window for the FBF. We were tired of our people hearing solid, fundamental, separatist messages in church, and then going home and reading a New Evangelical magazine from the coffee table simply because there were no alternatives. We felt that we *must* help to keep our people informed by

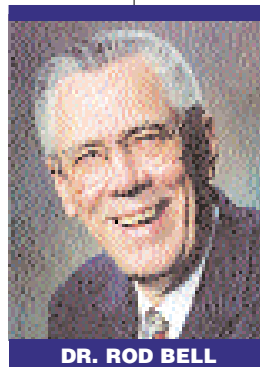
providing material that would produce strong families.

We knew what we wanted, but how to get the product was another challenge. These two Baptist preachers had learned that while you could not borrow character, you could “borrow brains.” So borrow brains we did! Dr. Bumpus was the editor and force behind this endeavor. I learned to give him directions, to set goals, and then get out of his way! I was the publisher, and I would set the tone for the magazine through my editorial column, “Behind the Lines.” In the early days, we would edit and rewrite each other’s articles. By the time the article was ready for printing, one would never recognize the original!

It’s hard to believe that the magazine is already in its 10<sup>th</sup> year. It must be said—had it not been for Dr. Bumpus, his fine staff, and the good people of Bethel Baptist Church in Schaumburg, Illinois, there would be no *Frontline* today. Mike Moreau was the brains behind *Frontline* in the early days, and he continues in the role of graphic designer and advertising manager. Today, the magazine goes into numerous countries and thousands of homes. As the President of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, I would like to congratulate our current editor, Dr. John Vaughn, and Bob Whitmore and staff, for making *Frontline* a premier, first-class publication. Congratulations on ten wonderful years!

If you like *Frontline*, send it to a friend.

*One of the core principles we try to maintain is to be fair, honest, and courageous, and to have the integrity to correct a misstatement should any occur.*



DR. ROD BELL





# Tenth Anniversary

## Born of a Preacher's Heart

from Mike Moreau

The first thing I ever remember Pastor Frank Bumpus saying about publishing a magazine was, "I'm tired of people getting good preaching from the pulpit and accepting error on their coffee tables!" It was the lack of sound, fundamental periodicals and the proliferation of New Evangelical publishing that strongly motivated the birth of *Frontline* Magazine.

"It must be a magazine that every fundamental Baptist preacher can recommend with confidence to his congregation," he affirmed. "And not only that, the artwork must be exciting, the same way illustrations in a sermon are windows that let the light in. Our folks should be proud to pass it around."

The "our folks" of Frank Bumpus were the men of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, standing together through the years under a common Biblical focus and philosophy, and helping each other stand against error and build strong, vibrant churches. It was the men of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship who, in 1989, sacrificially provided the funds that would become the seed money used to cultivate this new magazine. All those who supported it made a personal commitment to help this publication grow, and they became its strongest advocates, salesmen, and contributing authors.

The vision for the outreach of *Frontline* was broad-based. It was Pastor Bumpus's desire that the magazine be distributed and promoted as widely as possible—not just in a desire to see it grow, but primarily in an effort to draw as many people as possible to its distinct, separated, Biblical stance. *Frontline* was never intended as a magazine for pastors only. It began and remains a magazine for the fundamental believers in the pews. "Rasie a banner and the right people will rally around it," was the way he would express it.

Supporter and defender of *Frontline*, Pastor Bumpus often expressed to those who questioned its drain on church resources that "sometimes it must fall to the

larger churches to do things that smaller churches are not yet able to do." He recognized the need for the magazine, he immersed himself in it, and he defended his faith through it.

Remembering the vision and heart of the members of the FBF is what will keep *Frontline* effective for years to come. "If an article does not motivate a reader to do something for God, or help them to learn more about God, or teach them to become better in their ministry that article has no place in this magazine," was his simple editorial directive.

I still remember the meeting we had one late night during the initial development stages. We had worked for many months calling *Frontline* only "the magazine" for lack of a name. We were at a loss to know what to call it. We put out a call for help and suggestions but none were forthcoming. Finally in frustration pastor said, "We're going to sit here until the Lord helps us come up with a name." He coursed through the pages of the open Bible on his desk. "We need something that sounds strong but distinct. Something that expresses the battle the believer walks every day. We need to grasp the sense of Hebrews 10:23, 'Holding fast the profession of our faith.' Something militant but personal. Perhaps 'Living Faith,' or 'Serving True.' If only we could capture the sense of moving forward and standing strong—just what the Christian life is all about. Something like *Sword and Trowel* but for this century. There must be a way to express confident faith in the midst of the battle, Christians advancing forward, living on the *Frontline*!"

Endnote: One of the problems the editors of *Frontline* constantly wrestled with during the early years was maintaining a consistent focus on a general Christian readership while at the same time attempting to minister to pastors. It was the desire to minister to pastors specifically by many of *Frontline*'s supporters that led to the addition in 1996 of the "pastor's insert" titled *Sound Words* (compiled and edited by Dr. Mark Minnick). The pastor's insert opened the door for *Frontline* to maintain its lay focus and at the same time contain material specifically designed to help and bless preachers. This approach has allowed *Frontline* to be uniquely "two magazines in one," ministering to the full spectrum of membership within the local church.







# NOT MANY MIGHTY

**Jonathan Goodling**

**T**hirty-four years ago, at approximately 11:00 a.m., as the cold wind blew snow flurries around the Chicago area, a new life came into the world. I was the second of seven children in my family. Growing up in a family of that size will leave you with many stories to tell—some of which bring a smile, and a few which bring tears.

My life as a young child was a happy one. I learned to walk, to talk, and to make a total mess of my parents' house as most children do. I grew up in a Christian home with two wonderful parents whose love for the Lord was evident. It seemed all would be fine, that my life would be normal.

Then, when I was four, a swelling began under my jaw. Obviously concerned, my parents took me to a doctor. He first thought the swelling was being caused by an abscess. However, after further study, he found that this was not the case. He involved more doctors, who found a problem in my lymph nodes, those roundish bodies that supply lymphocytes to the heart and blood vessels. An operation was performed to remove several nodes for testing. After close study, no new evidence as to the cause of the swelling was found. This was the first operation in what was to be a long and difficult struggle.

During the operation, the doctors noticed that my tonsils were swollen so large that they almost touched each other. Another operation was performed to remove them, but the swelling remained and continued to grow. Eventually it grew around the side of my neck and close to the main nerve in the back of my head. I soon lost control of my eyes—I was not able to keep them both focused in the same direction. The doctors decided to do a biopsy of the swelling, and soon I entered the operating room again. Having three major operations in such a short time would be traumatic for anyone, but especially for a four-year-old. The doctors were uneasy about performing this third operation. They would have to cut into the side of my neck. If they were to damage a nerve accidentally, part of my head could be paralyzed. Following this third

operation, I almost didn't make it. I spent several difficult hours in the recovery room fighting to stay alive.

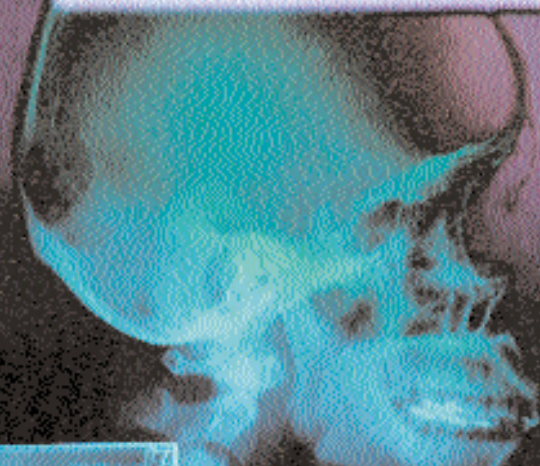
Later, the doctor told my parents that they had finally diagnosed the swelling as a malignant tumor called "rhabdomyosarcoma," a deadly type of cancer. The doctor told them that he didn't know anyone who had lived through it. My parents were told I had at the most one week to live.

It was finally decided that radiation therapy was the one thing that might work. The night before my first treatment, I came the closest to death that I ever would during this struggle. I was asleep in my hospital bed, and because my throat was so swollen from the tumor, in the middle of the night I stopped breathing. My mother went running to get help, and a doctor and two nurses came immediately; they were soon able to get me breathing again.

The following morning, as I was leaving to get my first radiation treatment, my mother's aunt and cousin came by to visit. They said that judging from the way I looked, they doubted if I would make it through another night, let alone an entire week.

That day, the radiologist had more discouraging news. He said that usually when they used radiation on a tumor such as mine, the tumor started to grow faster. He told my parents that as far as he was concerned, my chances of survival were zero. Every day for the next 30 days, I went back to receive my radiation treatments. I received the maximum amount allowed by law. But instead of the tumor growing and killing me, it went away. The doctors were astounded. They couldn't believe I was still alive. So, after spending almost two months on the verge of death, I was on my way home.

Several weeks later, my family and I were visiting relatives out of town. One night I awoke with a terrible headache. A couple of days later, while cutting my hair, my mother noticed another swelling, this time on the back of my head. We returned to the hospital immediately. The tumor had returned. Because of the location of the new tumor, surgery was practically





impossible. There was nothing they could do. Again, the doctors said, "Joshua is going to die."

The headaches continued and grew worse. The pain was tremendous, and I was constantly kept under sedation. As soon as one sedative would wear off, I would cry in pain until I was given more. All I could do was lie in bed, too weak even to sit up.

The doctors finally decided to try a new type of chemotherapy. Because of the side effects of the therapy treatments, all my hair fell out. My stomach was so upset I couldn't keep food down. I quickly lost weight. In fact, on my fifth birthday, I weighed only 27 pounds! I looked like the pictures you see of starving children in Third World countries.

In March of that year, a blood test revealed that my red blood cells were not developing properly. Someone noted in my medical records, "Joshua is sinking fast."

I received my chemotherapy treatments through injection. I became used to having a needle stuck in my arm. Because of the many shots, my veins began to shrink. Sometimes they would have to stick me several times trying to find a vein that would hold up.

Finally, almost two years after the first sign of any swelling, the cancer went away. The doctors told my parents that there still was not much hope and that eventually I would die from it. However, there has been no sign of it since then.

The cancer was gone, but it left behind several scars that would remain with me for life. From the time the cancer disappeared until I was nine, I grew only two inches. The doctors found that my growth hormone had been destroyed by the radiation. To this day, I am only four feet, eleven inches tall. Because I am so short, people are constantly thinking I am still a kid. At 34 years old, that can be a problem. Just recently I had someone tell me they thought I was only 16 or 17. I have been pulled over by the

police on numerous occasions because they didn't think I was old enough to drive!

The radiation and chemotherapy also partially paralyzed my vocal cords. This has made it difficult for people to understand me at times, especially over the telephone or when they first talk to me. My throat is also partially paralyzed, making it difficult for me to eat at times.

There are other problems as a result of having this difficult trauma. Naturally, my life has not been easy. The first inclination of many people

who suffer as I have is to withdraw and give up. By doing so, they waste their life. God has proven to me that He does not place problems and difficulties in our lives to destroy us but to make us better. My life has been a challenge and encouragement to thousands of people across the United States and around the globe as I have shared

my story.

When I was in the fifth grade, God called me to preach. Many people immediately said, "You can't preach! You're too short, and you talk funny." They, however, didn't call me to preach—God did! In 1987 I graduated from Bible college with a degree in theology. I have spoken in hundreds of churches, prisons, nursing homes, colleges, schools, businesses, and other places around the United States; I have written and produced several inspirational booklets; and I have published my own newspaper. God has been gracious to use these tools to encourage and challenge many, many people.

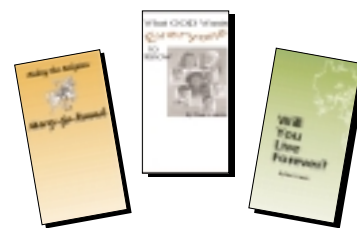
If the choice were up to me to redo my life, I would have cancer again. I would undergo all the painful surgeries and tests and would endure the great times of difficulty so that my life and testimony could be used as God has graciously allowed them to be used.

Joshua Goodling resides in Knoxville, Tennessee. For more information about his ministry, see Joshua's web site at <http://www.geocities.com/Hearthland/1885>.

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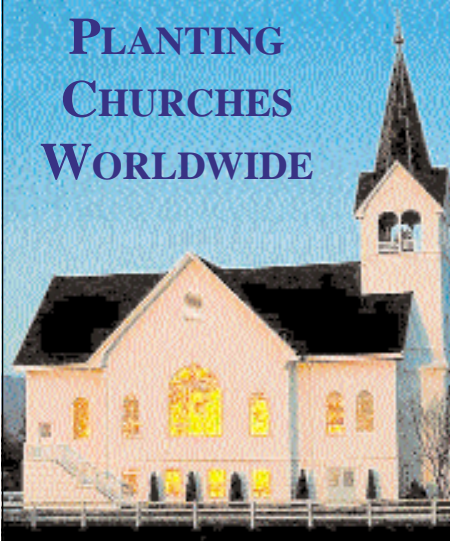
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# A Flood Out of Control

**M**y temper has always been a problem. When I was younger, I regularly got into trouble because I got so angry, so easily. Whenever a conflict would arise, I always ended up doing something or saying something that would ultimately only make matters worse. My defense for my actions was always the same: "It's not my fault!"

For years I blamed my lack of self-control on everyone and everything else. I never once thought the problem was mine, so I always had an excuse for my anger. I honestly thought (and often said out loud), "If everyone would just leave me alone, I wouldn't lose my temper." I would make foolish statements such as, "I can't help it, that's just the way I am," or "You'd be mad too if that happened to you!" There were times I even attempted to blame my problem on my younger brother. I can still remember telling my parents, "It's his fault. He made me do it!"

**Morris D. Hunsucker Sr.**



*It wasn't long before the Holy Spirit revealed to me one central truth; my loss of temper was not caused by what was happening on the outside but rather by what was happening on the inside.*

After I got married and entered the ministry, I began to blame my occasional flare-ups on the stress of the job, or on the trials of parenting, or on family financial pressures. I continued to make excuses, and consequently, I continued to have a problem. Finally, one day at a school basketball game, I noticed that my son was starting to develop the same problem with an uncontrolled temper. After the game, when I confronted him about his temper tantrum, I was stunned by his response. He simply excused his actions by saying, "I can't help it, Dad, that's just the way I am." Now where do you suppose he learned *that* excuse?

I immediately realized that if I was ever going to be successful in training him to control his temper, I would first have to learn to control my own. The first thing I did was to take my Bible concordance and look up every reference for words such as "anger," "wrath," "fury," and "strife." Then I began studying each Bible verse that contained one or more of those words. It wasn't long before the Holy Spirit revealed to me one central truth: my loss of temper was not caused by what was happening on the outside but rather by what was happening on the inside.

I must confess, I never did get rid of my temper. Trust me, it's still there, just below the surface, waiting to explode should I give it the opportunity. What I was able to do was learn to control it. The truth is, we all have a temper. It's just that some of us have learned the importance of keeping it under control. Below are a few things I learned from the Book of Proverbs that helped me to get control of my own terrible temper.

### **Five Warnings to Angry Men**

**1** *God expects us to learn to "rule" or to control our temperament and attitude (Prov. 16:32, 25:28).* Evangelist Tom Farrell put it best when he said, "Your attitude is your choice!" He was right! You can and you must learn to control your attitude (your way of thinking).

**2** *"Anger is outrageous" (Prov. 27:3-4).* The word for "outrageous" in that verse means "like a flood or a downpour." A man given to anger is like a flood out of control. He rains havoc and destruction on everyone and everything in his path. Often he winds up hurting the very people he loves the most.

**3** *Angry words only lead to more angry words (Prov. 30:33).* Strife only tends to stir up more strife. Solomon said,

"It is an honour for a man to cease from strife" (Prov. 20:3). In other words, "If you have any sense, you'll stop the nonsense."

