

CENTERS OF INFLUENCE: GOD'S PLAN FOR WINNING A WAR • WHO NEEDS ARMOR ANYWAY? • CIVIL FUNDING

FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

MAY/JUNE 2002 • \$3.95

On
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**The Military
Chaplain**

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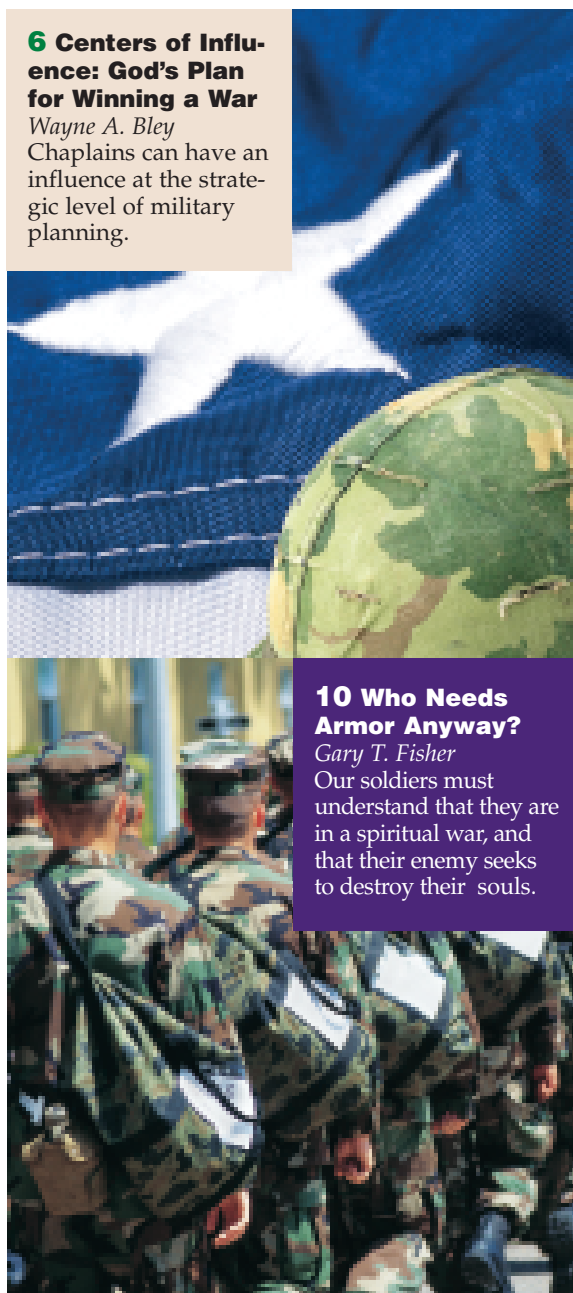
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I have appreciated and enjoyed every issue of your quality magazine this year.

*Jon Alexander
Bedford, IN*

I will not be renewing my subscription due to the stand you took in the July/August 2001 issue. . . . I cannot associate with a group that takes a stand with the liberals and apostates of the Majority Text camp. . . . I also take exception to your statement that "not all professors or pastors have expertise in the field of textual studies." While I may not be an expert in critical textual matters, I do know how to read and study the matter.

*Dennis J. Harry Sr.
Goose Creek, SC*

Thank you for standing firm and faithful during these times. You are an encouragement!

*Valerie Bryant
Laurel, MT*

Thank you for a consistent [high] quality publication.

*Pastor Charlie Eldred
San Jose, CA*

While I agree wholeheartedly with your stance on the textual issue, I am saddened at the way this issue has been treated in the article, "Dr. Ehud's Email" [Jan./Feb. 2002]. I understand this was to be a humorous article. Humor is a very

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powerful tool. It can give a discouraged heart a needed lift, but it can also anger and embitter when used improperly. . . . Thank you for your attention to this concern. I know you are facing great attacks. My prayers will be with you as you seek to continue to contend for the faith without being contentious.

*Matt Herbster
matt.herbster@wilds.org*

I want to commend you for the new piece "Dr. Ehud's E-mail." I believe this is a wise use of humor that will make us all think. I detect no acrimony (which would be a problem with me), but only a desire to get us to laugh at ourselves when laughter is in order. Keep up the good work.

*Charles Britt Sr.
Gainesville, GA*

I was greatly troubled by the jocular attitude of Dr. Bell and Dr. Ehud

at the devil's victory in dividing Fundamentalists and using God's Word to do so. . . . I am personally hurt by brethren in both "camps." But, I hurt most for our God who graciously gave us His Word that we might know Him and know how to become more like Him, only to now see us acting more like the one doing the dividing.

*J. Michael Phillips
West Palm Beach, FL*

I greatly appreciated your presentation of the translation issue in the "city" that it currently exists in: ridiculousity. Keep up the good work.

*Pastor Steven G.
Smallwood
North Rose, NY*

I am thankful to the Lord for what He is doing through the FBFI.

*Pastor Darrell Seest
Monticello, IL*

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Charting the Course

At our Winter Board Meeting in Atlanta February 11–12, 2002, I presented to the men my heartbeat for the FBFI in the 21st century. That message, called “Charting the Course,” has been prepared in a small booklet and is available from the home office. It will also be available at the National Meeting in June. I hope you are planning to come. It is shaping up to be a wonderful meeting, and I know your heart will be encouraged. The reason I prepared and published this message was to share my “dreams, aspirations, and concerns.”

I have been the President of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship (now the FBF International) for 25 years. In that time, we have fought a lot of battles and learned a lot of lessons. As I said in the message, “If a man as wise as Solomon can become such a fool, and a man as humble as Moses can be so presumptuous and arrogant, then a man or a Fellowship can become what it once despised and detested.” Jude 3, “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” is our Fellowship’s verse. But remember, we are a fellowship.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 133:1, 3, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity . . . For there the Lord commanded the blessing.” We must not violate this truth to defend the others. The “fellowship principle” is the key to our success. In our resolutions we articulate our stand, but in our meetings we seek to be a blessing. We are

constantly being pressured to lean one way or the other so that we would lose our balance if we did.

This issue of *Frontline* features articles by some of our FBFI chaplains, the finest chaplains in uniform. This patriotic emphasis is not only because it will soon be the Fourth of July, but to honor those who are serving in our armed forces in the War on Terrorism. There are some parallels in that war and the spiritual warfare we wage. Of course, we must keep pouring fire on

the enemy that would destroy us, but we must be careful that our own troops don’t get caught in “friendly fire” if we can possibly avoid it.

We are not a denomination; we don’t dictate to the local churches of the members of the FBFI. We are not a clearinghouse for controversies, either. There

are men within the FBFI that have serious disagreements over the applications of Bible truth. Sometimes these disagreements are expressed in their preaching. But not everything that every man says who is in fellowship with the FBFI is the official position of the FBFI. Anyone who wants to know where we stand as a group can look at our resolutions.

We have to take a stand on the authority of the Word of God and the fundamentals of the faith, but no one has a right to demand that another believer line up with his personal convictions on matters that Baptist Fundamentalists have always seen differently. The purpose of our

Fellowship is “to edify one another, to build up, to encourage, to exhort, to fellowship.” An army can’t fight the enemy if it is spending all its energy fighting itself. I said in the message, “I feel sometimes I’ve failed so miserably to keep a proper balance.” But we must keep striving for a proper balance. “The just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.” Praise the Lord, by His grace we can get up when we fall. And though we are all fallen men, in Christ some day we shall rise for eternity! We’ve made mistakes, but one mistake we don’t intend to make is the one we see too often: treating others as though they are “on the shelf” for life when they make a mistake and try to correct it.

Many of my dearest friends in the ministry, men who fought beside me in the trenches of the FBF in the early days, have gone on to their reward. Behind them marches a troop of new recruits— young Fundamentalists who are better prepared and better equipped than we used to hope they could ever be. Those of us who are getting on in years must encourage and challenge these hundreds, if not thousands, of young men “to stand for the old time religion and the fundamentals of the Faith, and to teach them to battle.”

You know, soldiers train for battle by sparring with each other, but they

know that when they face the enemy, they don’t win the war by putting on a sparring exhibition with each other while the enemy surrounds them for destruction. Pray for the Fellowship, that we’ll fight the fights we have to fight without mistaking each other for the enemy.

We are constantly being pressured to lean one way or the other so that we would lose our balance if we did.



DR. ROD BELL

Centers of Influence:

God's Plan for Winning a War

Wayne A. Bley

Most Americans will remember September 11th and what they were doing when the planes struck the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania. I, however, will remember 11:45 A.M. September 17th even more vividly. It was at this time that I called my wife and told her that I was heading home to pack and by 1:00 P.M. to be on my way to Washington, D.C. Neither of us knew how long I would be there and what it would mean to our family.

In a similar way, Joseph's time in Egypt upset his life. Yet he told his brothers, "Ye

thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. 50:20). Joseph always viewed his location as a center of influence. Whether it was at the Pharaoh's right hand or in prison, he extended himself and was an influence for righteousness.

Esther also understood this principle. In Esther 4:14 Mordecai told her, "Who knoweth whether thou come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" This verse has been a great comfort these past seven months.