**4** *The man who does not learn to control his temper will continually suffer for it (Prov. 19:19).* Until you learn to control your emotions, your emotions will control you!

**5** *Just like stink follows a skunk, sin and trouble follow the angry man (Prov. 29:22).* Transgressions abound wherever he goes. Whether you are willing to admit it or not, most of the time, you are the cause of your own troubles!

### **Five Things You Can Do to Get Control of Your Temper**

**1** *"Make no friendship with an angry man" (Prov. 22:24, 25).* Learn to stay away from others who have the same problem. Angry men always end up alone and lonely (Prov. 22:10, 24; 24:1).

**2** *Teach yourself to react slowly (Prov. 14:17, 29; 15:18; 24:8).* If you don't learn to practice patience, you will soon make a fool of yourself (if you have not already).

**3** *Understand that, at times, a silent response is a good answer, a slow response is a better answer, and a "soft" response is the best answer (Prov. 15:1; 25:15).* Soft words are often the only kind that can get through to a hard head. Tender and gentle words will not make you less of a man. It does not take much of a man to yell at a woman or a child, and what good is a man who can not control his temper around other men?

**4** *Learn to forgive (Prov. 19:11).* Vengeance is not your right or responsibility. The ability to "pass over a transgression" is a sign of strength, not weakness.

**5** *Remember that the source of your anger is your own proud heart (Prov. 13:10; 28:25).* Humble yourself and learn to trust the Lord. Think about this: *Your sinful outbursts are not caused by any outside input, but rather by your own inside output!*

Morris D. Hunsucker Sr. is assistant pastor of Eagledale Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.



**A**t the conclusion of the 20th century, some reports indicate that there have been more than 38 million abortions performed in the United States. We must not lose sight of the staggering nature of this number of abortions. This number is roughly 26 times larger than the total number of deaths (approximately 1,456,000) from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and the Viet Nam War combined (Ankerberg and Weldon, *The Facts on Abortion*, p. 5). While this enormous number of abortions is alarming, we are equally alarmed because many Bible-believing Christians are surprisingly uninformed, and in some cases apathetic, about the Bible's teaching on this subject. We must have a Biblical understanding of abortion. To fully understand what the Bible has to say on this subject, we need to examine three issues: the reason the Bible never explicitly discusses abortion, the Bible's teaching concerning the value of human life, and its teaching about the inception of human life. But before we examine these issues, we need to define abortion and some of the issues associated with it.

An abortion is the expulsion of an embryo or fetus from the womb of its mother before it is capable of independently sustaining life. An abortion that happens naturally is called a spontaneous or involuntary abortion. A miscarriage

is an example of a spontaneous abortion. An induced or voluntary abortion is medically induced. This type of abortion results in the termination of a pregnancy by killing the embryo or fetus. The induced abortion is the focal point of the modern abortion debate.

Most informed, Bible-believing Christians would maintain that an induced abortion is a moral atrocity. However, if this is true, then why does the Bible never explicitly address the issue? The answer is found in the Israelite view of children. God was responsible for opening the womb (Gen. 30:22; 1 Sam 1:17–20). Consequently, children were viewed as a gift from God (Gen. 33:5; Ps. 127:3). An Israelite expected proliferation in childbearing as an aspect of the prosperity that God had promised them in the Mosaic Covenant (Deut. 7:13; 28:4). The abundance of children was a blessing, but the lack of children was often considered a curse. Therefore, a voluntary abortion was unthinkable for an Israelite and, consequently, was not an issue to them. To understand the moral ramifications of this, we must approach the issue of medically induced abortion in light of other Biblical material.

What does the Bible teach about the value of human life? To answer this question, we must briefly examine the Bible's teaching about man. Moses wrote in Genesis 1:26–28 that man was created in the image and likeness of God. The

**Robert V. McCabe**

# A Biblical Understanding of Abortion



divine image refers to those personal, rational, moral, and spiritual qualities of man that make him like God. Though it was marred at the Fall, the divine image in man was not lost (James 3:9). This is cogently demonstrated in Genesis 9:5, 6 with God's institution of capital punishment for murder. The motivation for this command is God's creation of man in His image (v. 6). Whatever else Genesis 9:5, 6 may affirm, it clearly emphasizes the sanctity of human life. This is reinforced by the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill [murder]" (Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17), and is reaffirmed by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:21, 22). Though this data clearly asserts the sanctity of human life, it does not deal with when genuine human life begins.

What does the Bible teach concerning the inception of human life? A key passage is Psalm 51. This is a record of David's confession of sin after having committed adultery with Bathsheba. In verse 5 David traces his moral culpability back to the time of conception by asserting that he was sinful from the time his mother conceived him. Another significant passage is Psalm 139:13–16. Having dealt with God's omniscience (vv. 1–6) and omnipresence (vv. 7–12), David then gives an exposition on God's providential involvement with his prenatal development. God created David's inmost being (v. 13) and his body (v. 15). David asserts in verse 16 that his "substance," his embryo, as well as the course of his life, was part of God's plan. David's personal identity extends back to his prenatal state.

In addition, Luke 1:41, 44 have a bearing on this subject. After an angel had announced to the virgin Mary that she would carry the Messiah, she went to the home of Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with her son, John. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her unborn son leaped for joy. This demonstrates that John the Baptist had rational and spiritual capacities in his prenatal state. These passages indicate that a child in his prenatal state has personal, rational, moral, and spiritual qualities and, therefore, is fully human.

This understanding of a child being fully in the image of God from the time of conception is further supported by two other Biblical items. The first is the Biblical teaching concerning the origin of the human soul. God created the human race immediately in Adam. Adam and Eve transferred their spiritual and physical characteristics to their children through the process of procreation (Gen. 5:3; Acts 17:26). When an ovum and sperm unite, a new person containing the hereditary characteristics of one's father and mother is brought into existence. This should lend further support that a prenatal child is a genuine person.

The second item supporting an unborn child as being fully human relates to how we interpret Exodus 21:22–25. This passage has been used by some to support the legitimacy of having a medically induced abortion. The passage reads as follows:

If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow:

he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

There are two principal views of this passage: the miscarriage view and the premature birth view.

Many holding the miscarriage view take this passage as a reference to a situation where two men are fighting and one of them happens to hit a pregnant woman who suffers a miscarriage ("so that her fruit depart") but she herself is not harmed; the offender then must pay a fine (v. 22). However, if something subsequently happens to the woman, then the offender was to suffer punishment in proportion to the damage that he has inflicted upon the woman (vv. 23–25). Since the law of retaliation is applied to the woman and only a monetary compensation for the aborted fetus, it is implied that the woman had a higher value than the unborn child. This is then used to infer that under some difficult circumstances, a voluntary abortion is justifiable because the mother's life has more value than the unborn child. This is the view of some commentators and translations. For example, some translate the clause "so that her fruit depart" as "so that she has a miscarriage." Against this view, it should be observed that the Hebrew verb translated as "depart," when used in the context of childbirth, is never used for a miscarriage. Furthermore, the noun "fruit" is normally translated as "child," "son," or "boy."

When the noun "fruit" or "child" is used with the verb "depart," this can only be understood as a reference to a premature birth. This view correctly sets forth that Moses was describing a situation where two men were fighting and one of them hits a pregnant woman causing her to give birth prematurely. However, there is no "harm" ("mischief" in vv. 22 and 23 may also be taken as "harm") but because of the potential danger for the mother and her child, a fine was to be enacted (v. 22). If, however, there was harm, a penalty corresponding to the crime was to be enacted (vv. 23–25). For example, if either the mother or her child died, then a capital punishment would have been in order. Rather than being a justification for voluntary abortion, this is actually a solid text to suggest that the life of a child in its prenatal state is of equal value to its mother. Consequently, the unborn child is fully human.

As Bible-believing Christians, our responsibility is to understand what God has affirmed about His moral will on the issue of abortion and, consequently, to regulate our lives and spheres of influence according to a correct Biblical understanding. In light of the Biblical material examined here, we must emphatically maintain that a medically induced abortion violates God's moral standard against taking another person's life, and, as such, falls under the divine prohibition in the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not kill [murder]!"

Dr. Robert V. McCabe is Registrar and Professor of Old Testament at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary in Allen Park, Michigan.



A common criticism of the Bible is that it is antiquated and thus no longer relevant to our modern world. Since it was written millennia ago in an unscientific age (the claim goes), it is of no use to us today except as an interesting piece of ancient Semitic mythology. This criticism collapses, however, when one looks closely at the Mosaic Law and its relation to the field of medicine. While the cultures around him were awash in superstition, Moses left a legacy of unparalleled medical advancement. William R. Vis, M.D., a member of the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians, states:

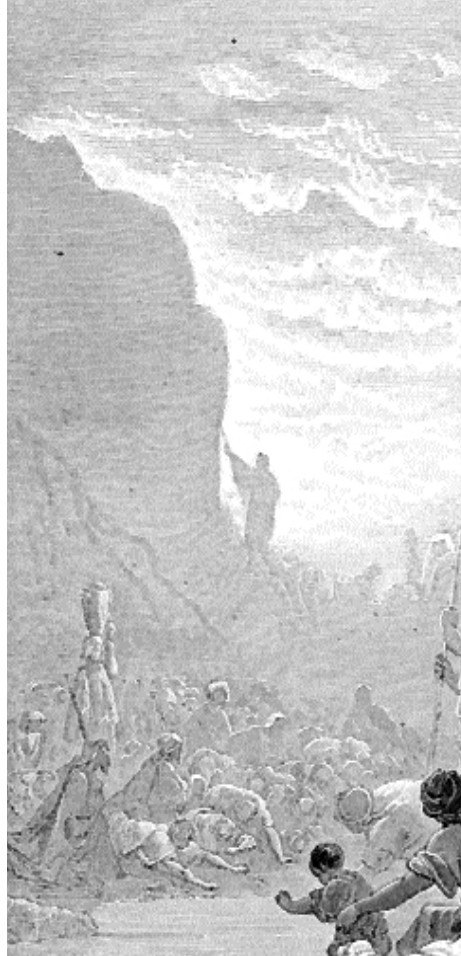
As a scientist, Moses rises above all other Biblical characters because of his stupendous knowledge of public health and hygiene. The safeguarding of the people Israel under the difficulties encountered should, perhaps, rank as the greatest achievement in all medical history.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Vis uses leprosy as an example of Moses' unique insight into preventing the spread of disease in ancient times, pointing out that the great law-giver used techniques unknown to the medical profession until fairly recently:

To show how far Moses was ahead of modern society we need only to remind ourselves that the word *quarantine* originated in the fourteenth century when the Italian ports of Venice and Genoa first refused admission to immigrants who might be harboring [bubonic] plague and required them to stay on board for forty days—hence the word *quarantine*. Even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries leprosy spread over southern Europe until the principles of Moses were re-enacted successfully. Moses disinfected the patient's clothing [Lev. 13:47 ff.], bed, and even the house itself [14:34 ff.]. The leper was required to wear a covering (mask) upon his upper lip [13:45]. On occasion the priest was requested to go outside of the camp to examine the suspect [13:46]—further to protect the populace.<sup>2</sup> [italics original]

Dr. Edward Neufeld, Professor of Ancient Cultures at Fairleigh Dickenson University in New Jersey, expanded on this point in the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*:

Of great significance is the fact that "purification" techniques involved also the rinsing or burning of the garment of the diseased person, shaving the hair of



## Medical Science and the Law of Moses

Stephen Caesar

Exodus and the wilderness wanderings they could scarcely have discovered for themselves, e.g. the prohibition, as food, of pigs and of animals which had died natural deaths [Lev. 7:24], the burial or burning of excreta [Deut. 23:13, Ex. 29:14], etc., and the contagious nature of some diseases. . . . In a number of respects the biblical outlook on the sick, and on health in general, has a bearing on modern medical practice, and is perhaps more up-to-date than is generally realized.<sup>4</sup>

Another physician who saw modern medical science in the Law of Moses was the late A. Rendle-Short, M.D., professor of surgery and lecturer in physiology at the University of Bristol in England, as well as Examiner and Hunterian Professor of the Royal College of Surgeons. Commenting on Deuteronomy 14:21, which prohibits eating the meat of an animal which has died of disease, Dr. Short observed:

Today, if a butcher exposed an animal which had died of disease for sale in his shop he would be prosecuted

the head, beard, and even the eyebrows (Lev. 14:8-9) and sterilization by means of fire (Lev. 13:55-58). Thus, in effect, the ways to fight communicable diseases were to destroy the germs, or prevent their being carried to healthy people. This leads us to the conclusion that although germs which directly cause certain infections and diseases were obviously unknown in those days, there was an awareness of the notion that some diseases were caused by the entry into the body of some infective agents.<sup>3</sup>

Other medical scientists have noticed the Pentateuch's astoundingly modern outlook on health and hygiene. D. H. Trapnell, M.D., Consultant Radiologist at Westminster Hospital in London, observed:

One respect in which Jewish medicine was better than that of contemporary peoples was the remarkable sanitary code of the Israelites in Moses' time. . . . The Jews, as a nation, might not have survived their time in the wilderness, or the many other vicissitudes through which they passed, without their sanitary "code." It deals with public hygiene, water supply, sewage disposal, inspection and selection of food, and control of infectious disease. The most interesting thing about it is that it implies a knowledge which in the circumstances of the



under the Food and Drugs Act, because there is the possibility of conveying some germ infection or parasite. The law is the more noteworthy because thereby a considerable source of food supply is cast away as useless. Whence had the Biblical writer this insight, two or three thousand years in advance of his day?<sup>5</sup>

Regarding Leviticus 11:32–38, which underscores the necessity of clean water for hygienic purposes, he noted:

The importance of a clean water supply is one of the major discoveries of the modern public health services. It was only about fifty years ago [Dr. Short was writing in 1949] that it became recognized that typhoid fever in this country [Great Britain], cholera in India, bilharziasis in Egypt, and many other diseases, were spread principally by polluted water.<sup>6</sup>

The late physician further wrote:

Closely connected with the protection of the wells and springs is the safe disposal of sewage. Water-borne and fly-borne diseases, such as dysentery and enteric fever, have been the scourge of armies in the field even more than of stationary populations. In the South African [Boer] War the loss of life from these diseases was greater than from wounds. It was not till the Great War of 1914–1918 that effectual precautions were put into practice. Yet all through the centuries the remedy was ready to hand, if the generals had troubled to read their Bibles, and to observe the directions given for the disposal of excreta by burial (Deut. xxiii. 12–14).<sup>7</sup>

The Mosaic Law not only stressed protection of water from contamination, but food as well. Commenting on Numbers 19:15, which declares unclean any food container not sealed with a tight lid, Prof. Neufeld stated that

some care was taken to protect the food being prepared from surrounding contamination. Textual references to “open vessels” with no lids fastened down clearly indicate that pots with fastened-down lids were used during preparation and storage to protect food from insects and various contamination. In fact, an ingeniously constructed lid of the middle 8th century B.C. was unearthed by [Yigael] Yadin at Hazor.<sup>8</sup>

These facts are more than interesting in themselves; they also stand in marked contrast to the medical “science” of the pagan Egyptian milieu out of which Moses and the Israelites emerged. Without divine inspiration, the Egyptian-influenced author of the Pentateuch would have absorbed—or at least been heavily influenced by—the unscientific beliefs about medicine and health care held by the Egyptians. This, however, is not the case. The great archaeologist Dr. William F. Albright, late professor of Semitic Languages at the Johns Hopkins University and former Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, pointed out, “it is clear that the religion of Israel revolted against virtually every external aspect of Egyptian religion, including the complex and grotesque iconography, [and] the dominion of daily life in the Nineteenth Dynasty by magic.”<sup>9</sup>

Prof. Neufeld similarly noted that the Pentateuch’s laws on purification and disease prevention do not reflect the

beliefs of the cultures that surrounded Moses:

They presuppose a fairly well-developed system of hygiene. None of the known rituals of the ancient Near East, as illustrated in mythological texts, incantations, and descriptions of festivals, can be compared to the vast scope of detailed topics, extent of knowledge, systematic elaboration, and clear identification of spiritual “purity” with community responsibility, as exemplified in the textual materials of the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. M. R. DeHaan, who received his M.D. from the University of Illinois Medical School and was a practicing physician for many years before becoming an evangelical preacher, expands on this central point:

We ask the question, since Moses was educated in all these [Egyptian] superstitions and primitive practices, how does it happen that he does not teach or recommend these remedies in his writings? Although he deals in detail and great length with diseases, the treatment of infections, leprosy, and running sores, yet the illusions, deceptions, gross errors, and superstitions concerning anatomy, physiology, pathology, and treatment of diseases as taught in the highest schools of learning in Egypt from which Moses was a graduate [Acts 7:22], are never taught or even suggested in the books of Moses. But instead the instructions Moses laid down for Israel were utterly at variance with the accepted practices of that day, and fully in harmony with modern-day scientific facts.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Short similarly remarked:

It is not to be expected on ordinary grounds that a small secluded nation like the Hebrews, lately come out of the desert, would have any better ideas of health and disease than were current amongst a great settled civilization like that of Egypt. It is the more surprising, therefore, to find in the Old Testament the observations of disease so accurate, and the sanitary science so much in accord with modern knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

Given such advanced knowledge on the part of Moses (in contrast to the unscientific ignorance around him), Dr. Vis makes the following statement:

The medical knowledge imparted by Moses to the people of Israel stands out as a solitary scientific mountain peak above the barren centuries which had gone before and the period of darkness which followed. . . . Moses, then, should be ranked not only with the great law-givers of history but also with the very great names in sanitary science. In safeguarding Israel from pestilence and communicable diseases he was the first and greatest of hygienists.<sup>13</sup>

These facts go far in demonstrating that the Bible is not of mere human origin. If it were, the commands regarding health and hygiene found in the Mosaic Law would have been tainted by the biases, prejudices, and presuppositions of its author, who was born and raised in an era of pre-scientific ignorance and superstition. Whether the Pentateuch was a product of a man fleeing Egypt or of Jewish priests in



exile in Babylon (as critics claim), the scientific facts it contains regarding health and medicine are so advanced and so completely unstained by pagan superstition and unscientific error that only a single conclusion can be reached about its origin—divine inspiration. Dr. Short commented that the medical principles in Moses' writings

are so free from paganism or magic, are so simple, so scientific, so neglected for centuries only to be rediscovered within our own lifetime, so little likely to be due to the observation of a people as primitive as the Israelites, a thousand or fifteen hundred years before Christ, that we must surely conclude that the writers had a special revelation from God.<sup>14</sup>

Another titan in the field of modern medicine, the late Dr. Howard A. Kelly, concurred heartily. Dr. Kelly received his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania (an Ivy League school) and served as associate professor of obstetrics at that same institution. He later became chairman of gynecological surgery at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Medical School, and finally Emeritus Professor of Gynecological Surgery at that prestigious institution. He closed his extremely productive life as chief surgeon and radiologist at Howard A. Kelly Hospital in Baltimore, as well as the author of countless papers on medical science, particularly obstetrics and gynecology. This intellectual and medical giant once wrote:

I am sure that the Bible is the Word of God, with an assurance greater than all other convictions directing my course in this brief earthly pilgrimage. Above all those maxims regulating the practical relations of life born of experience, above those logical deductions from philosophical and scientific premises, I place the clear light of truth shining from the pages of the Bible. The Bible, the Word of God, is my one great guerdon on my homeward journey.<sup>15</sup> . . . The Bible appeals to me strongly as a physician, because it is such excellent medicine; it has never yet failed to cure a single patient if only he took his prescription honestly. Whatever

there is in civilization that is worth while rests on the Bible's precepts. . . . Everywhere and in all its teachings the Bible claims to be the authoritative Word of God, and as such I accept it.

Stephen Caesar is currently pursuing his master's degree in anthropology/archaeology at Harvard University.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> William R. Vis, M.D., "Medical Science and the Bible," in *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1950), 238.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.
- <sup>3</sup> Edward Neufeld, "Hygiene Conditions in Ancient Israel (Iron Age)," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 25 (1970); reprinted in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader IV*, Edward Campbell and David Freedman, eds. (Sheffield, England: The Almond Press, 1983), 171.
- <sup>4</sup> *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), s.v. "Health, Disease and Healing."
- <sup>5</sup> A. Rendle Short, M.D., *Modern Discovery and the Bible*, 2nd ed., rev. (London: Inter-varsity Fellowship, 1949), 120.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.
- <sup>8</sup> Neufeld, op. cit., 162.
- <sup>9</sup> William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), 270.
- <sup>10</sup> Neufeld, op. cit., 172.
- <sup>11</sup> M. R. DeHaan, M.D., *Genesis and Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962), 61.
- <sup>12</sup> Short, op. cit., 119.
- <sup>13</sup> Vis, op. cit., 249.
- <sup>14</sup> Short, op. cit., 123.
- <sup>15</sup> Howard A. Kelly, M.D., *A Scientific Man and the Bible* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Co., 1925), pp. 41, 54, 61.

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## FBF NEWS AND EVENTS

Bob Whitmore, Managing Editor

### FBF Adopts New Constitution

After several years of work, study, and prayer, the FBF board adopted a new Constitution at its June 15 meeting. The new Constitution incorporates a statement of faith that replaces the former doctrinal statement and manifestoes. The previous Constitution had been adopted in 1977. The complete text of the new Constitution has been posted on the FBF web site.

### FBF membership now includes *Frontline*

The FBF board at its meeting on June 15 decided to include a subscription to *Frontline* as a benefit of FBF membership. Members also receive a free FBF directory. The new membership dues are \$29 per year. Of course, non-members may continue to subscribe at the regular subscription prices.

### Keep checking [www.f-b-f.org](http://www.f-b-f.org)

The FBF web site continues to expand with new information and services. If you have a credit card, you can now subscribe to *Frontline* or pay your FBF membership dues (which include an FBF directory and a subscription to *Frontline*) at the web site. Almost all articles from back issues are now posted. A dozen entries are to be found under Publications, and Resolutions from 1946 and 1978–2000 are posted. You'll also find the latest information about meetings. The site has averaged more than 20,000 "hits" a month for the past year, and several banner advertisers on the *Frontline*

pages are taking advantage of this traffic to promote their services. If you would like to join them, contact us as FBFLINE@aol.com for details.

### Mexico Regional Meeting

The following report was submitted by Dr. James E. Singleton, pastor emeritus of Tri-City Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona, and Western Regional Moderator for the FBF:

In 1999, while James Singleton held a series of meetings for Bacilio Alfaro in Culiacan, Mexico, they began discussions to hold another meeting. The result was a year's planning which culminated in a congress in Culiacan at the end of March. Principal speakers were John Vaughn, Dick Mercado, Tim Fisher, Bacilio Alfaro, and James Singleton. Two local pastors of large fundamental churches, David Cortes and Alejandro Cordova, also spoke. Topics for the sessions included vision in the ministry, church planting and growth, prayer, soul winning, purity, the charismatic movement, the Holy Spirit, sermon preparation, and music. A large hall was rented and more than 500 attended nightly, with another 100 young people meeting at a local church. Another meeting is currently being planned for March 2001.

### Meetings

#### October 24

##### *Northeast Region*

Marriott Hotel, Farmington, CT  
For information call  
Trinity Baptist Church  
Concord, NH  
(603) 225-3999

#### 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*

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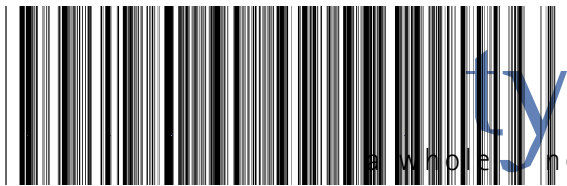
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# SOUND WORDS

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

## First Partaker

### Dedication to Preparation

#### Dedication

This month's column is written for the fine young men in our churches who sense upon their lives God's call to preach. It is sent out with the earnest prayer that the Lord who has called them would also grant them inspiration for their preparation.

Have you ever wondered if God would bless you in the ministry? If He were to bless you, what kind of man would you have to be? There's no more specific answer to that last question than Ezra 7:10—"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

This verse begins with the little preposition "for," indicating that the verse itself is the answer to a question. Although not actually asked in the passage, the question is one that God anticipated a preacher would have after reading of His exceptional blessing on Ezra's life. And it is the very question for which we're seeking an answer: What kind of man does God bless in the ministry?

The year is 458 B.C., and Ezra the scribe has a commission from Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, to move to Jerusalem in order to teach God's people the Law. According to Ezra 2:64, there had been more than 40,000 Jews who returned to Jerusalem some 80 years earlier, meaning that Ezra's potential congregation numbered in the tens of thousands. Now what kind of man would God entrust with such a large and strategic ministry? Our text describes him. He is the man who has *prepared* for it.

Note carefully the wording of the text: "For Ezra had *prepared*." Preparation is the credential God requires.

#### Investigation of the Word—"to seek the law of the Lord"

Let's begin where Ezra began. His desire was to be a Bible preacher-teacher, so he began by "seeking the law of the Lord." We could call this starting point *investigation*.

Investigation of the Bible is mandatory for a man who wants people to listen when he speaks. If we will dedicate ourselves to this labor of love, God will fill our hearts with Scriptural things to say to His people.

Unfortunately, many a man falls in the ministry, not because he has no ability, but because he has such an aversion to this kind of work. But before we presume that God's people will gather to hear us spill an empty mind, we ought to heed some wise men.

Study the Bible, dear brethren, through and through, with all the helps that you can possibly obtain: remember that the appliances now within the reach of ordinary Christians are much more extensive than they were in our fathers' days, and therefore you must be greater Biblical scholars if you would keep in front of your hearers. (C. H. Spurgeon)

If the study is a lounge, the pulpit will be an impertinence. I remember in my earlier days how I used to hear the factory operators passing my house on the way to the mills, where work began at six o'clock. I can recall the sound of their iron shoes ringing through the street. The sound of the shoes fetched me out of bed and took me to my work. I can no longer hear the Yorkshire shoes, but I can see and hear my busi-

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

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nessmen as they start off early to earn their daily bread. And shall their minister be behind them in his quest of the Bread of Life? (John Henry Jowett)

I would have laziness held to be the one unpardonable sin in all our students and in all our ministers. . . . Do we work as many hours every day, and as hard, as the people who support us work? As early in the morning, and as late at night, and as hard all the livelong day? Oh no! We cannot look seriously in one another's faces and say it is want of time that we have. It is want of intention. It is want of determination. It is want of method. It is want of motive. It is want of conscience. It is want of heart. It is want of anything and everything but time. (Alexander Whyte)

Learning to investigate Scripture is the gateway to many blessings. One of the greatest of these is the thrill of discovery. But discovering truth is never an accident. It is a reward.

## ***Investigation of the Bible is mandatory for a man who wants people to listen when he speaks.***

Some of us are alive today because of a substance discovered by the British bacteriologist, Alexander Fleming. That substance is penicillin. When Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, he was catapulted into international recognition. There were other scientists who coveted his honors. They said that he had been lucky—that he had stumbled upon penicillin by accident and experienced a stroke of good fortune. But those who said such things never reckoned with the 22 years of 12- to 16-hour days that Fleming wearied through in a cramped London laboratory before his great moment in 1928. Fleming discovered penicillin because he was dedicated to investigation! And the same dedication that rewards the scientist rewards the preacher.

People used to say that G. Campbell Morgan was an expository genius. They marveled at the magnetism of his ministry and were overwhelmed by the power of his preaching. So they called him a genius. But Morgan's biographer relates that those who said such things never observed him almost every morning (Christmas holidays included) at five o'clock, sitting in a little pool of lamplight with his Bible, a pencil, and a well-marked notebook. Morgan was a great expositor because he was a great investigator! You too will experience such rewards of discovery if you will rise early and work hard with the Flemings and the Morgans.

Dedication to Bible study will do something even greater for you. It will ensure you of a future place of service. This was what happened to Ezra. He had so distinguished himself as a student of Scripture that even the heathen king, Artaxerxes, respected his expertise. Reading through Ezra 7:11–26, you will observe that the entire passage is a letter of recommendation written by the king for Ezra. Twice he refers to Ezra as “the scribe of the law of the God of heaven” (vv. 12, 21), and in verse 25 he commissions Ezra to teach the laws of his God according to “the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand.” It was surely no accident that out of all the Jewish law teachers available, Artaxerxes chose Ezra. And there *were* other law teachers available. According to Ezra 2:36–39, there were more than 4,000 priests who had gone back to Jerusalem! But the king chose Ezra. Ezra had evidently been so diligent in his preparations that he had come to the king's attention. He had experienced the truth of Proverbs 22:29—“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean [obscure] men.”

If you would follow Ezra into an audience with the king and out again into a place of privileged service, be diligent in your business of investigating God's Word. It is to the diligent that kings grant ministries.

## **Incarnation of the Word—“and to do it”**

During our years of intense Bible study, we will discover much that should be incorporated into our own lives. It is then that we will have to determine to pattern ourselves after the second characteristic for which Ezra had prepared himself—“to do the law of the Lord.” Revelation always demands response.

The verbs translated “to do” in our English Bible have some very picturesque uses in the Old Testament. This is the same verb used of God's creative activities (Gen. 1:31) and Bezaleel's craftsmanship of the tabernacle (Exod. 36:1). In this context of the Book of Ezra, we might remember these uses of the word and think of the preacher as “creating” or “fashioning” an obedient response to all that he finds in the Word. This is always the necessary link between learning the Bible and preaching it. Even the most impassioned preaching cannot hurdle a disobedient life.

Whenever you encounter a demand of the Lord in Scripture, you might remember the pithy definition of preaching coined by Philips Brooks. Brooks said that preaching is “truth through personality.” Notice the channel for communicating truth—“through personality.” People need to see what the truth looks like when worn on the life. Had God intended only for people to *know* what the Bible says, He could have provided each believer with a library of inspired commentaries. Instead, He sends them preachers. And in preachers, people see the



truth incarnated. That is why Brooks discerned that good preaching is much more than sermon preparation and delivery. William Quayle, a godly Methodist preacher from the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, expanded Brooks' principle when he wrote,

Preaching is the art of making a sermon and delivering it? Why, no, that is not preaching. Preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering *that*. . . . Therefore, the elemental business in preaching is not with the preaching, but with the preacher. It is no trouble to preach, but a vast trouble to construct a preacher. . . . A great life, telling a great truth, ought to be a definition of a preacher at his message.

As you dedicate yourself to fleshing out the truth, God will send you people to see how you do it. But if you have resisted God during these formative years, then His people will see *that too*. They will not know exactly where the trouble lies. They will not know that you lied about completing assignments, that you were irregular in church attendance, that you went to ball games but not to soul-winning visitation, or that your roommates had little respect for you. They will not know the specifics, but they will sense the inevitable results. They will sense that you don't ring true. They will *feel* the powerlessness of your ministry. They will marvel that you are a cloud without rain—that there is no healing in your wings—that no virtue spills from your life. People expect that the man who binds them to such high ideals Sunday after Sunday shall have the breath of Christ about him. They expect that he shall do valiant deeds, work righteousness, obtain promises, wax strong in battle, and turn to flight the armies of the wicked one. In short, they expect a man of God. And now, during your training years, is the time God is giving you to become holy.

Before leaving this point of doing the law, we should note that all of his life Ezra had just such a reputation for living what he preached. For instance, the letter of commendation that Artaxerxes wrote for Ezra included the command for the king's ministers of finance to provide Ezra with whatsoever he needed to fund the worship services in Jerusalem. The expense was to be born by the king's treasury (Ezra 7:20). Ezra had such a reputation for integrity that the king drafted him a blank check on the royal treasury!