Daniel also illustrates this principle. King Nebuchadnezzar said, "Of a truth it is, that

your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets" (Dan 2:47). During another administration, Darius announced, "In every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God" (Dan. 6:26).

The chaplain in the 21st century is being asked to be a Joseph, an Esther, and a Daniel. He must *practice* Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Our world today is not different from the world of Joseph, Esther, or Daniel; it is a world of wolves. Yet they were successful because they were "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

Serving in the Pentagon, on the Staff of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is daunting. National policy, doctrine, and strategy are what consume each day. Learning and then engaging in the process of developing our National Security Strategy, our National Military Strategic Plan, and the strategic use of chaplains fills the day—yes, even for a chaplain.

Dr. Douglas Johnston wrote an article in the U.S. Naval Institute magazine *Proceedings* (January 2002) entitled "We Neglect Religion to Our Peril." "Given the religious component of so many of today's hostilities," he wrote, "chaplains can and should play a larger role in peace making and conflict prevention." Later in the article, he said, "Religion possesses an unrivaled potential to cause instability." As a fundamental Baptist chaplain, I fully understand this reality. However, we Fundamentalists have a wonderful opportunity to exercise with unprecedented vigor our premillennial eschatological understanding and our view of the nature of man.

Dr. Johnston clarifies our institutional role with a quote from Admiral Charles Abbot: "The role of chaplains at the strategic level of military planning is the greatest area of growth in (terms of their total) responsibilities. The way the world has evolved, it has become crucial to better understand the religious and cultural histories of peoples involved in conflicts." At the same conference, Major General Wax said, "I expect my chaplains to come prepared to help me and other military commanders understand how to work with other peoples and other nations; both those who claim a specific religion or belief structure and those who do not. . . . If your strategy is to engage, you must avoid an insult due to ignorance; the chaplain must help the Commander's awareness here."

Some may argue with this assessment of the responsibility of chaplains. But if we as Fundamentalists opt out of this assignment, others will fill the void. The advice (and the results) will be very different. For example, early in the operation against the Taliban in

Afghanistan, a question surfaced in the press regarding what actions the U.S. would consider appropriate during Ramadan. World leaders, especially Arab leaders, called for the bombing to cease during Ramadan, but why? The Joint Staff was asked to provide a recommendation, and I was one of the action officers who provided it.

As a staff officer and an action officer, it was my responsibility to provide an answer grounded in fact, not opinion or conjecture. The process of analyzing our options required a detailed study of conflict during Ramadan. My notes from seminary weren't much help. After studying the Qur'an and plowing through reams of historical information, a recommendation developed. This required an ethics check and an integrity check. Could I live with the decision?

First, it agreed with the President's commitment that Operation Enduring Freedom was not a war against Islam. Second, the Qur'an exempted men at war from fasting during Ramadan. Thus, Islamic doctrine permitted the war to continue. Third, in the centuries since 622, Muslims have been at war, remained at war, and started war during Ramadan with other Muslims and with non-Muslims.

Finally, in the year 2000 the Taliban had continued to fight through Ramadan.

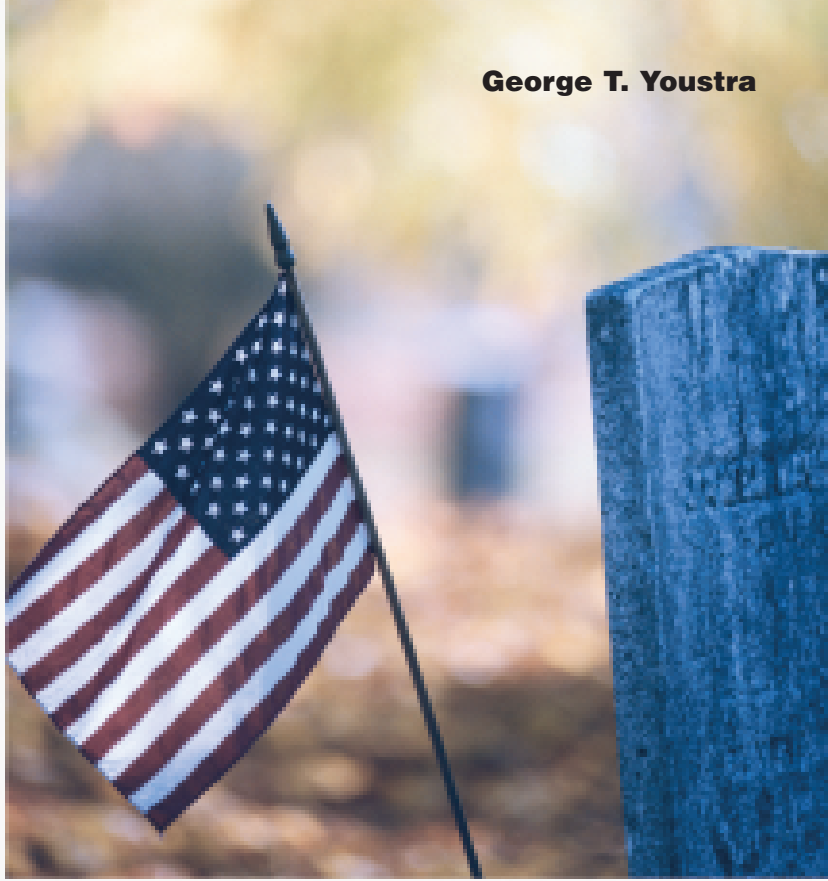
Continually I pondered what I should recommend, knowing that men would die regardless of the option chosen. Ethics, personal conscience, integrity, religious bias—all this and more was swirling through my mind. The recommendation was that bombing should continue, and the decision to do so was made well before the beginning of Ramadan.

What were the results? Because we studied the question thoroughly, our leaders were able to provide accurate, reasoned answers to anyone who questioned the decision, and criticism in the world press subsided.

What is the significance of this incident? By providing a solid recommendation on how to deal with a religious/spiritual question, chaplains earned the leaders' respect and esteem. The door to the leaders' hearts was opened. The opportunity to influence their personal lives became a reality. Some now ask important spiritual questions. This is the process of evangelism at the center of influence.

Chaplain Wayne A. Bley, Captain, USNR, is serving on the staff of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was recalled to active duty after the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. He is writing military strategy, policy and doctrine that will effect every chaplain in the US military. As a Navy Captain, he is the most senior chaplain endorsed by the FBFI. Prior to his recall, he served as the FBFI Endorser of military chaplains, and was an assistant to the Director of Admissions at Bob Jones University.

*Serving in the
Pentagon . . .
National poli-
cy, doctrine,
and strategy
are what
consume
each day.*



“Centers of Gravity”: Satan’s Plan for Fighting a War

Airborne! I can still hear the shouts echoing in my mind from the very first time I set foot at the United States Army Airborne School. It has become a proud ingredient of who I am. The “silver wings upon my chest” state clearly that I am not like every other soldier. Every time I salute a superior officer or am saluted by a subordinate, I ring out “Airborne.” I was taught that an American paratrooper can never be defeated in battle and can accomplish any task brought his way. I thought I was one of the best—then I saw someone wearing a Green Beret!

To be a member of the United States Army Special Forces brought a new pride into my life. The training and schools needed to become a Special Forces officer are the most difficult the Army has to offer. The day I donned my Green Beret for the first time and sewed my “Special Forces” tab on my left shoulder, I knew I had been accepted into an elite organization known as the “Silent Professionals.” I quietly went about my job. I traveled to many different places around the world attempting to impact nations in a positive manner. I knew that there was no one who could interfere in the mission of my A-team. After all, I was the best of the best.

During my time in the Army, I attended many of the Army Doctrine courses. I learned that the next war would be fought as the great “Air/Land Battle.” I was a

bit dismayed to think that other branches of the military would be needed to fight our wars. After all, we need only paratroopers, right? There was really no need for Carrier Battle Groups, Air Wings, and MAGTAFs (Marine Task Forces). I just needed a few good airplanes to jump from to attack our enemies! Such is the mentality of a paratrooper.

In 1998 I did something that I never thought I would do. The Lord led miraculously in my life, and I came on active duty in the United States Air Force. Early in my career, I was teased for my “Airborne” salutes and the Army ribbons and medals that I wore. I was often confronted with the question, “Why would anyone jump out of a perfectly good airplane?” Slowly I learned that we truly needed the important role of each military service.

In 1999, I was selected to attend the Squadron Officer’s School at Maxwell AFB in Alabama. It was there that we studied Air Force Doctrine, and I learned lessons that have truly “blued” me into the Air Force culture. One of the most impressive men who came to speak to us was Colonel John Warden. Colonel Warden was the Air Staff director of war-fighting concepts during the Gulf War. He revolutionized the way the United States would fight all future wars. We have seen his theories in Iraq, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, and now Afghanistan.

Colonel Warden introduced the idea of “centers of gravity” to our war doctrine. He theorized that we should not attack the fielded military forces first. Colonel Warden believed that we needed to attack these “centers of gravity” in order of importance and the fielded military forces would “die on the vine.” The “centers of gravity” are: 1) national leadership, 2) key production facilities [industry that enables a country to fight], 3) national infrastructure [electricity, roads, bridges, etc.], 4) national population [make the people uncomfortable so they lose desire to fight], 5) fielded military forces.