Years later there is another indication that Ezra rang true. Some 14 years after he arrived in Jerusalem, Ezra saw God bring revival to the nation (Nehemiah 8–10 records this). At that time the people hungered for the preaching of the law. So intent were they on hearing Ezra expound it that they erected for him a platform of wood on which to stand so as to give him added stature as he preached. Why were these people so concerned to

hear Ezra preach? It can be credited to the 14 years during which Ezra had been erecting for himself a platform of his *life* from which to expound the law. Platforms of wood are erected for preachers known for their platforms of life. For 14 years these people had seen Ezra live the law. When God sent revival to them, it is no wonder that they wanted him to *preach* the law.

When Ezra mounted his platform of wood to preach, he was God's man. But you can be sure that had he not already been fixed on his platform of life, the platform of wood would have served only to expose what a spiritual dwarf he was. You too can erect for yourself a preaching platform if you will dedicate yourself to incarnating God's Word. On the platform of your godly life you will have stature in the eyes of God's people so that they will cry, "Preacher, preach to us! Tell us what you've seen in God's Book! Tell us what you're living out of God's Book! Preacher, for the sake of Christ and His kingdom, tell us what God says in His law!"

### **Instruction of the Word—"and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments"**

Much of our success or failure in the ministry hinges on our dedication to these first two steps of preparation. But one day you will pass beyond the stage of the apprentice into the dimension of a full-time preacher. What a great day that will be. But it is something that must be prepared for just as you have made investigation and incarnation of the Word your preparation. There is a necessary preparation for instruction.

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***"Preaching is the art of making a sermon and delivering it? Why, no, that is not preaching. Preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering that" (William Quayle).***

Ezra 7:10 contains at least two truths about what it is to instruct God's people: "to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." The first truth has to do with the character of the instruction itself. The word "teach" is thought-provoking in that it means far more than standing in the pulpit three times a week. It was used of the training of an ox to carry its yoke, to stay in the furrow, and to persist in the plowing until the field was finished. A preacher's job is far more than communication. His job is something like that of a coach. He is to train the saints. He is to equip them for their work in the Body of Christ (see Eph. 4:11–13). This involves an almost Herculean effort to be a good coach. It



involves dogged commitment to the methodical and sometimes tedious routine of exercising believers in the spiritual endeavors that build maturity. It means one-on-one discipleship of “faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). No one but the preacher knows the many hours that are required for repeating truths and rehearsing skills so that the believers are functional for Christ. It will take every preacher an ocean full of determination to stick with it.

A second thing indicated here about instructing God’s people is the commitment a man must have to the exact requirements of God for His people. Ezra was going to face some tough issues in Jerusalem. As soon as he arrived, he had to deal with mixed marriages that had been made between the Jews and the heathen (Ezra 9–10). Ask any preacher ministering in today’s degenerate society if that’s an easy task! And later on Ezra had to enforce the keeping of the Sabbath, the giving of tithes, and the maintenance of a pure priesthood. When Ezra was preparing to go to Jerusalem, he didn’t know about any of these problems. But God knew about them, and He knew that Ezra was equal to the responsibility because of his commitment to training God’s people in the statutes and judgments of the law.

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## ***People expect that the man who binds them to such high ideals Sunday after Sunday shall have the breath of Christ about him.***

A *statute* is a demand that is as inviolable as if it had been inscribed in letters of lead on tablets of stone. It is a standard that cannot be altered. The word *judgment* is another way of referring to these same inviolable standards. But it views them as requirements that are so well established that they have become customs. We might call them the etiquette of God’s kingdom—His customs for thought, word, and behavior.


Surprisingly, even God’s people are often unaccustomed to God’s customs. Their thoughts, words, and behavior are sometimes the etiquette of the heathen. This is one of the heartbreaks of the ministry for which you must prepare yourself. How often you will be tempted to leave an application out of your sermon because of its exposure

of some present evil in your congregation. Even worse, you will be tempted to avoid certain passages of Scripture because you know that they rebuke the practices of influential members of your assembly. But your job, like Ezra’s, will be to view God’s standards as statutes and judgments—as inflexible standards by which to govern the personal, domestic, social, and religious behavior of believers. Right now, as you study the Scripture, you must develop such an exalted view of what you discover there that you will never waver about preaching it. If it will help you, remember that Moses (Exod. 17:4), Jeremiah (Jer. 20:7–9), Peter (Gal. 2:12), Timothy (2 Tim. 1:7), and most of God’s great men have had their battles with fear of man. And as you remember them, make earnest vows to God about yourself. Ask Him to inscribe His words on your heart as statutes. Ask Him to incorporate His customs into your life as etiquette. And may He impart iron to your blood to keep those vows.

## **Conclusion**

Joseph Parker, a British preacher whose influence was so vast that the pews in the back of his London church were said to stretch to the Rocky Mountains, used to marvel when people would ask him to reveal the secret to his powerful ministry. To Parker there was no secret. He would reply, “There is no need of explanation. I have lived for my work. That is all. Mystery there is none. I have made my preaching work my delight, the very festival of my soul.” And then Parker would challenge young men studying for the ministry, “Young brethren, go thou and do likewise, and God bless thee!”

Ezra never knew Joseph Parker. They were separated by 2,300 years. But Ezra and Joseph Parker lived by the same formula, and God richly blessed them both. Ezra is credited with authoring at least three books of the Bible, 1 and 2 Chronicles and the book that bears his name. He is also recognized as the one who first gathered into one collection the 39 Hebrew books that make up our Old Testament canon. He was the one who organized a group of scribes called the *Sopherim*. They were the official Bible publication society of their day and were the conscientious caretakers of the text of the Hebrew Bible for some 600 years (400 B.C. to A.D. 200). So effective and influential was Ezra that for centuries after his death, the Jewish people referred to him as the second Moses. He is one of the outstanding examples of the principle that a never-ending variety of ministries is available to the man who has adequately prepared.

Whenever you wonder if God will bless your ministry, remember where Ezra got his start. He began where we all must begin—with dedication to preparation. Where does God find qualified men for strategic ministries? He finds them wherever they are, all consumed with their dedication to preparation. 



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# Bring . . . the Books

## The Silence of God

Through the years, saints of God have struggled with the two-fold conundrum as to why the heathen prosper and why the righteous suffer. The Psalmist dealt with adversity's unequal balance in Psalm 73. In verses 1 through 9 he meditated upon the triumph of the sinful, and in verses 10 through 14 he pondered the trials of saints. In verses 3 and 12 he ruminated over the "prosperity of the wicked." The second part of the enigma is one of the many questions that plagued Job. That righteous man faced the question head on: "Why do the righteous suffer?" Thank God, both Job and David were given Divine insight and came to rest in the Lord's goodness.

Modern self-help specialists have dabbled in humanistic answers to these dilemmas. Titles such as *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, *They're All in It Together: When Good Things Happen to Bad People*, and *What Happens to Good People When Bad Things Happen?* reveal an effort to assuage disillusioned religionists who live without reality.

What a contrast is found in the classic by Sir Robert Anderson, *The Silence of God* (newly reprinted by Kregel, 1999). Here one finds the soothing spiritual balm of Gilead. Before contemplating this masterpiece, consider this brief résumé of Sir Robert Anderson (1841–1918). Trained as a lawyer at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, Anderson became famed in Great Britain as an adviser on Irish affairs in matters relating to political crime. In 1888 he was appointed head of the Criminal Investigation Department (Scotland Yard).

Anderson, however, was first and foremost a child of God, and with all his duties he found time to study theology, author many volumes, and preach with great conviction and authority. He has given the Christian public a number of outstanding books of merit. (This writer possesses seventeen of his titles.) His choice works include: *The Gospel and Its Ministry*, *The Coming Prince or the Seventy Weeks of Daniel*, *The Hebrew Epistle*, and *Daniel in the Critic's Den*. But if forced to select only one of Anderson's books to include in my five-foot book shelf, I would surely choose *The Silence of God*.

How is it that our omnipotent, omniscient Creator, in whom resides all power and knowledge, does not intervene in the affairs of His creatures and, more precisely, in the concerns of His children? We know that in ages past Jehovah God revealed Himself through miracles to His earthly people, Israel. His power was unleashed upon the earth in the days of Elijah and Elisha. In the days of His flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ exhibited God's power in healing the sick and raising the dead. And what of the apostles? Peter was miraculously released from prison. His very shadow passing over the sick brought healing.

Were the reports of such miracles merely embellished myths? Leaders of the modern-day charismatic movement

would decry such a position. They have concluded that a silent heaven is caused only by a lack of faith on the part of current disciples. They demand the miraculous, and when such is not forthcoming, there is consternation in their camp.

Tragically, because of the silence of God in this day, some have questioned the validity of the divine record and have repudiated the faith.

Sir Robert Anderson wrote:


The mystery remains that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers," never speaks to His people now! The Divine history of the favoured race for thousands of years teems with miracles by which God gave proof of His power with men, and yet we are confronted by the astounding fact that from the days of the apostles to the present hour the history of Christendom will be searched in vain for the record of a single public event to compel belief that there is a God at all!

Arguing that in the plan of God we are living in the day of man, Anderson summarized his findings:

A Silent Heaven! Yes, but it is not the silence of callous indifference or helpless weakness; it is the silence of a great sabbatic rest, the silence of a peace which is absolute and profound—a silence which is the public pledge and proof that the way is open for the guiltiest of mankind to draw near to God. When faith murmurs, and unbelief revolts, and men challenge the Supreme to break that silence and declare Himself, how little do they realise what the challenge means! It means the withdrawal of the amnesty; it means the end of the reign of grace; it means the closing of the day of mercy and the dawning of the day of wrath.

He concludes,

If God is silent now it is because Heaven has come down to earth, the climax of Divine revelation has been reached, there is no reserve of mercy yet to be unfolded. He has spoken His last word of love and grace, and when next He breaks the silence it will be to let loose the judgments which shall yet engulf a world that has rejected Christ. For "our God shall come and shall not keep silence."

This valuable volume will strengthen and settle the heart of God's children in the assurance that the Heavenly Father has given. 

Dr. David L. Cummins is Deputation Director of Baptist World Mission in Decatur, Alabama.

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



Jesus' Passover Discourse (John 13–17) is a uniquely powerful portion of Scripture. John Brown remarked that "there are few more touching displays of the moral grandeur of the man Christ Jesus, than that which is exhibited in these valedictory instructions and consolations." The material in these five chapters is not found in the Synoptics, and it provides the Christian with a marvelous record of the Master's last instructions to His missionaries. After Jesus washes the feet of His 12 disciples (13:1–15) and Judas departs (13:16–30), only those who truly love Jesus are in His audience. What does Jesus think is most important to reiterate to these disciples? What is of enduring importance to Him and His work? These chapters lift the veil on the heart of Jesus.

These chapters can be presented in three very profitable ways.

### Preaching the Outstanding Texts

What tragic and vivid pictures does a text such as John 13:30 evoke: "... and it was night"! What believer does not need to be reminded of John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"? What Christian does not need to revel in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"? How profoundly applicable is the text: "Without me ye can do nothing"! No presentation of pneumatology would be complete without John 16:7–15. And perhaps no text is more twisted and so is in greater need of clarification than John 17:11, "that they may be one." In Warren Wiersbe's *Treasury of the World's Great Sermons* no book is more represented than John's Gospel, and over a third of those messages come from these five chapters.

### Preaching the Successive Paragraphs

Presenting these chapters systematically as a unified discourse is always more difficult in John than the other Gospels because his progression sometimes seems to defy logic. The five paragraphs of John 13 can all be organized around the theme of "The Disciple's Service."


The three paragraphs of John 14 (1–14, 15–24, 25–31) focus on the sorrowing disciples and are dedicated to the theme of "The Disciples' Consolation." Jesus begins by commanding "Let not your heart be troubled," explains why they should not, and then returns to His original exhortation in verse 27. He comforts them by reminding them of heaven (1–6)—this awaits them. He comforts them by reminding them of His mission (7–11)—He has done what He came to do. He comforts them by assuring them of their mission (12)—they have a job before them. He comforts them

by providing for them in prayer (13–14)—they have all they need to do their job. He comforts them by focusing their attention on obedience (15–24)—real love doesn't pout, it obeys. He comforts them by promising them the Spirit (16–17)—He will resume Christ's own ministry to them. He comforts them by promising to be with them through the Spirit (16)—He is not really leaving them. He comforts them by reminding them of His destiny (25–29)—He is going to a better place.

John 15:1–17 presents "The Disciples' Fruitfulness." Its source is the subject of verses 1–10, and its greatest expression—love—is taught in verses 11–17. The chapter break between John 15 and 16 is unfortunate because in 15:18–16:3 (three paragraphs: 18–25, 26–27, 1–3) Jesus teaches His missionaries about "The Disciples' Enemy" (the world). The one word that describes the posture of the world toward the believer is *hatred*. Then 16:4–15 follows with "The Disciples' Paraclete," "The Disciples' Joy" (16:16–24), and "The Disciples' Peace" as a result of their faith (16:25–33). Look at the themes which preoccupy Jesus: not Himself but His disciples—their service, their comfort, their fruitfulness, their enemy, their Comforter, joy and peace. Is it not a remarkable testimony to His love for His own?

### Preaching the Leading Themes

The leading themes of these chapters can be presented analytically. The largest theme in these five chapters is love, with 32 individual references to the subject. Jesus spoke to His disciples about the Father's love for us (14:21, 23; 16:27), about His own love for us (13:1; 14:21, 31; 15:9, 15), and of the Father's love for Him (15:9–10). He spoke of our love for Jesus (13:23) which is demonstrated when His disciples obey His commandments (14:15, 21, 23–24; 15:10, 14). He speaks of the world's lack of love for us because they hate Jesus (15:19). But He speaks especially of our need to have love for each other (13:34; 15:12, 17). Other themes dealt with extensively include *joy* (13:17; 15:11; 16:16–24), *peace* (14:1, 27; 16:25–33), *faith* (13:19; 14:1, 10–12, 29; 16:9, 27, 30–31), the *cross* (13:31–32; 15:13), *prayer* (14:13–14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–27), His *glorification* (13:31–32; 15:8) and the *Comforter* (14:6, 15:26, 16:4–15). These subjects Jesus emphasized at the close of His earthly ministry are as important for the disciple today as they were the first century.

J. C. Ryle rightly remarked, "In every age the contents of these chapters have been justly regarded as one of the most precious parts of the Bible." 

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



According to a recent article in *Psychology Today*, “the average six-year-old laughs 300 times a day, the average adult, just 17.” Why is that? Somewhere along the line, we learned not to laugh. That’s right. A baby giggles for the first time at about nine weeks of age. Between 4–6 months, touch and sound make a baby laugh and by ten months an infant will seek out laughter, usually through games such as peek-a-boo. This is a natural part of human development.

But at some point, perhaps when we enter school, we begin to hear such messages as, “Don’t act so silly,” “Wipe that smile off your face,” and “Grow up.” Remember? Again and again, we hear these phrases throughout our formative years. So what we learn is: be more serious and be more mature. (Bah! Humbug!)

Then we learn about No Laughing Zones. They are everywhere. Places we frequent. Places where we spend many of our waking hours—work, school, even church. We are expected to keep our nose to the grindstone at work, be mindful at school, and be reverent in church. Anything else is, well . . . inappropriate.

To top it off, there are emotions that squelch laughter. Their names are: Embarrassment, Humiliation, Pain, Rejection, and Criticism. They tell us to keep our composure, stay in control, and—don’t act foolish!

What is the truth? Laughter is good for us. What other bodily function can give us a healthy workout inside and out, can alleviate stress, relieve pain, and help us gain a better perspective on our lives? Laughter is a tension reliever. Have you ever felt your mounting anger give way to a burst of laughter? It can be an icebreaker at a party—“Did you hear the one about . . . ?” Laughter has the ability to transform us from fearful and discouraged to spirited and encouraged.

Often, we have little control over life’s events, but if we learn to see humor in these situations and laugh, we can minimize the impact. Just one more reason to laugh: *Men’s Health* reported that watching a couple of hours of Mary Tyler Moore reruns will actually burn about 100 calories. Ha!

The Bible gives us much encouragement to see the humor in this life. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken” (Prov. 15:13). “All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (Prov. 15:15). “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Prov. 17:22).

We find in the Scripture the principle that laughter is good, encouraging, healthy, and uplifting. A person

who is a pessimist has a hard time seeing the good things in life. I am often encouraged when I am with someone who sees the humor in difficult situations.

My parents were always available to entertain missionaries or visiting preachers. As kids we used to enjoy sitting and listening to the guests as they would relate experiences they had had in the ministry. Many of those experiences were funny. I remember my dad saying that it takes a sense of humor for those in the ministry to be able to endure the stress that accompanies the Lord’s work.

Years ago I remember Larry Johnson, missionary to East Pakistan, telling our family of a newspaper account of a killing in East Pakistan. It told of two

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

*Charles Spurgeon*

***The Bible gives us much encouragement to see the humor in this life. “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10). “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken” (Prov. 15:13). “All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (Prov. 15:15). “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Prov. 17:22).***

priests who were having an argument. One of them pulled out a knife and stabbed the other to death. When police questioned him about the incident, he said that they were just having a good time and he was tickling the other priest with his knife. I remember Larry saying, “Yes, I can hear the priest saying, ‘Stop that! You are tickling me to death!’”

We can endure a difficult situation if we can see the humor in it. It takes the sting out of it.

The same is true, however, in the realm of the forbidden. I can remember the day when immorality was viewed as a terrible blight. It wasn’t talked about openly. It was understood that a marriage commitment was a serious decision and people did not go into marriage without having thought long and prayed



hard about it. People didn't talk of adultery openly or lightly. Then "adultery" began being referred to as "having an affair." To take the edge off of it even more, people started telling jokes about people being unfaithful to their marriage, and the discussion became more and more common. Then the late night comedians got their mileage out of it. The more it was used as common conversation, the more it was the theme of jokes . . . and the more it became palatable in the minds of people.

Then came the television commercials for the liquor industry. These commercials made extremely effective use of humor. Now Budweiser's three croaking frogs are doing more to influence our children than Joe Camel ever did. It has made drinking beer seem innocuous. Why? Because of the humor. Humor can be used very effectively, for good or for evil.

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***The Scripture cautions the believer against looseness of conversation. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:3-4).***

At a recent White House Correspondents' Dinner, President Clinton presented himself as a stand-up comedian using jokes to make fun of his misconduct. He also used humor to lay cautiously placed barbs against his critics. The 2,000 guests made up of the political and media leadership of the country should have been ashamed of themselves for laughing at such grossly immoral behavior on the part of the President of the United States. *Washington Times* columnist Tony Blankley, however, was not one to think these comments deserved laughter. He stated, "The fact that the jokes might be funny and well-delivered doesn't mean the audience ought to laugh with Mr. Clinton. Decent people no longer laugh at racist jokes because there is nothing funny about racism. And there is nothing funny about Bill Clinton's shameful conduct as President."

Our society used to view sexual perversion as grossly unnatural. It was something disgraceful and was whispered about in the locker room. With the looseness of our society came the promoting of "alternate lifestyles." The promotion of these lifestyles made their way into the media, which made them acceptable. Who were the major pro-


moters? Again, the late-night comedians. The jokes seemed to take the immoral sting out of these lifestyles. It seems there is something tantalizing about making fun of the forbidden. When people take these topics and make light of them, they make wicked things palatable.

Do we really want to laugh at immorality? Do we really want to laugh at street language? Thanks to Hollywood, people now laugh at nudity, promiscuity, and vulgarity. Our society is now speaking of these things in common conversation which makes these things acceptable behavior. The Scripture cautions the believer against looseness of conversation. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:3-4).

As Bible-believing Christians, we need to censure laughter that mocks righteousness and tears down moral inhibitions. We need to set an example of what is proper humor and what is improper if we are going to protect our families. You see, with some things there is a good reason not to laugh. What example are you setting for your family and society in general?

The "Art of Parenthood" was an essay written by Wilfred A. Peterson and published in *The Art of Living Treasure Chest* (Simon and Schuster). This essay gives us a good example to present to our children.

Of all the commentaries on the Scriptures, good examples are the best. In practicing the art of parenthood, an ounce of example is worth a ton of preaching. Our children are watching us live, and what we ARE shouts louder than anything we can SAY. When we set an example of honesty, our children will be honest. When we practice tolerance, they will be tolerant. When we demonstrate good sportsmanship, they will be good sports. When we meet life with laughter and a twinkle in our eye, they will develop a sense of humor. When we are thankful for life's blessings, they will be thankful. When we express friendliness, they will be friendly. When we speak words of praise, they will praise others. When we confront failure, defeat and misfortune with a gallant spirit, they will learn to live bravely. When our lives affirm our faith in the enduring values of life, they will rise above doubt and skepticism. When we surround them with the love and goodness of God, they will discover life's meaning. When we set an example of heroic living, they will be heroes. Don't just stand there pointing your finger to the heights you want your children to scale. Start climbing, and they will follow.

In short, we can teach what we know, but we will reproduce what we are. If we expect our children to have strong moral principles we must set the example. We need to be careful about what we see as humorous. Laughter is revealing. 



# Three Perils of Fundamentalism's Next Generation

Alan D. Cole

*The following article is from the February 2000 issue of Faith Pulpit, published by Faith Baptist Theological Seminary in Ankeny, Iowa, and is reprinted here with permission.*

The 20th century has closed, and the world has moved into a new era. With the passing of the 1900s, Fundamentalism is at least 100 years old. During this time, there has also been the passing of Fundamentalism's first and second generations. There are few men, if any, who were alive at the formation of the movement, and there are decreasing numbers who saw the rise of New Evangelicalism and warned others of its dangers. For those who remain, their days of service and leadership are drawing to a close. A new generation is rising to the forefront of leadership in Fundamentalism. One must ask, "What are the perils that this new generation faces?" Although this question could be answered many ways, there are at least three significant perils that should be considered.

## I. The Peril of Persecution

Christians need to be aware that society's mindset has shifted. This country, which was formed to protect religious freedom, has moved from tolerance of religion toward a position of intolerance. "Religion" is viewed as a good thing as long as it does not get in the way of the social agenda of multiculturalism. Toleration is the absolute of today's culture, except when it comes to religious absolutes.

One characteristic of postmodernism is not just disdain for absolutes or a debate with absolutes, but also an attack on absolutes and on those who hold them. When Fundamentalism declares positions such as the complete authority of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17), the sin of homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-27), and the leadership of the parent in the home (Eph. 6:1), it places itself in a head-on collision with postmodernism and multiculturalism. One must realize that morality, truth, honesty, and character are qualities that are no longer honored by today's standards. The world has forgotten that private morality determines public policy. The "live and let live" slogan of the sixties is now the pervading philosophy of the day, except when that philosophy encounters Fundamentalism. At that point, there is no allowance for the absolutes of a Fundamentalist.

What should be done in light of this predicament? We must train our young people to stand for Christ despite a culture that is adrift. We must recommit ourselves to expository preaching and to the anchoring of ourselves in the Word, in order to avoid the infiltration of false ideas from an errant society. We must brace ourselves for the coming tide of religious persecution. Just because we live in the United States does not mean that we are safe. One friend of mine said that he thought he would never live to see the day when a Christian in America would be killed for his faith. Sadly, last spring we saw that day when a young lady in Colorado was martyred. We tend to forget that the Bible

never promises religious protection to those who live in the United States. The Constitution makes that guarantee, but the Constitution is only as good as the men who interpret and enforce it. The tide of persecution may only be a ripple on the sea of time now, but it could expand quickly into a full-blown hurricane.

## II. The Peril of Pride

The new generation of Fundamentalists faces the peril of thinking that they are superior to the founders of the movement. There is the temptation to look at foibles of past men and respond with disdain toward them and the positions they advocated. There is the danger of thinking that one is enlightened, and therefore that past battles were trivial. When this mindset grips a young man, he is in danger of allowing, or perhaps even promoting, a drift from the movement's founding commitments.

In a previous *Faith Pulpit* article (May/June 1996), Dr. Robert G. Delnay discusses "Third-Generation Christians." He states that "in the third generation the importance of deliverance and of the founding issues gets less and less." He further warns of the possibility that "the third generation will have brought about the end of the founder's dream." These trends can also be a possibility within Fundamentalism. Personal and ecclesiastical separation and an exposition and defense of the faith can all become less significant to one who is unaware of their importance or Biblical basis. One may even reject the whole stand with the excuse that "he knows better." He may struggle with the pride of youth and view himself as superior to those who have sacrificed for his spiritual growth.

What should be done to avoid this temptation? Those leaders who are in the autumn of their service must realize that they still can make a contribution. They need to pass on to younger men an understanding of the importance of the issues that formed Fundamentalism. Moses, for example, rehearsed Israel's history to remind the new generation how the nation had come into existence (Deut. 1:5). Later in his article, Delnay states that "those who would arrest the process [of toleration] will have to do a serious ministry of teaching history. If the coming generation does not know the past, it will have little basis on which to appraise or preserve anything." While the errors of past generations should not be glossed over, neither should their victories and successes. Fundamentalism is not a movement filled only with defeats.

The older generation also needs to train, prepare, and at times even rebuke the next generation. In short, there must be a mentoring process. Those men who are rising to places of leadership or are training for leadership must accept this mentoring process and patiently grow under it. They must learn to be less critical of the past and more appreciative of the successes of those who have preceded them. This point is especially true when young men have grown up in the



ministries of the men they now criticize. Our young men must be willing to be mentored by seasoned veterans, and the older men must be willing to undertake that mentoring responsibility. The younger generation must become a bedrock of faith and practice, and the older generation must continue to speak out on significant issues.

### III. The Peril of Pluralism

The next generation faces the temptation to avoid controversy under the guise of toleration. There is an attitude that affirms that one's salvation is all that matters and that doctrinal distinctives are insignificant. The idea is that, as long as one is born again, he should allow all distinctives to be amalgamated into the melting pot of Christianity. This amalgamation, however, is pluralistic. Religious pluralism can be defined as the absorption of many religious beliefs into one system, despite the incompatibility or inconsistency of those beliefs. One individual asked, "When I stand before Christ, will He really be concerned about all these distinctives?" The answer is "yes" because they are part of His inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and man is held accountable for all of it.

Being a Fundamentalist is not just wearing a label. It is a firm exposition of and commitment to a theological position, and, in particular, to personal and ecclesiastical separation. It is the application of all doctrine to everyday life. It seems that some, in their attempt to promote a softer and less distinct Fundamentalism, have forsaken their

commitment to its declaration and practice. At the heart of this issue is an attempt to be more relevant to mankind while forgetting faithfulness to the Lord and to His Word. When one attends ecumenical conventions for male leadership, when one uses "Christian Rock" or Contemporary Christian Music to build his youth group, when one is unwilling to defend and declare personal and ecclesiastical separation, he is guilty of religious pluralism. He is combining the world with the Word and clouding the lines of distinction between them.

What should be done in light of these blurred distinctives? We must expound the Scriptural truths of separation and apply those truths to daily living. We must recommit ourselves to holiness in the home and in the church. We must remember that man's primary goal in life is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31), and we must make all other purposes secondary to this one objective. We must teach and preach the basis for our position. If we do not explain this theological rationale, we will raise a whole generation who have no clue why they are or need to be Fundamentalists.

Fundamentalism faces new challenges as it faces a new century. Three of these tests are the peril of persecution, the peril of pride, and the peril of pluralism. The next generation must be aware of these pitfalls and brace themselves to overcome them.

Alan D. Cole is Associate Professor of Bible and Theology at Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary in Ankeny, Iowa.

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# The House on the Hill

Doris Fisher Harris

**T**hey'd been inseparable. Through first grade water fights, fierce competition for every exam, whispered secrets at stay-overs, vows of eternal friendship, and talk about boys, nothing had ever separated them.

Now, everything was different. But they could still talk about "boys."

"I wouldn't be caught dead going out with him!"

"Why? He's a nice guy. He's smart and he's good looking. It was mean of you not to wave back."

"He lives in the white house on the hill!" Alyson said.

"So?" Debi answered.

"It's a funeral home. His dad is an undertaker. They keep bodies on the first floor. Weird!"

"I think he's kind of lonely."

"Yeah. I think he's going to stay lonely."

"I kind of like the house on the hill. My family used that funeral home when my grandma and grandpa died. I liked it a lot better than the cold, formal uptown mortuary where they took my great aunt."

"You're weird too! At least you have been lately."

"Maybe it's because I'm saved now and not afraid of death."

"You're saying that I'm afraid?" There had been a change in their relationship since Debi had accepted the Lord at the white cinderblock church at the edge of town.

"I think most people are who . . . who—"

"Who what?"

". . . who don't know the Lord as Savior."



"Oh, brother," Alyson said, rolling her eyes. "Here comes the religious stuff again."

"Come to the church picnic on the river with me?"

"Did you invite him too?"

"Well, sure."

"A religious nut and a guy who lives in a funeral home. Some party."

"Come on, there are some *normal* people there too," Debi teased.

The river curved quietly and the leaves were stirring gently when Debi's dad dropped her off. "I'll find a ride home. Don't worry."

The games were raucous and the air snapped with noise. The new boy was leaning against a willow tree. Debi was glad she'd asked him to come. There was no sign of Alyson.

"Hi. It's Lance, isn't it?"

"Hi, yourself."

"I'm glad you came."

"You're the only one. Welcome to the friendly neighborhood freak. But thanks for the invitation."

"Has this happened to you before? Where you lived before you moved?"

"Yeah, but it wasn't so bad. When you're little you don't notice it so much."

"What are you going to do about it?" She grinned up at him.

"Do?"

"Yeah, do! Are you going to stand there and look lonely or join in? Let's get in the game!"

They both gave one hundred percent, and their teams were impressed. Just before he dropped her at her house he asked pointedly, "Why did you take time with me?"

"You seem kind of lonely."

"Yeah, it's an occupational hazard."

"It doesn't have to be. I know how it is. I've been there too."

"So what does your dad do?"

"He's an investigator for the IRS."

"Not too much fun?"

"No. Folks don't want to be friendly because they're afraid he'll notice they redecorated a room or that they bought a new car."

"Lots of people think my dad is weird because he handles dead bodies."

"His work used to really bother me too until . . ."

"Until . . . ?" he questioned seriously.

"Until I got saved. Then I started studying the Bible, and it teaches us that we're responsible for our own actions. We're not to be judged by others, only by our pleasing God."

"Aren't you supposed to obey your parents or something like that from the Bible?"

"Oh, sure, we're to honor and obey our parents, but I don't think we should let what they do bother us in our relationships."

"That makes sense."

"The Bible says each of us is responsible before God for his own actions."

"Sensible! I didn't know you could really understand

the Bible."

"Will you come to church with me and my family Sunday?"

"Sure. Why not?"

But she saw him before Sunday. It was a frantic call from Alyson.

"My Aunt Beth died. Mother and Dad are at the funeral home and want me to come. I . . . just can't go there alone."

"Of course I'll go with you. I'll meet you there."

The porch light was on and shed a welcoming beam. They met under one of the old oaks that arched over the street bowing with a sympathetic salute.

"Thanks for coming. I've been such a pain."

"Come on. Let's go in," Debi urged.