Why am I telling you all this military stuff? The answer is simple. I finally learned that a paratrooper was able to do his job because the Air Force had a plan to weaken the enemy, and then the battle would become easier. More importantly, I have come to realize that our spiritual enemy, Satan, has been attacking the “centers of gravity” in the church since it began. Ephesians 6:10–12 says

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

We are up against the greatest foe this world has ever seen. His weapons inventory is vast, and his forces are well trained in his war-fighting doctrine. Satan’s forces are powerful, numerous, and well organized. With this vast armada arrayed against us, what is Satan’s order of battle?

I believe Satan and all his forces are attacking our spiritual “centers of gravity”! The first “center of gravity” is our spiritual leadership. The Scripture is full of examples of Old and New Testament leaders falling into sin: Adam, Abraham, Samson, Saul, David, and Solomon. The list goes on and on. Our Lord was tempted on many occasions. Lately, my heart has been broken often by close friends and college classmates who have fallen into sin and have left the ministry. Satan wants to destroy our leadership and leave our churches rudderless. We must use the whole armor of God that is given in Ephesians 6 to put up a strong defense.

The second “center of gravity” that Satan wants to attack is our “key production” facilities. In other words, Satan wants to destroy the institutions that strengthen the church and equip its warriors for the great battle. We have seen Satan destroy mission boards, colleges, and other para-church ministries. Apostasy slowly enters, and soon the organization goes the way of compromise. Satan attacks the leadership and infiltrates the organization. Just like Achan in Joshua 7, sin is allowed inside the organization, and Satan gains the victory. We must keep our colleges, seminaries, parachurch organizations, and mission boards true to their calling.

The third “center of gravity” Satan wants to destroy is the “spiritual infrastructure.” The essential tie that binds us together as Christians is the church. Satan has attacked the church since its inception. We see the church at

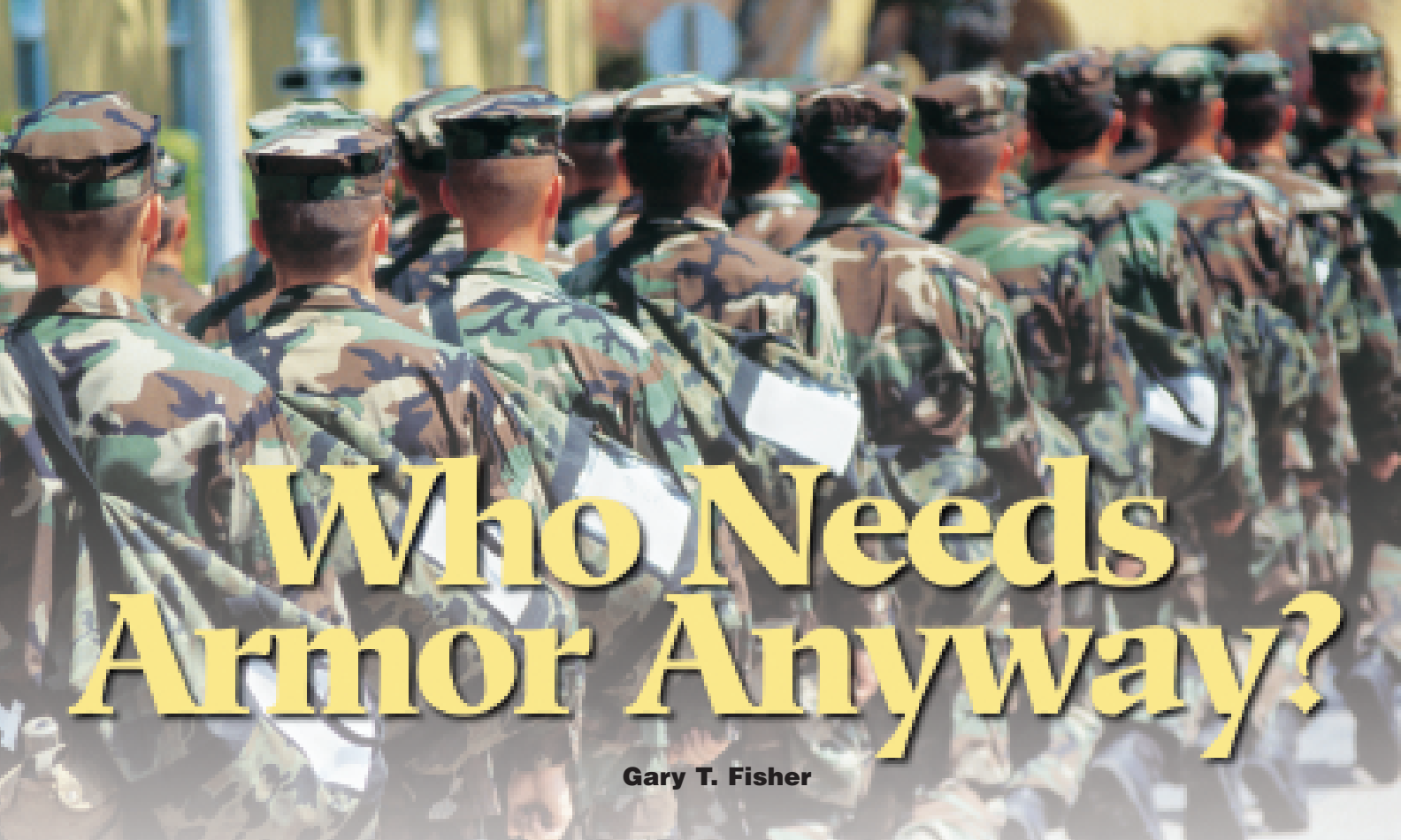
Corinth infiltrated with sin. The churches listed in Revelation 2 and 3 allowed sin to creep in and thereby earned the judgment of God. Carnality in the church today influences how the business of the church is done. There is a lack of respect for the spiritual leadership that God places over our churches. Sin is allowed to continue inside the church until the church is no longer relevant in its community. The church refuses to follow the Biblical mandate of church discipline and thereby weakens itself by allowing sin to continue inside the body. Consider how many churches are in your community. How many are truly serving Christ in a manner that would please Him? We must protect our churches by remaining true to the Word and calling given to us by our Lord.

The fourth “center of gravity” is our families. Divorce has increased, even among professing Christians. Drugs, pornography, materialism, and spiritual apathy damage families. Parents give up the responsibility to rear children in a way that would please Christ. Sometimes it’s easier to be friends with our children instead of expecting excellence and godliness from them. Children are given choices as to whether they want to participate in church or attend a Christian college. Satan wants this “center of gravity.” He knows that if we shirk our responsibilities in this generation, the next generation of churches, colleges, and mission boards will be his. Remember the Biblical admonition of Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

The final “center of gravity” is the fielded forces, or individual Christians. Remember how Satan has set upon the other “centers of gravity.” He destroys leaders, institutions, churches, and families. All that is left is the individual Christian. Satan wants that Christian to be spiritually leaderless, untaught, and isolated. Picture with me the long lines of Iraqi prisoners streaming from their bunkers to surrender following the Gulf War. That is exactly how Satan would like to see Christians. He wants to see the individual Christian hunkered down in a cave, like Elijah in 1 Kings 19, believing he is all alone.

But—praise the Lord!—we are never alone. Our Lord is always with us, even to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:20). In the recent Afghan war, we have seen that isolated American troops were never alone. When the troops were in danger, the Air Force was there to bring needed air support. As an infantryman, I was thankful that help was just a radio call away if I was in trouble. As a Christian, I am grateful that my Heavenly Father is always there for me. Sometimes, though, we act like the old paratrooper who thinks he can fight the war alone. After all, we are independent Baptists. This paratrooper now knows that I need “air power” and “naval support.” We need to realize that there is support from other fundamental brethren. We need to uphold each other in prayer, support each other with encouragement, and inform each other of the Satanic attacks on our “centers of gravity.” We need to pray for and defend our leaders, institutions, churches, families, and each other from attack.

The FBFI is Chaplain (Captain) George T. Youstra’s endorsing agency. He is currently on active duty serving at Luke Air Force base near Phoenix, Arizona.



Who Needs Armor Anyway?

Gary T. Fisher

At the time of the attacks of September 11th I, along with all the other chaplains of Fort Jackson, South Carolina, were in Charleston at a profession development conference. We all immediately began watching in disbelief what was happening on the TV screens—America had been attacked! Our lives and careers changed in that one moment. We knew as chaplains that our jobs just got tougher. We were at war.

I began thinking about my drill sergeants. How is this going to affect them? I have 1,250 soldiers in our barracks who will start basic combat training in two days. How is this going to affect them? What am I going to say? I thought of friends who are in Special Forces and other war fighting units. Are they going to deploy?

Now we find ourselves in a new kind of conflict—a war against terrorism. We as Christians have a specific calling to fight spiritual war through spiritual means. Only a few people act in terroristic ways. However, man's capacity for evil seems to have no limit and is not limited to Islam's extremists.