The room was open and inviting and comfortable. There was rose-bordered wallpaper and plush, amply used furnishings. In a small room banked with flowers a casket rested.

"I can't."

"You don't have to." They sat down. There was a quiet murmur of voices.

"Did you love her?"

"Of course."

"What was she like?"

"Like everybody's aunt, I guess."

"People aren't alike. What was she really like?"

"She was pretty. She traveled a lot. She always sent birthday cards and Christmas gifts."

"It was good that she remembered you on special days."

"Yeah, I guess I should have looked at it that way. She was very religious. God seemed to be a natural part of her life."

"Did she ever say she was saved?"

"She talked about it all the time."

"Then you don't have anything to be afraid of. She's in heaven."

"How can you know? I mean, really know for sure."

"Anybody can know. I'll show you." Alyson's mother approached. "I'll wait for you," Debi whispered.

"Come on, darling. It's time to pay your respects." Alyson's mother said. "Thank you, Debi, for coming."

"Hi," Lance smiled shyly as he sat down beside her and they watched the tentative steps toward the casket.

"I like it here," she said. "Is that man your dad?"

"Yeah. My dad always wanted it to be like a neighbor's house."

"Did you know that Alyson's aunt was saved?"

"I'm not exactly sure what that means."

"It means that though her body is resting in a neighbor's house she's at home in her Father's house. May I tell you about it sometime?"

"Sure."

"How about Sunday night after church? I don't think you or Alyson is going to be really lonely anymore. I live in the green house on the other hill."

Doris Fisher Harris is a freelance writer living in Greenville, South Carolina.



# WIT & WISDOM

Better by far you should forget and smile than that you should remember and be sad. —Christina Rossetti

This man [Lord Chesterfield] I thought had been a Lord among wits; but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords. —Samuel Johnson

He had been kicked in the head by a mule when young, and believed everything he read in the newspaper. —George Ade

It has been well said, that heart speaks to heart, whereas language only speaks to the ears. —Francis de Sales

There must be a beginning of any great matter, but the continuing unto the end until it be thoroughly finished yields the true glory. —Sir Francis Drake

The man who dies . . . rich dies disgraced. —Andrew Carnegie

Absence sharpens love, presence strengthens it. —Thomas Fuller

The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them. —Kin Hubbard

The inevitable end of multiple chiefs is that they fade and disappear for lack of unity. —Napoleon Bonaparte

The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose. —William Cowper

We are both great men, but I have succeeded better in keeping it a profound secret than he has. —Bill Nye

Such is our vanity that the good opinion of half a dozen

of the people around us gives us pleasure and satisfaction. —Blaise Pascal

Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise. —Thomas Gray

It is much easier to suppress a first desire than to satisfy those that follow. —La Rochefoucauld

The Holy Ghost rides in the chariot of Scripture, and not in the wagon of modern thought. —C. H. Spurgeon

The human mind was not created for independence; God did not make us to be as gods. —John Duncan

Human reason is never the measure of sin's severity. —Michael P. Barrett

When arguing with a stupid person, be sure he isn't doing the same thing. —Unknown



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

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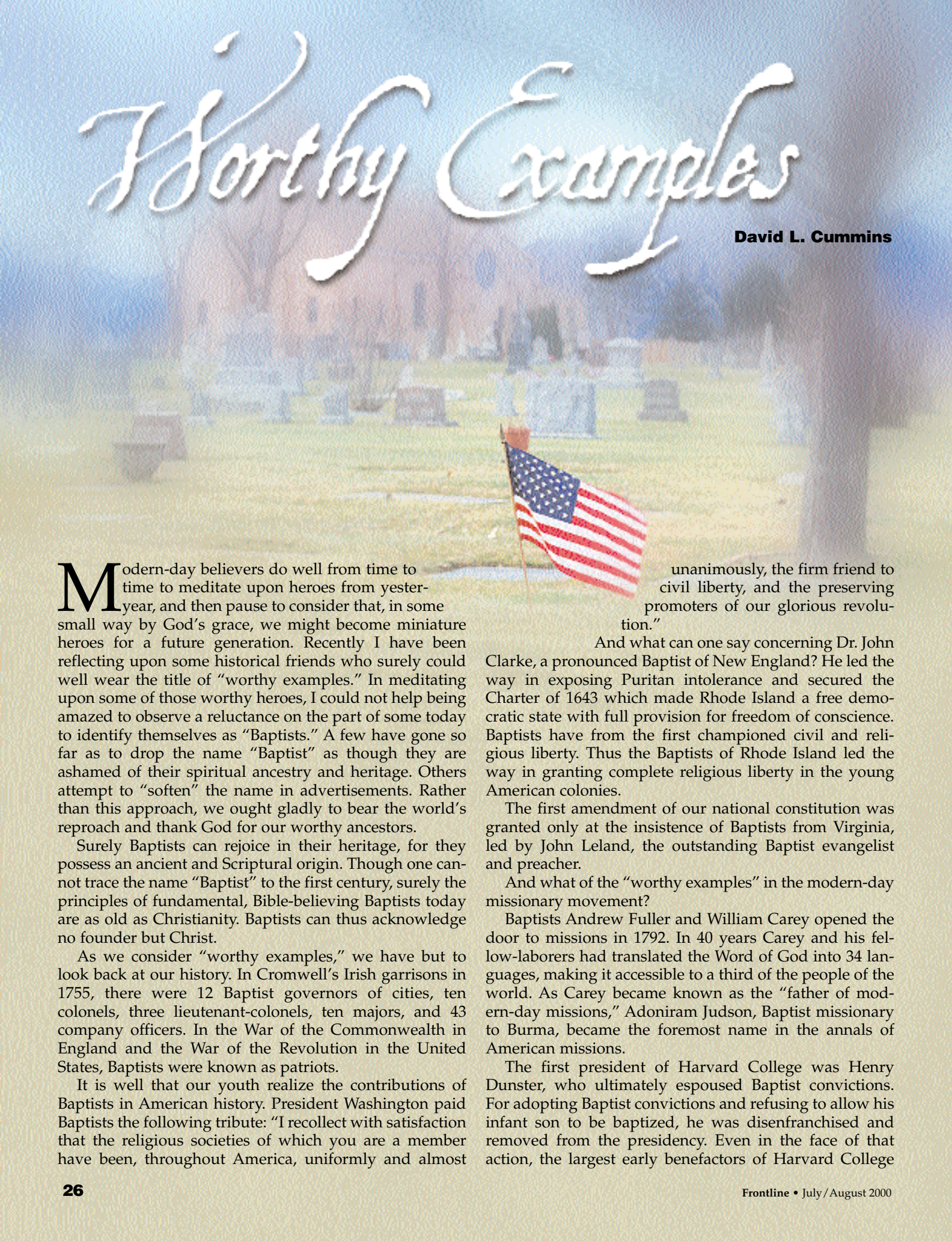
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# Worthy Examples

David L. Cummins



**M**odern-day believers do well from time to time to meditate upon heroes from yesteryear, and then pause to consider that, in some small way by God's grace, we might become miniature heroes for a future generation. Recently I have been reflecting upon some historical friends who surely could well wear the title of "worthy examples." In meditating upon some of those worthy heroes, I could not help being amazed to observe a reluctance on the part of some today to identify themselves as "Baptists." A few have gone so far as to drop the name "Baptist" as though they are ashamed of their spiritual ancestry and heritage. Others attempt to "soften" the name in advertisements. Rather than this approach, we ought gladly to bear the world's reproach and thank God for our worthy ancestors.

Surely Baptists can rejoice in their heritage, for they possess an ancient and Scriptural origin. Though one cannot trace the name "Baptist" to the first century, surely the principles of fundamental, Bible-believing Baptists today are as old as Christianity. Baptists can thus acknowledge no founder but Christ.

As we consider "worthy examples," we have but to look back at our history. In Cromwell's Irish garrisons in 1755, there were 12 Baptist governors of cities, ten colonels, three lieutenant-colonels, ten majors, and 43 company officers. In the War of the Commonwealth in England and the War of the Revolution in the United States, Baptists were known as patriots.

It is well that our youth realize the contributions of Baptists in American history. President Washington paid Baptists the following tribute: "I recollect with satisfaction that the religious societies of which you are a member have been, throughout America, uniformly and almost

unanimously, the firm friend to civil liberty, and the preserving promoters of our glorious revolution."

And what can one say concerning Dr. John Clarke, a pronounced Baptist of New England? He led the way in exposing Puritan intolerance and secured the Charter of 1643 which made Rhode Island a free democratic state with full provision for freedom of conscience. Baptists have from the first championed civil and religious liberty. Thus the Baptists of Rhode Island led the way in granting complete religious liberty in the young American colonies.

The first amendment of our national constitution was granted only at the insistence of Baptists from Virginia, led by John Leland, the outstanding Baptist evangelist and preacher.

And what of the "worthy examples" in the modern-day missionary movement?

Baptists Andrew Fuller and William Carey opened the door to missions in 1792. In 40 years Carey and his fellow-laborers had translated the Word of God into 34 languages, making it accessible to a third of the people of the world. As Carey became known as the "father of modern-day missions," Adoniram Judson, Baptist missionary to Burma, became the foremost name in the annals of American missions.

The first president of Harvard College was Henry Dunster, who ultimately espoused Baptist convictions. For adopting Baptist convictions and refusing to allow his infant son to be baptized, he was disenfranchised and removed from the presidency. Even in the face of that action, the largest early benefactors of Harvard College



were Baptists Thomas Hollis and his descendants.

Bible societies were organized first by a Baptist, John Hughes. Robert Raikes had formed educational institutions that met on Sundays, but the credit for establishing the first Sunday school founded to teach the Bible belongs to a Baptist deacon, Mr. William Fox, in 1785. The first Sunday school paper for young people in the United States, *The Young Reaper*, was printed by Baptists.

Among the world's greatest preachers we would mention Baptist men from Great Britain such as Alexander Maclaren, the great English expositor; F. B. Meyer, whose books on Bible characters are still in demand; Robert Hall, whose elegant diction was unsurpassed by any English orator; Christmas Evans, whose eloquence was used of the Lord in the salvation of multitudes; and Charles Haddon Spurgeon, perhaps the best-known preacher of all time. Time and room would fail us to catalogue just a cursory listing of such Baptist preachers from the United States.

The literary world has been enriched by Baptist writers. Let me mention only a few well-known authors from England. Daniel Defoe, famed writer of Robinson Crusoe; John Foster, the great essayist; John Milton, the great epic poet and statesman; and John Bunyan, whose *Pilgrim's Progress* stands next to the Bible in extent of its circulation, are merely representative of many famed authors.

Mr. Spurgeon rightly said, "It is the chief glory of Baptists that, suffering all martyrdom themselves, they never yet have persecuted others."

I am thankful that we have such a glorious heritage, and as I reflect upon these "worthy examples," it fills my heart with praise for such a glorious family. Change my name? Never! Let the interlopers take unto themselves

any aliases that they may choose, but I am pleased to stand in the line of those who faithfully transformed that which was intended to be a name of shame to one of fame.

What a challenge our history places upon us. It is incumbent upon fundamental, Bible-believing Baptists to so live that those who follow us will be able to consider us as "worthy examples" of righteousness for our Lord's honor and praise.

Dr. David L. Cummins is Deputation Director of Baptist World Mission in Decatur, Alabama.

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# The Best Birthday Gift Ever

Debbie Craven

The celebration of birthdays has always been a family time. But as missionaries in Brazil, the church has become our extended family. Everyone in the church knows the date of your birth and looks forward to the Sunday when they can honor you with a special song and a small gift. This is the custom not only for children, but also for the adults. Even though I am now into my fifth decade, I know that the Sunday after my birthday you will find me in front of the church, smiling as my church family sings *Felicidade*, a chorus that asks for God to give one happiness and blessings in Jesus Christ.

My birthday was in May and came at a time when we were emotionally drained, trying to say farewell to the people and the ministry in Samambaia, grappling with the reality of not returning to Brazil because God was leading us to a ministry with our mission in the home office, and fatigued with all of the packing, organizing, and planning that comes with an international move. After Sunday school on my birthday, a dear friend named Eva came up to me and said, "I have a gift for you."

Eva is a woman in her 60s who loves to cook and mothers everyone that she can. In her lifetime she has raised 26 children. Six or seven were her own, and the rest she rescued from the streets, bringing them into her home and then into her heart. Though she is now a widow, there are still eight or nine others living in her home, and she is helping to raise three of her grandchildren. Eva does not know how to read. She was saved under our ministry in Samambaia, but her growth has been slow because of the evil influences around her and her illiteracy. She does not have much of this

world's wealth, but what she has, she shares.

When she approached me about the birthday gift, I was surprised and concerned, knowing that she didn't have the extra funds for purchasing birthday gifts. Plus I could see that there was nothing in her hands. We were standing on the platform of our new church building by the keyboard where I had been playing, and she said to me, "Dona Debora [a greeting of respect in Brazil], my gift for you is a prayer." Immediately she bowed her head and began to pray for me right there on the platform.

Around us were the noises of children trying to play hide and seek between the new pews while their parents were busy visiting; one of the teens was humming a chorus that we had recently been teaching the church; and the birds nesting outside in the rafters were complaining about all the ruckus.

Then, the peripheral noise faded away as I listened to her pray. She prayed for our safety as we traveled to the U.S., for the new ministry that God had for us and the people with whom we would come in contact. She asked the Lord to bless us and help us to remember the people of Hope Baptist Church of Samambaia, with whom our hearts were so intertwined. Eva petitioned specifically for each member of my family, for happiness and special blessings, and that most of all we would walk with our hands in His. After the "Amen" she gave me one of her soft, motherly hugs, and we both wiped the tears away. It was a priceless gift, one that I will always treasure.

Her prayer present will forever be imprinted on my mind and my heart. It was the best of birthday gifts. It was time, concern, and caring, all packaged together—a gift tied with cords of Christian love and

decorated with a big, beautiful hug. Eva not only gave me a gift that I will never forget, but also taught me a lesson about prayer. It has value without measure and can relay the gifts of encouragement and love far better than any present I could purchase at the local gift shop. Eva has motivated me to follow her example, to give the gift of prayer to my brothers and sisters in Christ whenever I can. May the Lord continue to bless Eva as she ministers to others in prayer. May we all follow in her footsteps.

Debbie Craven and her husband Terry served until recently as missionaries in Brazil. They now reside in Macomb, Michigan, and Terry serves as Midwest Mission Advancement Representative with Baptist Mid-Missions.

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## Tears

Jack Shuler

*"And it came to pass . . . that I sat down and wept" (Neh. 1:4).*

Nehemiah's are not the tears of mourning shed in the presence of candles and shrouds. His is not the wail of the bereaved gazing upon the corpse-littered streets of a gutted city. His is not the lament of the felon being dragged to the scaffold for execution. Nor does he sob the superficial sob of the tragedian absorbed in the fantastic plot of some ancient form of drama. The text prefaces the account of one of the mightiest revivals of all time! The forerunner of all worthy evangelists beholds the awful apostasy of his people and tells us how a revival started. He declares simply, "I sat down and wept."

Israel, the nation so singularly favored of God, had once written her history upon the golden pages of conquest. Her feet had paced the basin of the Red Sea. Her armies had envired the walls of fortified cities and watched them crumble to dust in her advance. Hers had been the song, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces thine enemy!" Hers were the tabernacle, the Holy Place, the covenant, the oracles, the promises more numerous and bright than the desert stars.

But those corpulent days had felt the biting locust, the tight fingers of famine. The dry rot of apostasy had set in, and Israel had withered. The mighty nation had sinned, and now she shivered within her tumbled walls and charred gates as she counted the wages. The tragic account recited by faithful Hanani settled like coals of fire within the heart of the king's cupbearer and bored like a gnawing worm into his soul. And here is where the story begins. It is the story of prayer that ends in power; of fasting that ends in feasting; of grief that ends in glory! It is the story of a gracious revival that begins where any and every revival must begin—in tears.