A key passage of Scripture that has helped me as I have sought to encourage my soldiers is Ephesians 6:10–18. I have been a chaplain for basic training, or “boot camp,” for three years and 14 training cycles. Nearly 17,000 soldiers have come through my battalion. I see three basic needs of new soldiers:

First, they need to know we are at war, a spiritual war. Satan is after their souls. Secondly, they need to be fortified with the full armor of God. Lastly, they need to learn how to pray and prepare for battle. Our enemy is greater than the Al-Qaeda. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual

wickedness in high places” (Eph 6:12). This battle is real, difficult, and dangerous. No true soldier of Jesus Christ can expect to be immune from the assaults of the enemy; we cannot be neutral in this conflict.

Prepare for Spiritual Warfare

My soldiers must clearly know and understand that we are at war. Who is the enemy of this war? It is not the non-believer, although occasionally you will meet people so full of evil that they may even declare their rebellion against God. It is not the world or our society; although they may work to undermine God's truth, they are not the enemy. Paul declares that our enemy is Satan and the spiritual forces of evil. Satan, the deceiver and destroyer, is the adversary of our souls. Beginning in Ephesians 6:10 Paul offers a call to arms: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God: that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” He is sounding the alert. God wants us to do our pre-combat checks. As Paul is calling us to arms, he wants us to know whom we are fighting. Our enemy is powerful, but he is already defeated.

Notice the phrase “In the power of his might.” Our strength comes from God. To be strong in the Lord is not a one-time exercise. It is like gaining physical strength, being built over time after making daily commitments to eating right and getting proper exercise. It we do not continue striving for excellence, we will grow weak. If we want to accomplish anything for God, we have to spend time with the spiritual disciplines: Bible study, prayer, church fellowship, and service.

I have made the point to my soldiers that being a Christian is not simply a discipline; rather it is a living,

vital, and growing relationship with the living Lord Jesus Christ. Like any other relationship, if you want it to be strong and deep it takes time and commitment. The battles are going to come; whether spiritual or earthly combat, they are coming. The deeper the relationship we have with God, the greater the threat we become to Satan and his forces. That is why Paul calls us to check our armor.

God not only is our strength, but He becomes our protection. Some Christians don't use the full armor of God. Why? 1) Because they do not sense danger or recognize the power of the enemy; 2) or they do not have the weapons they need because of poor training; 3) or they do not have the necessary training to use effectively the weapons they already have; 4) or they are too comfortable, too far from the fight. We are to put on our armor and stand victoriously in this battle.

Put on the Full Armor of God

As my soldiers face the influences and attacks of Satan, I encourage them to recognize that the power and presence of God in their lives must be greater than any threat they face. A key objective of basic combat training is to bring individual soldiers to the point where they trust their equipment and know how to use it without thinking. Likewise, I must bring my soldiers to the point where they see the battles of life as a way of getting to know God more. My soldiers need more of God. We must train our people to cultivate a deeper sense of God's presence, to seek more direct contact with Him, and to rest in complete dependence upon Him.

Paul calls us to put on the armor and stand ready for battle. In the Army we say, "We train as we fight and we fight as we train." Why? Because we must give the training environment the necessary intensity in order to hone the skills vital to survival and success on the battlefield. The armor has been given so that a person can stand his ground when evil comes and when the conflict becomes most severe.

The first element of armor is not armor at all; it is a belt. Before the armor could be put on, the soldier would bind up all his loose clothing so he would be free to move. For a soldier to tighten the belt meant he was ready for duty. Verse 14 calls us to stand firm with truth as our belt. Truth is the foundation of our armor, and it protects us from the father of lies. I always encourage my soldiers to return to the Bible for the source of all truth. As their chaplain, I must help them to learn how to read and study the Bible for themselves, so they can gain truth from the Scripture when I am not available.

The second element of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate protects the soldier's vital organs. The righteousness of God is what protects our heart. I believe that an aspect of putting on the breastplate of righteousness is coming to grips with the basic tenets of the gospel. My soldiers must understand that God loves them and sent His Son to die for them, and they can be

made righteous by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third element of the armor is boots of peace (v. 15). Satan wants us to believe that telling others about Christ is worthless and hopeless. He wants us to think the job is too big and that we may offend others. But God gives us comfortable combat boots that enable us to proclaim the Good News. A soldier needs sure footing to enable him to march and move quickly when necessary. The "preparation of the gospel of peace" is a great way of saying that the Christian must be prepared with the gospel whose message is peace.

The fourth element of armor is the shield of faith. Verse 16 tells us that, in addition to all the elements of armor, we should never be without the shield of faith—complete and total dependence and reliance upon God. Satan and the world would have us to doubt God. The shield of faith pro-

protects us from the fiery darts. The shield breaks the force of the arrows, and they fall harmlessly to the ground. With God's perspective, we can see beyond the current circumstances and know that victory has been assured.

The fifth element of armor is the helmet of salvation (v. 17). A helmet is designed to protect the head. Our helmet is salvation, and it protects our minds from doubting God amidst trials. Confusion on the battlefield is deadly. A clear understanding of salvation and a daily realization of our need before God protect our mind from being defiled by Satan and the world.

The "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" is the only offensive weapon in the list. I tell my soldiers that the M-16 is only a \$400 stick unless you know how to use it and have ammo. A sword is only effective if used properly. The need is great for Bible-teaching chaplains on active duty to be able to proclaim the truth and teach people how to read and apply the Bible. A sin-

gle text of Scripture well understood and rightly applied in the soldiers' lives can change them forever. God recommends only one weapon, which is the Sword of the Spirit. No substitute is enough to do battle. Only the Sword will do.

Pray Before You Go into Battle

Now the soldier is dressed and ready to go into battle, but something else is needed. He needs to pray! Prayer is like the infantryman's best friend, "close air support." Verse 18 says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching. . . ." Proper communication on the battlefield is crucial. The soldier must know his orientation to the battle and clearly understand his role. Prayer and watchfulness are the proper attitudes in conflict and crisis. Prayer keeps us in a proper relationship with our God. It is not an alternative to preparation for battle; it is an essential part of the battle. If my soldiers are going to live for Christ, I must teach them to pray before they leave basic training. They must develop and

Likewise, I must bring my soldiers to the point where they see the battles of life as a way of getting to know God more.

live a life of prayer. It is essential to growth.

In the time I have been here at Ft. Jackson, I have touched many lives with the Word of God. But for everyone who has been touched there have been many others who go into the fray outnumbered, unarmed, and unprotected from the enemy. I am one man in one battalion in a standing Army of 468,000 soldiers. When I look out across the formations of troops and hear their footsteps, I am deeply moved, for I know they are souls and perhaps I am the only one standing between them and hell. We need more chaplains who see the need to enter the fray and reach our soldiers for Christ. Our soldiers face an enemy greater than the war against terrorism. This battle has eternal consequences. I have heard the call to arms—have you?

As every soldier of Christ engages in spiritual warfare, let him first put on the full armor of God, complete all necessary pre-combat checks, and then engage the enemy with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Chaplain (Captain) Gary T. Fisher's post of duty is Fort Jackson, near Columbia, South Carolina. His endorsing agency is the FBFI.

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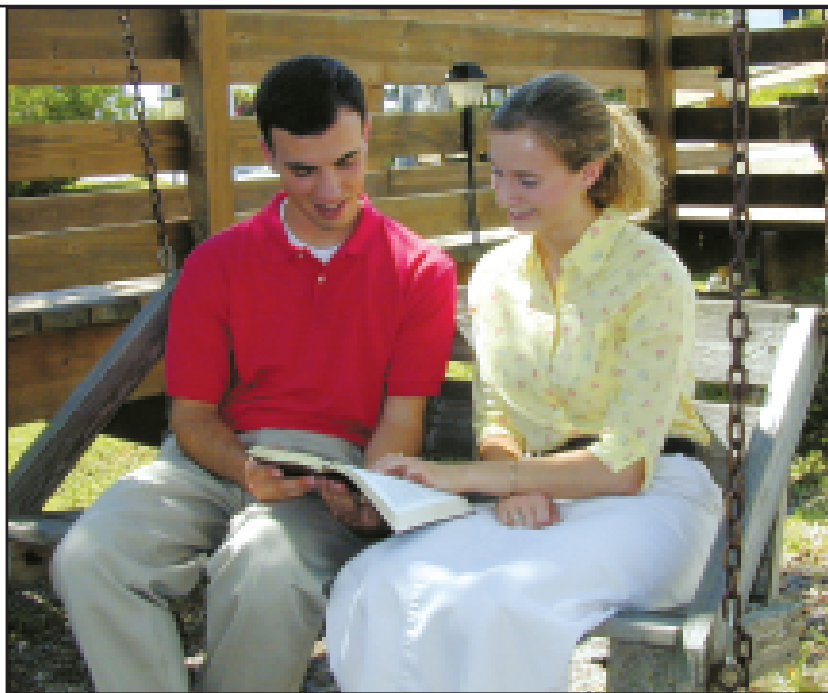
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Colonel Wiercinski's Weather Prayer

Mike Shellman

The following came from Chaplain Mike Shellman in a February 9 e-mail to his wife in Tennessee.

Greetings from KAF (Kandahar Airfield). The Lord again has been good to Task Force Rakkasan by answering prayer in a miraculous way. Here are the details:

My unit had attempted a classified mission for the third time. Each time they had to abort the mission due to bad weather conditions. At our daily Brigade Update Brief, Task Force Commander Col. Wiercinski summoned for the chaplain to report to the front of the room. As I reported, Col. Wiercinski addressed his frustration with the failed missions due to bad weather. He stated, "Chaplain, I give up; there is nothing I can do. I want you to pray to God for good weather so we can do this important mission. Give us a weather prayer—now."

Here is the prayer that God laid on my heart:

Almighty God,

We enter into Thy presence with praise and thanksgiving as we have witnessed Thy divine

hand of protection upon Task Force Rakkasan. We lift Your name on high as the Creator of all the universe and the One who holds us in Your hands.

Tonight, Lord, Thy humble servants request that You would directly intervene and grant us our petition for good weather, that we may go forth and accomplish our mission.

Lord, You have taught us patience, and we desire to do Your will. As Elijah, the Old Testament prophet, prayed for fire from heaven, we pray that You would subside the hindering weather and allow our aircraft and soldiers safe passage to their designated area of operation, that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust" (Psalm 18:2).

In Your all-powerful Name we pray, Amen.

Col. Wiercinski thanked me for the prayer and said, "Let's see if God answers the chaplain's prayer." Some

Chaplain Capt. Mike Shellman, of the 2nd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) helps comfort a soldier who was hit with shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) in Sirkankel on March 3, 2002. U.S.-led troops on March 5 pressed a fierce mountain assault on entrenched Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in Afghanistan, killing 'a lot of people' and weakening enemy resistance, a senior military official said.

Photo by Warren Zinn/Army Times/Reuters. Used by permission.



doubted that God would answer our prayer. I remained in a spirit of prayer and encouraged other Christians to pray with me that God's name would be glorified and that we would be able to accomplish our mission.

The next day the Air Force weather report told us that it was very doubtful that we would be able to go forth with the mission. Then things changed. Col. Wiercinski ordered the mission to begin preparations to proceed. God honored our faith and answered our prayer. The mission began with good weather. The report for our destination had called for bad weather, but it had changed there too. The mission went forth and is now complete. God had miraculously answered our prayer.

The next night at our Brigade Update Brief, Col. Wiercinski ended this meeting with all key personnel by having the chaplain report to the front. Col. Wiercinski said, "Chaplain, God answered your weather prayer, our mission went forth, and I am awarding you an Army Commendation Medal for your prayer and work."

Here is what was then read:

ATTENTION TO ORDERS

The Department of the Army has awarded the Army Commendation Medal to Chaplain Michael T. Shellman, Task Force Brigade Chaplain, for outstanding support to Task Force Rakkasan for successfully petitioning the Lord God of Elijah to provide sufficient weather to enable Task Force Rakkasan to accomplish their mission of eliminating their enemies. His actions reflect great credit upon himself, the Rakkasans, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the United States Army, and Jehovah God.

Signed Francis J. Wiercinski, COL Infantry,
Task Force Rakkasan Commander.

Col. Wiercinski then pinned the medal on my dusty battle uniform as I said, "Sir, to God be the glory, great things He hath done." Col. Wiercinski then asked me to address the commanders. Here is briefly what I said, "Gentlemen, I say again what I just told Col. Wiercinski—to God be the glory, great things He hath done. Sir, with your permission, allow me to remind us what happened on December 8, 1944. General Patton was at war with the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge. Poor weather was not allowing his troops to execute their mission. He then summoned his chaplain, Chaplain O'Neil, and told him that there were three parts to carrying out a successful mission—planning, working, and then praying. He told his chaplain he wanted a prayer for the rain to cease. Chaplain O'Neil did this and the rain stopped. God had

worked a miracle.

We too have witnessed a miracle. Sir, with your permission, I would like to entitle our weather prayer last night as Col. Wiercinski's weather prayer. May we never forget what God has done for us!"

I praise God for answered prayer and remind all that He is in control. May we all step forth in faith and proclaim His wonders. God's name is being exalted in Kandahar!

I am simply a servant of the Lord and count it a privilege to be the first soldier to receive a medal during this operation. It was not the chaplain who was honored this night, but the true God Almighty.

Here is my prayer in all of this:

Thank you, Lord, for answering our prayer. Your name has been exalted tonight as we have witnessed Your divine intervention. May we not forget what You have done, and we lift Your name on high. May this night be a night that will cause these men to trust in You. We have trusted in You to help us in our mission. May those who are lost now trust in You for salvation. Amen.

Capt. Mike Shellman is a chaplain serving with the 101st Airborne Division in Afghanistan. The FBFI is his endorsing agency.

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CIVIL FUNDING—FOR THE WORK OF THE CHURCH?

Mark W. Rizzo

American churches were recently faced with a proposal that an office be opened in the White House to provide federal funding to community organizations, including those of a religious nature. Those who view the purpose of the church as the provision of public charity applauded this idea. They saw this proposal as a legitimate way to provide funding for that purpose.

An offer of such magnitude deserves to be studied, and the issues and consequences explained and defined. We need to look at the Biblical, historical, and Constitutional evidence regarding this issue, consider the consequences of such an enactment, and draw some conclusions about the wisdom of such a plan.

As Christians, we must first look at Biblical evidence. What does the Bible say about the duty of the church? Matthew 28:18–20 say, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

The purpose of the church is to preach the gospel and make disciples, or followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything that interferes with or subverts this mission is an interference with and subversion of the authority of Jesus Christ over His Church. In 1790, John Leland, a Baptist minister in Virginia, wrote *On Dissenting from the Episcopal Church*. He said, “The gospel church acknowledges no head but King Jesus: He is law-giver, king and judge—is a jealous God, and will not give His glory unto another.”

A second question of duty regards the duty of citizens. Isaiah 1:17 presents the duty of citizens: “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” Proverbs 14:31 speaks of the poor: “He that oppreseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.” These are the duties of individual citizens. God-fearing citizens will understand and fulfill these duties, but that does not make them the responsibility of the church. Responsible citizenship means that every individual takes an active part in fulfilling his duty to his family first, and then to the community. Regarding citizenship, the duty of the church is to teach the foundational principles of civil and religious liberty. We are to teach men their duty and the reasons of it. The apostle Paul made the following statement in Acts 20:27: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” We must do the same.

There is also historical precedent regarding this kind of proposal. In 1784, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia was presented with a “Bill establishing a provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion.” In

1785, overwhelming opposition crushed the Bill. Opponents of the measure presented the Virginia legislature with a document called Memorial and Remonstrance, which outlined 15 reasons for not enacting such a plan.

Early Americans had a great fear of living under the establishment of a national church. John Leland wrote, “No national church can, in its organization be the gospel church.” In a speech before Congress, calling for a Bill of Rights, James Madison said that the words “nor shall any national religion be established” needed to be placed in the Constitution. What America ended up with was the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights, which begins, “Congress shall make no law respecting [regarding] an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

The bill recently proposed asked Congress to make a law respecting religion that would bring churches under civil authority. It is necessary to consider three different pieces of legislation to see the full impact of where we are going in this country.

The first piece of legislation, which we have been discussing, called for federal funding for religious organizations to provide charity, but then states that no public funds may be used to “proselytize.” The second piece of legislation is the Religious Liberty Protection Act that was introduced in 1999. Section 2, subsection (a) of that document reads, “General Rule—Except as provided in subsection (b), a government shall not substantially burden a person’s religious exercise—(1) in a program or activity, operated by a government, that receives Federal financial assistance; or. . .” and then subsection (b) states, “Exception—a government may substantially burden a person’s religious exercise if the government demonstrates that application of the burden to the person—(1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest.”

Compelling governmental interest is provided by the third piece of legislation, which is that dealing with “hate crimes.” Another important consideration is found in Section 5, subsection (b) of the Religious Liberty Protection Act which says, “Religious Exercise Not Regulated—Nothing in this Act shall create any basis for restricting or burdening religious exercise or for claims against a religious organization, including any religiously affiliated school or university, not acting under color of law.”

The key is in those last words, “under color of law.” Once an individual or an organization accepts federal funding, it comes under the authority of the federal government and ceases to have the rights of a religious organization. It has then become a civil institution. This document was designed to give the government the authority to regulate religious organizations that accept public funds.

Based on this evidence, we can see that there are consequences to the enactment of a bill providing federal funding to religious organizations.

1. It violates the purpose of the church. Restrictions may be placed on churches, requiring them to refrain from using public funds to proselytize. Preaching the gospel is not an option for the church. It is a command.

This proposal, however, silences churches that take federal funding. Furthermore, the Religious Liberty Protection Act, in a section regarding land use, apparently would have provided for taxation of church property. Section 3, subsection (b) (1) (b) states that, "No government shall impose or implement a land use regulation in a manner that does not treat religious assemblies or institutions on equal terms with non religious assemblies or institutions."

Even though this bill was not passed, these are the issues that continue to come up every time Congress contemplates enacting a law regarding an establishment of religion.

2. It will distract the church from its primary responsibility. The church will suffer the danger of becoming overwhelmed by the responsibility of social work and have no energy left for its Biblical duty.