David's had been called the Golden Age of Israel. Those were the days when the very heathen were given to the people for their inheritance. Out of those triumphant years came a prescription. One ingredient seemed so necessary a part of the mixture that David stresses it repeatedly in his Psalms: "My tears have been my meat day and night"; "I water my couch with tears."

Paul's ministry marked a high point in Christian

missionary endeavor. The dim-sighted, ill-formed arch-advocate of Christ had discovered the same secret: "I worked among you with weeping"; "I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears."

From every quarter today comes the query: "Where are our converts?" Perhaps another question provides the answer: "Where are our tears?" Dry-eyed Christianity simply lacks the appeal presented by "the faith of our fathers" that dampened the altars and made the sawdust trail glimmer in the lamplight. A conspicuous lack of tears betrays the fact that our message is all of the head and none of the heart. Until the glowing cheek of the preacher is reflected once more in the glistening faces of the pew there will be no converts; and without converts there will be no revival.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" Jesus wept, and long before, one whose heart was strangely attuned to the same Spirit, for the same sinful city "sat down and wept." Those tears supplement the pen of Nehemiah to tell the beautiful story of God's faithfulness toward those who "sow in tears." They verily prove the promise that "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Somehow there is in human tears a force that knocks at the very gate of heaven and pleads at the throne of God. Precious to the Father is that river whose fountainhead is the broken heart of a weeping saint! It is a tide that sweeps before a band of angels to join the faithful in setting up the gates, rebuilding the walls, and establishing that righteousness that exalts a nation. Myriad lips have made request, but there is that in tears that demands of God an answer.

O God, crush these hearts of ours until we weep again! Help us to see what Jesus saw that night on Olivet that distilled upon His face in liquid passion and sent Him down to find eternal glory upon a cross! Mingle our prayers once more with the holy sobs that gave them souls in other days. Let our gospel glitter anew against the background of scintillating sincerity. Then repeat the precious promise, "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears, I will heal thee."

Jack Shuler, evangelist for more than 25 years and author of this article, died in 1963. His brother, evangelist Dr. Phil Shuler (philshuler@juno.com), reprints this article in Jack's memory "because his subject is so needed in evangelism today."



**T**he most effective way to illustrate the importance of context in Bible interpretation—and simultaneously to address an equally important doctrinal issue—is to present a real-life case study.

Gordan Fee and Douglas Stuart have written a mostly helpful little book on hermeneutics titled *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. It is instructive on two different levels: (1) it offers some good advice on how to interpret the Bible with an emphasis on context (though I disagree stridently with their approach to certain passages); and (2) it often exposes, quite unintentionally, the flaws in a New Evangelical approach to passages that argue against their positions and practices.

In order to illustrate the importance of reading every passage of the Bible exegetically (i.e., reading with a view to extracting from the text and its context the author's original intent), they cite the following experience:

For example, one of the authors of this book recently received a letter from a well-known evangelical, who argued that the author should not appear in a conference with another well-known person, whose orthodoxy was somewhat suspect. The biblical reason given for avoiding the conference was 1 Th. 5:22: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." But had our brother learned to read the Bible exegetically, he would not have used the text in that way. For that is Paul's final word in a paragraph to the Thessalonians regarding charismatic utterances in the community. "Don't treat prophecies with contempt," Paul says. "Rather test everything; and hold fast to the good, but avoid every evil form." The "avoidance of evil" has to do with "prophecies," which, when tested, are found not to be of the Spirit (pp. 20–21).

The authors make a valid point here. A verse is not an isolated statement; it is a sentence (or part of a sentence) that is part of a paragraph of thought, and that paragraph-context is crucial to interpretation. So let's examine 1 Thessalonians 5 for ourselves, contextually and exegetically.

### Exegetical Overview of 1 Thessalonians 5

Paul has just completed a theological/eschatological section on the rapture and the day of the Lord in chapters 4–5. He begins his closing exhortations in 5:12.

12–13 form a unit of exhortation to the Thessalonians regarding their relationship to those who minister among them and lead them.

14–15 form a unit of exhortation regarding their relationship to one another in particular and to unbelievers as well.

16–18 form a unit of exhortation regarding their relationship to God, as manifested in their own spirit and in prayer.

19–22 form a unit of exhortation regarding their relationship to . . . what? Fee and Stuart say the context centers on "charismatic utterances." What does that mean? Let's look at the context.

Verse 19—Do not resist or stifle (literally, pour water on, as if to douse) the Holy Spirit. Why? This is one of Paul's earliest epistles (ca. A.D. 51). Probably their only access to written Scripture was the OT. So the Holy Spirit was the key Agent in their understanding and growth in NT-age doctrine—as well as the One who empowered and directed them for ministry. Thus, Paul commands, don't "quench" His ministry among you. How was that ministry manifested? What forms did it take? The next verse elaborates.

Verse 20—Do not despise (i.e., treat with contempt) prophesyings. These are the "charismatic utterances" to which Fee and Stuart refer. But what do they mean by that? Do they mean "tongues"? If so, we immediately have an exegetical problem with that view. Paul never mentions tongues in Thessalonians. In fact, the only place he does mention tongues is 1 Corinthians 12–14.

On the other hand, Paul does mention "prophecy" in a number of passages. He mentions it frequently in 1 Corinthians 12–14, where he emphasizes a distinction between tongues and prophesying.

Fee and Stuart's undefined reference to "charismatic utterances" is notoriously unhelpful. The untutored reader has little choice but to accept the scholarly authors' word that 1 Thessalonians 5:22 simply doesn't apply to the issue of separation.

### What Are "Charismatic Utterances"?

In fairness to Fee and Stuart, they do clarify elsewhere (though, regrettably, not in this book) that they do not have merely tongues in mind. In his book *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, Fee identifies "prophesying" as the most frequently mentioned of the "charismata" (grace gifts). Prophesying, he explains, refers to "spontaneous, understandable messages orally delivered to the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people. . . . [T]he prophet spoke to God's people under the inspiration of the Spirit" (pp. 170–171). Paul requires in 1 Thessalonians 5 that they "weigh all such Spirit utterances in light of his own apostolic teaching. I would assume that the same holds true for all believers in all generations" (p. 173).



# AND THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION: A CASE STUDY

## What Is Prophesying?

We generally color that word with the idea of prediction or foretelling the future. But in Biblical usage, prophesying frequently communicates the simpler idea of proclamation or forthtelling of already-revealed truth. "Prophecy" actually has less to do with prediction and more to do with proclamation. Read the OT prophets attentively, and you will discover that though their messages often include a predictive element, most of what they are doing is proclaiming, preaching, or exhorting God's people. A prophet is a spokesman for God. And the measure of a prophet is his conformity to the Word of God (Isa. 8:20).

Even Fee and Stuart acknowledge this predominant nature of Biblical prophesying: "To see the prophets as primarily predictors of future events is to miss their primary function, which was to speak for God to their own contemporaries" (p. 166). In a different context, they understand and acknowledge this fundamental idea of prophesying. But in the pinch of a passage that would otherwise seem to contradict their position, they either massage the exegetical facts or leave them undefined. This is what the authors themselves refer to earlier as "vested interest" (p. 14).

## Back to 1 Thessalonians 5

The context of verses 20–22 flows like this: "Despise not prophesyings"—that is, do not hold revelations/proclamations of truth in contempt nor suspiciously regard them with skepticism (v. 20). Rather, "prove/test all of them"—that is, put all such prophesyings to the test (v. 21). Don't divorce the "all things" from the immediate context, where it refers specifically to prophesyings.

The verb "prove" here conveys the idea of approving something only after putting it to the test. What is the test? How are one's proclamations tested? Measure them by their consistency with already-revealed truth of God's Word. In Fee's own words above, they were (and, he admits, we are) to "weigh all such Spirit utterances in light of . . . apostolic teaching."

Then what? "Hold fast to that which is good" (v. 21). And what about the rest? "Abstain from all appearance of evil"—that is, hold at arm's length any and every semblance of doctrine or proclamation that does not pass the test and is, therefore, evil. Again, do not generalize the principle of verse 22 without first making the direct application that is intended in the context.

So this paragraph (verses 19–22) forms a unit of exhortation regarding their relationship to "prophesyings"—that is, doctrine, proclamation, preaching. They are not to despise it, but they are to assess it and then respond to it accordingly.

## So Was He Right or Wrong?

Returning, then, to the unnamed evangelical who wrote the letter to one of the authors, was he abusing the text and violating the context of 1 Thessalonians 5:22 by applying it to the inappropriateness of associating with preacher of unorthodox doctrine? He was using that text precisely in keeping with the contextual meaning of the text—maybe better than he knew. I suspect he was applying it merely as a general principle when, in fact, the whole context of the passage argues that this kind of situation is exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote.

Here is a believer/preacher/teacher going to a conference and appearing with a man "whose orthodoxy" he admits is "somewhat suspect." Should he go? What should he do? He should, Paul teaches, take this man's proclamations, teachings, and doctrines, and test them by the Word of God. If what the man says is "good," hold it fast and support it. But, if what he says doesn't measure up, it is "evil"; abstain from it, resist it, reject it. In other words, this is not just a possible or even likely application of the principle of 1 Thessalonians 5:22. This is exactly what Paul meant in the context.

Even if 1 Thessalonians 5 didn't directly address Fee and Stuart's conference situation, the terminology here warrants a wider application in principle. And it's not just Fundamentalists who say that. In his commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Leon Morris explains that "all things" refers specifically to the "prophesyings" in the context, but then notes:

At the same time the words he uses are quite general, and they must be held to apply to all kinds of things. . . . It is part of the process of living out the Christian life that constantly the servant of the Lord is called upon to discriminate between the base and the true, and to fashion his conduct accordingly.

Whether you're talking about the general principle or the exegetical context, both argue decisively for the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation and against associating with anyone "whose orthodoxy is suspect."

## One final note

In the context, what is Paul's concluding, overriding concern in issuing such instruction? Exclusiveness? Divisiveness? He states it in verses 23 and 24—our sanctification. The goal of the true Fundamentalist is that he may, out of love and devotion to God, be like Him and set apart to Him in both doctrine and deportment. We are to be "separated . . . [in order] to seek the Lord God" (Ezra 6:21).



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## The Vatican's UN Status

Many Protestant groups opposed the Vatican's permanent observer status in the United Nations when it was granted in the 1980s, but now many evangelicals are defending the Vatican's unique position because of the Roman Catholic Church's opposition to abortion. "We Christians from all denominations will stand with our Catholic allies to see that the abortion industry is not successful at silencing the Holy See at the UN," says Tom Minnery, vice president of public policy at Focus on the Family. (*World*, 4/1/2000)

## ACCC Protests Anglican Papal Recognition

Whereas the Church of Rome teaches that it is the way to Christ, rather than Christ the way into the church, and; whereas the Church of Rome teaches the mediation by a class of priests, thereby transgressing the Biblical truth that "there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," and; whereas the Romish mass purports to be the resacrifice of Christ, and; whereas the Roman church has suppressed, tormented, persecuted, and murdered countless saints of God who proclaimed truths which it denies and distorts, and; . . . whereas the pope's apology for his church's history of perse-

cuting believers named only "excesses" of rather than total repudiation of the Spanish Inquisition; be it therefore resolved that the Executive Committee of the American Council of Christian Churches meeting in the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, North Carolina, this 11th day of April 2000, decries this betrayal by the Church of England of the truth of God's Word and of England's martyrs who died for these truths at the hands of a yet unrepentant Roman church.

## Student Fees Can Go to Objectionable Groups

A University of Wisconsin student-fee system which had been challenged by conservative law students does not violate the constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a unanimous vote in March. Student groups with divergent views can receive funds from mandatory fees collected by public colleges and universities, the justices concluded. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 3/28/2000)

## GOP Softening on Abortion?

House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) told Republican supporters in Pittsburgh that the GOP may consider abandoning its firm opposition to abortion. This statement follows Gov. Tom Ridge's (R-Pa.) declaration that the GOP should drop its hard-

line stance against abortion in order to reflect a broader range of party members' views on abortion. (*Liberty Alliance*, 4/20/2000)

## Sodom and Gomorrah Found?

British Bible Scholar Michael Sanders says the centuries-old debate about the location of Sodom and Gomorrah is over. In a television documentary, Sanders claims he has found the ruins of the Biblical cities destroyed by God at the bottom of the Dead Sea. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 3/29/2000)

## Evangelical Chaplains Claim Discrimination

Alleging the U.S. Navy censors their sermons and passes them over for promotion, evangelical chaplains have filed a lawsuit that seeks equal representation. The legal challenge questions a system that splits chaplaincy leadership seats into thirds, allocating equal representation among Roman Catholics, liturgical Christians, and non-liturgical Christians, even though more than 50 percent of the Navy's religious population call themselves evangelical. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 3/29/2000)

## Planned Parenthood's Blood Money

For the accounting period ending June 30, 1999, Planned Parenthood reported profits of \$125.8 million on gross income of \$660 million. Of the total,

\$211 million came from clinic operations (the rest came from donations and government funding). Of the clinic operations, \$58.8 million came from killing unborn children. (*World*, 4/22/2000)

## Rabbis Approve Same-Sex Unions

The largest group of American Jewish Rabbis has given the nod to homosexual "commitment ceremonies." Delegates at the Central Conference of American Rabbis overwhelmingly approved a resolution that clears the way for same-sex couples to participate in Jewish rituals similar to those conducted at heterosexual weddings. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 4/2/2000)

## Latin American Baptists Hold Congress

More than 2,000 pastors, musicians, theologians, and laypeople from 18 countries packed First Baptist Church, Niteroi, Brazil, for a first-ever Latin American Baptist congress on worship March 15-18. The congress was sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance's study and research division and the Union of Baptists in Latin America. It provided the setting for a reconciliation between two Brazilian Baptist bodies that formerly had been divided over their differing worship styles. Each day, three different styles of worship were modeled—traditional,



contemporary, and renewal/charismatic. Each evening service was a blend of classical, gospel, and contemporary songs; liturgical dance, Latin American indigenous music, and preaching. Thirty-five years ago, 14 churches of the Batista Nacionales Churches (National Baptist Convention) were expelled from the Baptist Convention of Brazil because of their different worship style influenced greatly by the charismatic movement. The Batista Nacionales today has 3,000 congregations with 200,000-plus members. (*Baptist Press*, 4/8/2000)

### **Tufts University Oppresses Christian Group**

When student Julie Catalano, an openly "bisexual" member of the Tufts Christian Fellowship, recently sought a leadership position in that group, fellowship leaders turned her down because her belief that homosexual acts are not Biblically wrong countered their core belief. As a result, leaders of a Tufts student government panel ruled that the fellowship's policy violates the school's anti-discrimination policy. The Christian group was stripped of its name and about \$6,000 in annual funding from student fees. In addition, they were forbidden from meeting in campus classrooms. Thor Halvorssen of the Philadelphia-based Freedom for Individual Rights in Education, told the Associated Press, "They're asking a fundamentalist Christian group to stop being fundamentalist Christians." (*Liberty Alliance*, 5/12/2000) An appeals board of students and faculty at Tufts

## **NOTABLE QUOTES**

**A**s a Catholic, I can't get mad at Bob Jones University, except in the sense that I'm mad at Martin Luther. True, it's not nice to call the Pope the Antichrist, but there are more important things than being nice. The claim of the Catholic Church is that the Pope is the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ. Quite a claim. If not true, it's, to say the least, presumptuous. I believe it's true. But if I didn't, I'd have to believe something like what Bob Jones University believes. That's what the Reformation was all about, and any literate person must recognize the position of Bob Jones as standard Reformation polemics. Unlike most contemporary theology, Bob Jones is still arguing about fundamental differences between Catholics and Protestants as if they mattered. From my own side of the Catholic-Protestant divide, I respect that.—columnist Joseph Sobran