The proposal violates the Biblical authority of Jesus Christ over His church by subverting and regulating the mission of the church. It violates the Constitution, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 was unconstitu-

tional, the Religious Liberty Protection Act of 1998 was unconstitutional, and the recent proposal put forward by well-meaning politicians was also unconstitutional.

Christians must not be tricked into accepting federal funding for their ministries simply because a Christian conservative advanced the idea. Al Gore endorsed the idea as well. President Bush will be gone in a few years, and what would happen when someone comes to power who may not have Christian interests at heart? Support of federal funding for Christian ministries is sheer shortsightedness coupled with a willingness to sacrifice our children's future for results, for benefits, for peace in our time.

Mark W. Rizzo is C.E.O. of FREEdom Flyer ministries, based in Bridgeview, Illinois.

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FrontLine Clubs —*Just What Our Fundamental Baptist Church Has Needed!*

John C. Vaughn and Ted Harris

A Pastor's Perspective

For years our church enjoyed the blessings of a children's curriculum based on Bible memory, songs, and games. The uniforms and awards motivated the children to attend meetings and work faithfully on their memory work that will provide lasting benefits throughout life. The club was designed to be used as an outreach ministry. Some children were reached for Christ, although usually the unsaved families of clubbers remained distant, attending only the awards programs, if then.

Nevertheless, for more than 20 years, several generations of preschool-aged children through young teens attended the club and grew greatly. So why would we even consider changing to something else? There were several reasons. First, that program was being used by so many New Evangelical churches that many of our people, while looking for a good church to attend while on vacation or traveling, found themselves shocked by the carnal music and worldly atmosphere of churches they assumed were fundamental and sound because they advertised the club as one of their ministries.

We wanted a club that was designed primarily to disciple the children of our members by involving the entire family in Bible study when possible, and one that included outreach as well. We wanted a club that would reinforce our fundamental Baptist distinctives, including the principle of separation. We wanted a curriculum that would not drift into the use of modern versions of the Bible, or that would put our youth in contact with charismatics or compromisers at camp or in Bible quiz. We considered every alternative and concluded that, for us, something new was in order. FrontLine Clubs was the answer.

We have just finished the first year of a two-year program. We have never seen our young people so excited. Every week we hear comments such as, "I love club. I can't wait till Wednesday night!" In fact, one Wednesday night I asked a little girl if she was enjoying FrontLine Club and she lit up when she said, "Yes! I wish it was next Wednesday already!" But this hasn't happened in one night, you can be sure. We began to pray about making this change nearly six years ago. It took us two years of planning and preparation to get ready for the first year. Our writers and other teams have worked all year just to stay ahead of the weekly club meetings. We will have at least two more years of this before the first editions of the study books and family guides are written.

Dr. Ted Harris, my family doctor and a faithful deacon and worker in our church for well over 20 years, agreed to serve as our FrontLine Commander. As such, he provided the leadership for all the teams that put the Club together. One team designed and prepared the uniforms, which consist of colorful knit shirts with the FrontLine logo for the older children, and vests for the younger children. The logo itself was designed by another team that also designed the booklets. A team working with our youth pastor selected the names of the various clubs. Our graphic artist designed the flag, which one of our ladies produced. A talented musician wrote the FrontLine Song, while our pastoral staff wrote a purpose

statement and set the philosophy and direction, teaching from the pulpit the Biblical basis for everything we were trying to accomplish.

The results of this massive effort have been remarkable. FrontLine Clubs have unified our church like nothing else before. More workers than we imagined have come forward to be a part of this effort, and more of our people understand our church philosophy of ministry than ever before. Families are using FrontLine Clubs to begin having devotions who have never done so before. When we think about the struggle we had in deciding to drop the old program and launch this new one, we wonder why the decision seemed so hard, since the change has been so dramatic. Our experience may not be typical, but we can certainly encourage you to just trust the Lord, plan and prepare properly and step out by faith in obedience to God if He should lead you to the front line of any ministry change that you fear.

Several churches have asked to use the materials as they make a change in their own ministries. They have agreed to use them in their preliminary form as they are being developed. At the winter board meeting of the FBFI, two families, in uniform, presented FrontLine Clubs to the Executive Board. We told the men that if others wanted to use FrontLine Clubs we would like to limit the Club's growth to the churches of men who are members of the FBFI so that we could avoid the kinds of problems that many of us have had in the past. If your church should decide to make a change to this or any other program, you will have a lot of work to do. Dr. Harris will give you a parent's perspective on how this transition can be made smoothly and the level of commitment needed to make it successful.

A Parent's Perspective

As a parent of four children, now 19 to 24 years old, I worked closely with all four as they progressed through the entire club that we previously used in our church. It had both positives and negatives. When Pastor Vaughn challenged us with the vision for a new club program incorporating the principles our church has learned, focusing on Biblical discipleship, the sheer magnitude of the task was both exciting and overwhelming. The Lord had laid the foundation through years of Bible teaching and now brought together not only the concepts, but the skills necessary for the task, and the people with those skills showed a willingness to commit themselves to the task. It has been a blessing to watch.

Early in the process, two major concepts emerged to form the backbone of the club program and curriculum. The first was the emphasis on discipleship. This took the form of required work for five days out of each week in order to earn a faithfulness award for that week. Under the old program, each child worked at his or her own pace, which too often meant weeks of no work at all, followed by superficial catch up work merely to get a reward for being able to quote something poorly understood. Since many of us as adults still struggle with consistency in devotions, we believed that faithfulness should be developed as a part of discipleship.

The second concept was an integration of the lesson themes across all club age groups so that the youngest as well as the oldest learn the same truths each week. Even though we included different Bible stories to illustrate and teach that theme, the doctrinal basis and application is the same for all. This truth is reinforced by using the same Bible memory passage for all ages, but the program requires more material to be learned as the clubber matures. The older clubbers learn passages of Scripture and context rather than single, isolated verses. This approach led to the development of the "Family Guide," which incorporates what each child is learning, including memory verses, in an outline that parents can use for family devotions.

FrontLine Clubs are patterned on a military theme, and the club names were chosen accordingly. The youngest age includes three- and four-year-olds, and are known as "Scouts." The second group, the "Marchers," includes five- and six-year-olds. The third group includes 2nd and 3rd graders, divided into boys' and girls' groups, the "Sentinels" and "Keepers." The 4th and 5th graders are the "Defenders" and "Protectors," and the 6th grade has its own group, known as the "Standard-bearers" for the girls and the "Armorbearers" for the boys. This group has part of its club time devoted to serving by preparing and helping the two youngest age groups with crafts.

The whole process of developing FrontLine Clubs has been a challenge and a blessing as we have seen the Lord work through the leaders, writers, editors, and artists. We have all grown and as the distinctives of our fundamental Baptist church have been woven into the fabric of the curriculum and program, all of us understand them better. We have a second year of writing ahead of us, and then two more years editing and rewriting before we will have the program completed, but we are looking forward to what it will accomplish not only in the lives of our children, but in our own as well. FrontLine Clubs is not just a replacement for our former program; it is what we have needed all along.

Dr. John C. Vaughn is pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina and Editor of *FrontLine* magazine. Dr. Ted Harris is a physician in family practice, a long-time deacon of Faith Baptist Church, and the Commander of FrontLine Clubs, responsible for the development team.

FrontLine Editor Will Not Be Featured on Focus on the Family

Although we appreciate the efforts of Dr. James Dobson to strengthen families and stand against abortion, there are several problems in his approach that are contrary to the Scriptural position of the FBFI and *FrontLine*. In 1988, a tape of Dr. and Mrs. John Vaughn's testimony was sent by a listener to Dr. James Dobson and broadcast on his International program, *Focus on the Family*. There were many requests for tapes and the two-day program was aired again in 1990. In 1992, the director of programming called Dr. Vaughn to ask for updated information and to inform him that the testimony would be broadcast again. Dr. Vaughn asked *Focus on the Family* at that time not to air the tape again because he was not supportive of the direction of the ministry and because he takes a strong stand for the sufficiency of Scripture and against psychological integration.

The tape was not aired. In April, 2002, while the Editor was ministering in the UK, a call came to the home office inquiring about airing the tape again. When Dr. Vaughn returned to the states and was able to communicate with the new director of programming, he explained his stand and Biblical reasons for his separatist position. It was agreed that the tape would not be aired and another note would be made in the files of *Focus on the Family*. However, it came to our attention that the programming guide for the broadcast had already been printed and the Vaughns'

testimony was listed for May 17th.

Further, when the Vaughns' testimony was published by Fleming Revell in 1994, the publisher designed a book cover which mentioned the previous broadcast as a point of fact and identification. No disclaimer was given when the broadcast was mentioned in the text of the book. This has been changed in the new release of the book through FrontLine Press. We want to reassure the readers of *FrontLine* and members of the FBFI that we are not supportive of the New Evangelicalism of *Focus on the Family* or the integration of psychology into Biblical counseling.

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June 11-13

National Meeting
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July 30-August 1

Alaska Region

Hamilton Acres Baptist Church
138 Farewell Avenue
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October 7-8

Southeast Satellite Meeting
Landmark Baptist Church
116 Landmark Court
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October 28-November 1

Caribbean Region

Calvary Baptist Tabernacle
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First Partaker

The Need to Preach on Preaching

All preachers preach, and for that reason sermons are constantly on their minds. But in the main, this is probably true only of those sermons they're delivering from week to week. It's another matter entirely to think not about the product of preaching (sermons), but about the thing itself. That is, about preaching as an activity, a *phenomenon*, or, if you will, a recurring *event* in the life of the Church.

For many years I've been constrained by force of circumstances to think about preaching in this more philosophical way. Not only because I preach, but because it's been my lot to teach preaching on the university and seminary levels. As a result, I've enjoyed the happy obligation of reading scores of books about preaching. The other day I counted 65 in my own library, not to speak of the many I've borrowed from others. Not all are good, but all have forced me to think about preaching philosophically. So have the several hundred biographies of preachers that stand on the shelves across the room from me even as I write.

It may, therefore, have been this calling to teach preaching that first motivated me to preach to my people about it. But somewhere along the line I came to realize that my church actually *needed* to hear preaching on the subject of preaching. That realization has become a conviction that the Lord's people have a genuine, spiritual need to hear this topic unfolded just as scripturally, exegetically, and applicationally as any other Bible theme. So through the years I've done so frequently, perhaps even once or twice a year.

Preaching about preaching may seem a novel idea,

perhaps even a self-serving one. It strikes people as something especially suited to the preacher's needs, not his people's. But there are compelling reasons for confronting them also with this subject.

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

Our People Need Understanding That Preaching Is Vital to Their Spiritual Life.

Something that is "vital" is an irreplaceable necessity to the very life of the object. It's a thing without which the object would die. Sound like an overstatement to make about the contribution of preaching to the life of the Church? It's not. P. T. Forsyth's oft-repeated statement is true: "With its preaching Christianity stands or falls."

What I'm arguing is so much the case that the history of the true Church of Jesus Christ is little more than the history of its preachers and their preaching. In the introduction to his classic work, *A History of Preaching*, Edwin Charles Dargan could justifiably claim, "The spread of Christianity, both geographically and numerically, has been largely the work of preaching." His two massive volumes of historical survey verify his observation. Read them. Dargan will persuade you.

Even more convincing is the fact that the Bible's entire history of mankind is recorded primarily in terms of the lives and messages of preachers. You can think your way right through the only history of the ancient world to which the Bible pays any attention by just proceeding one spokesman after another—Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, the Prophets, John the Baptist, the Son of God, and the apostles. In fact, apart from the Patriarchs, a few of the Judges, and the most significant of the kings, men are given very little place in Biblical history unless they are public spokesmen for God. This is particularly true of the New Testament era.

I want to clarify emphatically, however, that what I'm

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defending doesn't for a moment diminish the significance of the non-preaching believers who make up the vast majority of the Body. Far from it. The New Testament makes much of them. But even this is done *through preaching*. Frankly, we wouldn't even know that the Holy Spirit has designed and gifted every member of Christ's Body to play a significant role in the edifying of the whole unless a God-called spokesman had said it in passages such as Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Yet even with those scriptures available for reading many believers still miss their point. What does it take to set them straight? *Preaching* on those passages. The very life of their service depends upon it.

But unfortunately, any two or more of us, just like water, tend by our carnal nature to reach a common level by running off downhill of Scripture. As a result many believers gradually lose whatever spiritual comprehension they've ever had of just how vital preaching is. I don't mean that they'd opt for eliminating it altogether. In fact, most of them would quickly argue that they can't do without it. But the shallow depth to which many of them understand this is exposed by

. . . consider how Christian people so readily opt for more of what diminishes preaching's centrality. More music, more liturgy, more fellowship, more testimonies, more light-hearted, folksy chit chat from the platform, more of almost anything that is less taxing on the mind and less demanding of the spirit than biblical preaching.

the *kind* of preaching they choose to listen to. Much of it is very short, and what there is of it contains very few of the actual words of God. There's a little bit of Bible in a little bit of time, and Christian people are content with it. They have almost no concept of the fact that by *nature*, spiritual life must—not should, but must—feed on large servings of the very words of God which alone are spirit and life (John 6:63). Tragically, many Christians can hardly identify with the absolute necessity of this because they have never learned what it is to give the words of God a rich dwelling in their spirit (Col. 3:15). They have, in effect, scarcely begun to really *live* on the words of God. As a result they don't, in fact they *can't* think God's thoughts after Him. They're constitutionally incapable of it. Correspondingly, their appreciation for the vital necessity of the right kind of preaching

is stunted.

Or, to give another illustration of the point, consider how Christian people so readily opt for more of what diminishes preaching's centrality. More music, more liturgy, more fellowship, more testimonies, more light-hearted, folksy chit chat from the platform, more of almost anything that is less taxing on the mind and less demanding of the spirit than biblical preaching. Though perhaps unwittingly, they are nevertheless effectively eroding the influence of the pulpit. They simply don't understand that their choices not only leave less and less time for the meat of the Word but, even more insidiously, develop in a church a large appetite for nearly everything but solid food.

One of the most effective ways of correcting this and *keeping* it corrected is to preach with some regularity on the necessity of preaching. The Bible itself provides numerous texts for careful expositors to use in persuading our people that nothing is more vital to their spiritual health than the right kind of preaching. Find those texts. Feed on them yourself. They'll do you good. They'll magnify your calling for you. When they have, take them with you into the pulpit and preach them fervently. The vigor, stamina, sensitivity and quality of spiritual life in your church may depend upon it.

Our People Need Understanding That Preaching Uniquely Glorifies God.

Something that is *unique* is something that is the only one of its kind. Things are not "sort of" unique. They are either unique or they are not, like Mount Everest, or the Dead Sea, or a fingerprint, or a snowflake. Among the forms of verbal communication, preaching is unique in the way it glorifies God. It is uniquely *doxological*. This is a logical deduction from the fact that God does everything ultimately for His own glory. And He is the One who chose preaching above other oral styles.

He has "in due times manifested his word through preaching" (Tit. 1:3). "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach. . .," Paul insisted (1 Cor. 1:17). "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," he explained (1 Cor. 1:21). "How shall they hear without a preacher," he asked (Rom. 10:14). So "preach!" he exhorted Timothy (1 Tim. 4:2). Though it's easily overlooked, we must never forget that "Preach the word" assigns not only our content ("the word") but mandates the method by which it is communicated (preaching). "Preach!" This is God's idea, God's method, God's command, and it must, therefore, be the most excellent verbal means of giving Him glory.

Let's explore that for a moment. What is there about preaching that excels any other form of private or public speech in its glory-giving to God? Why is it *uniquely*

God glorifying among oral communications?

Have you ever reflected on the fact that while a preacher is speaking nobody else gets to talk? Nobody gets to interrupt, interject his own opinion, or even ask a question. Preaching is a *monologue*. Even more significantly it's an *authoritative* monologue.

That's because preaching is not man's word. It's God's. Not on the same level as inspired Scripture, of course, but in the sense to which Paul testifies when he expressed his thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' reception of his preaching: "When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13).

Someone may argue, "But wasn't Paul inspired when he preached? Isn't that why the Thessalonians received his preached word as God's word?" The Scripture never says apostolic preaching was inspired. Nor does it ever speak of inspired Prophets or inspired Apostles. It reserves the word "inspired" for the Scriptures alone (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

But when a Spirit-filled preacher has those Scriptures as his predominant content, God expects that people should receive it as nothing less than His word. Not the preacher's word. *His* word. That's why the writer of Hebrews could say truthfully that those who had the rule over those early Jewish believers "have spoken unto you the word of God" (Heb. 13:7). In fact, this is not merely something that *can* be true of a preacher's preaching, it's something he must ensure is true of it! God commands it. Through Peter He admonishes, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

Don't overlook that word "oracles." It's a form of the word "logos," the Greek term translated "word" in expressions like "word of God" and "the word." It occurs just three other times in the New Testament. Acts 7:38—Moses "received the lively oracles to give unto us." Romans 3:2—unto the Jews were entrusted "the oracles of God." Hebrews 5:12—the readers needed someone to teach them "the first principles of the oracles of God." In all three of these passages, the "oracles" are unmistakably the "words" or "utterances" of God as they are found in the Holy Scriptures.

It's absolutely astounding, therefore, when God then commands that if *any* man is going to speak, he must speak as God's very own oracles! His utterances!

That's how the glory-giving takes place in the very preaching moment. It gives both God and man their only appropriate places. God is supreme. He is authoritative. He is the Sovereign *commanding*. Man is made subordinate. He listens silently and submissively. He is the *commanded*.

No other form of oral communication so impressively creates this situation. This is the genius of preaching—it puts both God and man in their places because it is nothing less than the authoritative public procla-

mation of the very words of God to His creatures. No wonder, then, that among all the forms of oral communication, it uniquely *gives God glory*.

Our People Need Warning That Preaching May Be Easily and Acceptably Perverted.

The word *pervert* is from a Latin word which means "to turn completely." Morals may be turned completely from the right to the wrong. Theology may be turned completely from orthodoxy to heterodoxy. Likewise, preaching may be perverted. It may turn away completely from being what it ought.