**I**n a time when religious fundamentalism threatens pluralism, tolerance, and women's human rights, the [United Nations] must maintain a clear separation between religious beliefs and international public policy.—from Catholics for a Free Choice web site

**M**artin Luther said that the Papists burned the Bible because it was not on their side.—Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*

**F**undamentalism is a perversion of the gospel. It's not about the kingdom of God—about grace and freedom. To me, fundamentalism is focused on power and control. It is very similar to Phariseeism in the New Testament. It chokes out grace. . . . I don't think God wants fundamentalism to be the dominant Baptist perspective in the 21st century. I think it will kill Baptists out.—David Currie, executive director of the "moderate" Texas Baptist Committee (SBC)

**I**t is reported that Mr. Whitefield was one day asked by a partisan, "Do you think that we, when we get to heaven, shall see John Wesley there?" "No," said George Whitefield, "I do not think we shall." The questioner was very delighted with that answer, but Mr. Whitefield added, "I believe that Mr. John Wesley will have a place so near the throne of God, and that such poor creatures as you and I will be so far off as to be hardly able to see him." As I read such remarks made by Mr. Whitefield, I have said to myself, "By this I know, as a Christian, that he must be a Christian," for I saw that he loved his brother Wesley even while he so earnestly differed from him on certain points of doctrine.—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

University unanimously overturned the derecognition of Tufts Christian Fellowship on May 16. (*Maranatha NewsWatch*, 5/21/2000)

### **Kentucky Removes Ten Commandments**

A federal court in Kentucky has ordered state officials to remove wall displays that include the Ten Commandments from classrooms in a public school district and two county courthouses. Judge Jennifer B. Coffman issued three nearly identical preliminary injunctions on May 5, arguing that the wall displays amounted to government endorsement of a particular religion, in conflict with the First Amendment. (*Maranatha NewsWatch*, 5/21/2000)

### **Ohio's Motto Struck Down**

Ohio's motto, "With God, all things are possible," has been junked by a federal appeals court because it expressed "a uniquely Christian thought" and therefore is unconstitutional. A Cleveland Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister fronted an ACLU lawsuit that doomed the Bible reference. State officials said they would appeal. (*World*, 5/6/2000)

### **SBC Liberals Unhappy**

A group of dissident Southern Baptists with ties to the "moderate" Cooperative Baptist Fellowship have formed a "Network of Mainstream Baptists" to prevent churches and state conventions from following the conservative trend of the Southern Baptist Convention over the past two decades. More than 100 representatives from 15 states participated in



the "mainstream Baptist consultation" April 25-26 in Atlanta. A key strategy to advancing the group's moderate theology is to "boldly and unapologetically enlist our universities to partner with us to expose students to Baptist principles and vision," declared Keith Bruce, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas' Christian Education Coordinating Board. (Baptist Press, 5/4/2000)

### **SBC Liberals Incorporate**

The Baptist Convention of the Americas incorporated and registered the name in 1998. Legal papers were filed by four prominent Southern Baptists. One of the four, Paul Powell, a Tyler, Texas, pastor and former head of the SBC pension board, said the likelihood is increasing that a "moderate" group will break away from the SBC. (*Christian News*, 4/3/2000)

### **SBC "Moderates" Join with Secular Humanists**

Several leading Southern Baptist moderates affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship have joined with secular humanists in a newly released book to call for a common view of religious liberty that includes abortion rights and opposition to the growing public influence of conservative evangelicals. The volume, *Freedom of Conscience: A Baptist/Humanist Dialogue*, is edited by Baptist Paul D. Simmons and published by Prometheus Press, one of the nation's largest

publishers of humanist books.

Simmons, a former ethics professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is a leader in the effort by Kentucky Baptist moderates to form a Baptist Seminary of Kentucky as an alternative to Southern Seminary's conservative direction since the election of a conservative president in 1993. (Baptist Press, 5/5/2000)

### **Public Denies Literal Hell**

While more people believe in hell today than did in the 1950s, most described it as "an anguished state of existence eternally separated from God" rather than an actual place, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Only 34 percent of respondents said hell is an actual place where people suffer eternal fiery torments. (*Baptist Bulletin*, April 2000)

### **Okay to Pray in U.S. Capitol**

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., has ruled in favor of a Maryland evangelist who sued the U.S. Capitol Police after he was told it was illegal for him to pray inside the U.S. Capitol because praying was considered a prohibited form of demonstration. The Court also ordered the Capitol Police to refrain from using what it calls "an unconstitutional restriction on speech" in the future. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 4/11/2000)

### **Humans Not Linked to Neanderthals**

Two key samples of Neanderthal DNA "are different from that of modern humanity," according to a study in the journal *Nature*. This finding adds weight to the view that Neanderthals "perished without contributing to" the human gene pool, *Nature* noted in its March 30 edition. The finding runs counter to those in modern science who argue that humans evolved, at least partly, from Neanderthals. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 4/5/2000)

### **NAE Courts NCC**

Relations between the National Council of Churches (NCC) and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) seem to be warming. The NCC is

applauding the NAE's March 6 decision to allow dual memberships in both groups. In 1996, Don Argue, former president of the NAE, became the first representative of the evangelical organization to address a general assembly of the NCC. Kevin Mannoia, the new NAE president, took part in a dialogue with NCC, Roman Catholic, and Pentecostal representatives last fall. (*Christian News*, 4/10/2000)

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## Making History as We “Consider One Another”

**T**he 80th Annual National Meeting of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship was a historic event. It was well attended and much appreciated by those who came. A number of goals were reached that we have been working toward for several years. In addition to messages on the fundamentals that were worthy of publication, a new constitution was approved that supports our expanding activities and range of services. The most important part of this document (now posted on the FBF web site and which will eventually be published in booklet form) is a more comprehensive statement of faith. Progress is also being made on updating some details of incorporation and verification of tax exemption. The promised changes in simplification of membership were also put into place. Please see the note at the end of this article for details.

One of the most encouraging trends we are seeing in the FBF is the increase of new memberships, especially among younger pastors. Some attended the national meeting for the first time. Of these, a few reported that they almost didn't come because their churches couldn't help them with travel and lodging expenses for various reasons. We know of others who wanted to come but were not able to cover the cost of the trip from personal funds. Every Christian knows the bittersweet experience of rejoicing at a great moving of God in a special series of meetings while ticking off the names of those we looked for who weren't able to attend.

Many of those who attend meetings of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, whether local, regional, or national, do

so with the blessing and support of their churches. Over the years, pastors, missionaries, staff, and volunteers in local churches have found messages and materials that have greatly enhanced their ministries. Others have wanted to come, but haven't been able to make it. The FBF is not for everyone, but if you are reading this article, it is probably for you. There is so much to read that crosses our desks. No doubt this article will be missed by many who need this information. But our prayer is that somewhere there will be a deacon or other leader who, while reading these words, will ask himself, "How can we make this blessing available to our pastor?"

Fundamental Baptist churches that recognize the importance of the Biblical exhortation of Hebrews 10:22-25 should recognize how the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship can help fulfill this directive.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Each year some of the churches whose pastors have been very active in

the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship not only send an offering to help with the expenses of the annual meeting, but an additional gift to help bring FBF men from other countries or to cover the cost of *Frontline* for foreign national pastors. Surely the blessings that these sacrifices make possible would be just as helpful to men right here in the United States. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every pastor who wants to have his faith strengthened, his mind informed, his heart warmed, and his prayer support increased could have the full encouragement and financial support from his church to attend the regional and national meetings of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship? These meetings are a wonderful way to "consider one another" while making Baptist history

### **NEW: Simplified Membership/Subscription Package**

Membership in the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, which now includes a copy of the new annual directory and a subscription to *Frontline* magazine, is available as a package for just \$29 a year. There were many requests for this package, and it represents a significant savings over individual prices. The next year will, of course, be a time of transition. We are planning to make every possible effort to communicate with all FBF members and *Frontline* subscribers. These changes were made for the convenience of our

FBF members, but anyone may continue to subscribe to *Frontline* only as in the past. Or perhaps many *Frontline* subscribers will decide to join the FBF as well. We know there will be questions. Please call us at 1-800-376-6856, or check for information on the web site at [www.f-b-f.org](http://www.f-b-f.org).

*One of the most encouraging trends we are seeing in the FBF is the increase of new memberships, especially among younger pastors.*



DR. JOHN C. VAUGHN



# What's on the Web

Bob Whitmore

Following is an excerpt from a reader's e-mail:

I read with interest and concern your "What's on the Web" article from the Nov./Dec. 1999 issue of *Frontline*. My concern has to do with the two sites you mentioned that allow you to look up phone numbers and check addresses. My question is, from where is this information taken? While it is nice to have this resource for finding information as you mentioned for your purposes, it concerns me that this information is there for anyone who may have other things in mind. Just recently we had forwarded to us a message from a woman who claimed that she was being stalked by someone whom she had met online.

Privacy concerns are becoming more and more of an issue for Internet users. It is my understanding, however, that the web sites mentioned in the previous article [www.anywho.com, www.555-1212.com] simply use directory information already available in other sources, such as a telephone book. It is also my understanding that if a person has an unlisted phone number that this number will not be found on these sites.

Since reviewing those sites my wife shared one more with me that I think is even better—www.theultimates.com. It uses six different search engines at once to look up addresses and/or phone numbers. But make sure you type it in correctly. I know someone who didn't and got a site he didn't want to see.

A separate issue is that of meeting people online in chat rooms. I have

hosted chat rooms several times on America Online (AOL). These have a scheduled time to begin and end and a specific topic to be discussed (in my case, something to do with working overseas). During the scheduled time I function as a teacher and leader, giving out information and answering questions on the scheduled topic. Those who participate in this chat room know who I am, and AOL knows who everyone is.

Other chat rooms on the Internet may be for people who share similar interests or hobbies. Still other chat rooms have no topic or structure. The problem with such chat rooms is the anonymity—you have no way of knowing for sure the identities of other participants. Yes, I have heard about people witnessing in such chat rooms and even about people being converted, but still IMHO (in my humble opinion) these kinds of chat rooms are generally a waste of time and can be dangerous, especially for children and teens. 'Nuff said.

On a more positive note: Have you ever wished you could vote in some of the opinion polls quoted by the national media that usually favor a liberal, unbiblical position? Now you can express your opinion online on many current national issues, and your vote will be sent where it will count the most—to your congressional representative. Vote.com [www.vote.com] has simple yes/no questions, and after you vote a box pops up to ask for your e-mail address and ZIP code. Your vote is then sent to the appropriate representative, and an automated response is sent to you confirming receipt by your representative. Interestingly, on almost every issue the vast majority of votes favor the more conservative (and Biblical) position.



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# "We'll Come Back for You!"

**Rick Barry**

**H**ere's a quick history quiz. In what year did World War II end? 1941? 1945? or 1974? Most likely you chose 1945, which is normally the correct answer. However, for at least one man, the world's greatest conflict lasted for over 30 years, not concluding until 1974.

Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda of the Japanese Imperial Army received his commando training at the Nakano Military School in 1944. After graduation he was sent to Lubang, an island in the western Philippines. His orders were to lead Japanese troops in guerilla warfare, beginning by destroying an airfield and a pier in the harbor. However, an important ingredient in Onoda's training was a large dose of propaganda assuring an ultimate victory for Japan over the United States. The war against America, he was taught, would not be a short one. It could last for decades, his instructors said, but in the end Japan would triumph.

"Whatever happens," General Muto had said to Onoda, "we'll come back for you. . . . You may have to live on coconuts. If that's the case, live on coconuts!" So Lieutenant Onoda accepted his orders, determined to survive and fight for Japan until his commanders returned for him.

However, propaganda can't alter real life. The tide of war turned against the Japanese military, and the Empire of the Rising Sun surrendered the following year. Cut off and ignorant of these events in the mountains of Lubang, Onoda and his men continued occupying the island, ready to resist any American activity.

One day a Boeing B-17 flew over the Japanese hideout and dropped leaflets containing surrender orders from General Yamashita. The orders were genuine, but unfortunately they contained a Japanese printer's error, which the men quickly spotted. The Americans are sneaky, Onoda concluded, but not sneaky enough. He threw away what he thought was a phony surrender order.

In the following months and years, various methods were used to coax the Japanese out of the jungle. Loudspeakers announced the end of the war, magazine articles about Hiroshima and Nagasaki were planted along jungle trails, and more leaflets were dropped. One after the other, Onoda's men either deserted or were shot by armed islanders. Onoda himself, however, constantly recalled the promise his commander had made to him: "Whatever happens, we'll come back for you."

So year after year dragged by. By 1954, only Onoda and one other companion, Kozuka, were left. They constantly busied themselves with scouting the island, mending their uniforms,

cleaning their weapons, and raiding Filipino huts for food, knives, and whatever useful items they could find. Eventually, whole decades passed. Then, in 1972, Kozuka was shot and killed during one of their raids. Onoda was left alone.

Meanwhile, back in Japan Onoda had become famous. He was known as the one Japanese officer who had never surrendered, the undefeated samurai. In 1974 a young Japanese man decided to go camping in Lubang in order to find Onoda and persuade him that the war had truly ended and that he could return to Japan. When he finally met Onoda in the jungle, though, and explained why he had come, Onoda replied, "If you want me to go to Japan, bring me my orders! There must be proper orders!"

Two weeks later, the young man did just that: he had tracked down retired Major Taniguchi and returned with him to Lubang where, at last, Onoda was finally convinced to lay down his arms and come home—three decades after the war's conclusion.

How sad that Onoda's trust and faithfulness—ordinarily two positive qualities—were misplaced in his human superior officers, causing him to spend half a lifetime sneaking through a jungle, fighting a war that no longer existed. He put his confidence in the promises that fallible men would return for him, but he waited in vain.

Jesus too has promised to come again for His people: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Unlike the human commanders of the Japanese Army, however, the Lord keeps His promises, and *nothing* can interfere with His plans. True, years have passed, and some have stopped waiting for His return. But the Son of God will return in His time, and each tick of the clock only draws us closer to the Second Coming of our Lord.

So keep looking up, soldier of Christ! Lieutenant Onoda faithfully occupied his island for 30 years as he waited and scanned the ocean for an army that could not return. But Christ, who died in order to bring you into the family of God, will not forget you nor forsake you. He will be faithful to His Word. "Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:32).

Rick Barry is Administrative Vice-President of Russian Gospel Ministries in Elkhart, Indiana.

References: Onoda, Hiroo, *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War* (New York: Dell Publishing Co.), 1976.







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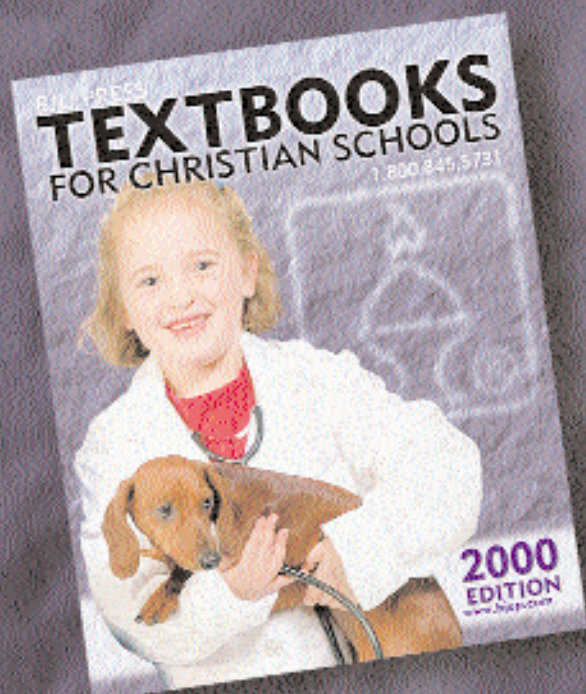
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