Most of our people would recognize preaching that has turned from orthodoxy. But they don't always recognize preaching that has turned from what, for want of a better term, I'll call *Biblicity*—that is, from a pervasively Biblical content.

For instance, awhile back I had several hundred miles to drive and spent the time listening to preachers on the radio. One turned quickly from his text to berating politicians. The second attempted to deal

This is the genius of preaching—it puts both God and man in their places because it is nothing less than the authoritative public proclamation of the very words of God to His creatures.

with a passage, but it was soon obvious that he had not carefully studied. He carelessly misinterpreted his text, bogged down in a few of its most insignificant details, and only came alive when he began to talk about his pet peeves, particularly some of the ways in which people drive. I heard only about ten minutes of a third, but he spent most of it talking about the way he eats like a hog. He described the four or five ways in which he gets food all over himself. But then he has a little dog that comes over and licks the crumbs off of his face so that he's clean again. Sometimes his guests think all of this is odd, but that doesn't bother him. He's not going to change. He plans to keep eating any old way he very well pleases.

I found myself liking this man the best because he was entertaining and made me laugh. I was actually sorry his program was over so quickly.

I use this personal illustration because late that evening it occurred to me that my own reaction to those three preachers was probably very much like that of their congregations. The first interested me briefly because as soon as he began talking about the government his message took on an air of relevancy. I

knew I wasn't really hearing the Bible, but the issues were current, the observations were conservative, and the preacher was hot enough to keep my attention for awhile. Frankly, the second man bored me, even though he was the only one of the three actually attempting to preach the Bible. *He could have riveted me.* I was hungry for someone to minister the Bible to me that night. That's why I had turned on the radio. But his obviously careless handling of the text gave no sense that God was speaking authoritatively. Finally, when he turned to poking fun at women drivers, I just sort of stared through the windshield with my mind drifting in and out of hearing him to thinking about the things that were heavy on my heart. The third man got and held my attention because he made me laugh. Laughing made me feel better. For a moment I quit thinking about my burdens. It's why I enjoyed his program and would have been glad to hear him tell some more funny stories.

But here's what happened when his program was

I needed His words. None of the preachers gave very many of them to me. But two of the preachers almost made me forget my need of them. For a brief time they actually provided a bit of relief by distracting me from that real need. But when they were finished I returned to searching. No one had opened the Scriptures to me. No one had healed my soul.

over. I switched off the radio and drove for perhaps 15 minutes in silence. Just thinking again. And all the serious things that really mattered flooded back over my spirit. I prayed. I thought. I prayed some more. And then, without really thinking about what I was doing I started fishing around in the cassette holder for a tape—not of preaching, but of *music*. For an hour, at least, I played that tape forward and backward, forward and backward, and let the sounds and words of serious singing minister to my spirit.

Now I'm able to recall all of that, not because my memory is good, but because much later that night I began to reflect upon what had happened. I had needed someone to minister to me. For several days I had looked forward to that trip with its hours to myself so someone could. Preaching was what I instinctively turned to first.



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I longed, not wanted, but really *longed* to be preached to. I hungered to hear about the Lord, about His sovereignty in my life, about His promises, about His sufficiency, about His care for me personally. I needed His words. None of the preachers gave very many of them to me. But two of the preachers almost made me forget my need of them. For a brief time they actually provided a bit of relief by distracting me from that real need. But when they were finished I returned to searching. No one had opened the Scriptures to me. No one had healed my soul. For that I had turned to music. The tape was no harangue. There were no pet peeves, no distracting anecdotes, no shallow laughter. Just warm, heartfelt, engaging singing about the Lord that lifted my spirit and renewed my confidence in Him.

I've wondered since, was my experience that night a microcosm of what goes on in many churches? Maybe people keep returning to them week after week because if the preacher majors on current events they think he's practical, or if he makes them laugh they feel better. Sure, contemporary issues and humorous stories aren't really the Bible, but they're tolerable because he does read the Bible at the beginning and now and then he refers back to it. But what really ministers is something else—the Christian friendships, the fellowship, the programs, the opportunities to serve, and maybe most of all, the music.

We're all unspeakably grateful to God for the gift of ministering music. I can personally testify that my car, my home, my church, and my soul are full of it. But if the part of our services that is the most God-centered, earnestly devotional, and quickening to needy hearts is the music, then those of us who preach need to shut ourselves up in a quiet room and weep before the Lord.

Most godly Christian musicians would weep for us if they recognized what's happening. I trust it isn't. But tellingly, just a few weeks after that night in the car when I found myself turning from preaching to music, a man confided in me that though the preaching in his church is weak, his family joined because the music is outstanding.

Such folks need renewing in their minds. They're not thinking God's thoughts. They need for us to preach about preaching and how easily it can turn away from being strictly occupied with the words of God to becoming a collection of personal opinions, funny anecdotes, pet peeves, and careless exposition—and yet seem like tolerable preaching. They need for us to explain to them why it's not.

They need us to clarify why they must choose churches for nothing less than their preaching. Why they must call preachers to their pulpits who focus on the Lord and the text. Why they must encourage us to do so by their unflagging interest and earnest response when we do. Why they should vote with their feet if we won't.

The issue could not be more serious nor the need more acute. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Likewise, study to persuade your people that it must be so. ☞

Bring . . . the Books

Praying Hyde—Apostle of Prayer

After hearing so much about the powerful, spiritual impact of the life story of John Hyde (1865-1912), I determined to read his biography for myself. One of the most readable biographies of his life is *Praying Hyde Apostle of Prayer: The Life Story of John Hyde*, edited by E. G. Carre (reprinted by Bridge-Logos publishers in 1992). The first three sections of the book are portraits of Hyde's life written by close friends or ministry partners, followed by a brief selection from Hyde's personal correspondence.

The son of a Presbyterian pastor in Carthage, Illinois, Hyde first learned about prayer as a youth by observing the passionate praying of his father. During his senior year at McCormick Seminary, he surrendered to missions and determined to journey to India as a missionary. Progress was slow. In 1904, he and two other men held a meeting in Sialkot for the encouragement of pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and lay workers. This meeting had a profound impact for the gospel. Eventually there would be seven such meetings, and God's reviving presence was evident at each convention.


The convention's secret was the prayer work done in advance by Hyde and his small band of prayer warriors. For 30 days prior to the conference, these men gathered around the clock beseeching God to bless the conference and send revival. The later conferences saw attendances of over 2000, and many credit the famous Sialkot revival to these conferences and to Hyde's praying. He and his band covenanted together in what became known as the Punjab Prayer Union, whose principles were set forth in five searching questions to which each member signed his agreement. On observing the difficulty of this covenant and the extended and strenuous prayer labor, one of his Hyde's friends stated, "Do you who read these words look at those long continued vigils, those days of fasting and prayer, those nights of wakeful watching and intercessions, and do you say, 'What a price to pay!' Then I point you to scores and hundreds of workers quickened and fitted for the service of Christ; I point you to literally thousands prayed into the kingdom and say, 'Behold, the purchase of such a price.'"

Hyde sensed more and more that his real ministry in India was to be one of prayer. Often, Hyde would hear of a meeting in a particular place. He would travel there and make his own accommodations at his own expense. Often he would never even go to the meeting; he would simply devote himself to prayer. As effective as he was in the pulpit, his real power and ministry lay in the unseen ministry of the prayer chamber. Often, he would pray all day without even

rising from his knees for meals. Those who traveled with him testified that he would rise every two or three hours throughout the night to spend time in prayer. As a result, many of these meetings were greatly blessed by visible and lasting effects in those who attended.

In the early years of his ministry, not all understood his call. Some, feeling he was not sharing the load of ministry duty, grew critical of the time spent in his room praying while others were laboring in the work. However, in time these questions were put to rest by the evident power upon all ministry endeavors for which Hyde prayed. Hyde rarely talked about prayer. Instead he prayed. The secret to his prayer life was that his life was prayer!

Only once did Hyde talk about his prayer life. He explained to an inquiring coworker that two related incidents led him to this ministry. First, a dear family friend left a letter in his cabin on the ship taking Hyde to India promising to pray until Hyde was filled with the Holy Spirit. Deeply wounded and angered by the implication, he threw the wadded up letter on the floor of his cabin and stormed up to the deck of the ship. After several hours he retrieved the letter and commenced a three-day battle with God. Finally he surrendered all ambitions and dreams of success as a missionary and asked for the empowering of the Spirit at any cost. The second event took place in the first month of ministry in India. After hearing a missionary preach on the power of Christ to deliver from sin, an Indian man asked the speaker whether he himself had thus been delivered. This question penetrated Hyde's heart, for he knew he was still in bondage to certain sins. He returned to his room determined he would not preach deliverance to others until he had first experienced it personally. He spent the rest of his life convinced that the secret to his deliverance and the power on his ministry was due to the victory God gave him during this season of prayer.

Hyde's ministry in India lasted only 19 years, as the extended fastings and long night vigils eventually took their toll on his body. He died on February 17, 1912, and was buried next to his father and mother at Moss Ridge cemetery in Carthage, Illinois. His earthly life ended but the effects of his prayer ministry continue to this day. Those who read his life's story will be challenged to pursue the same commitment to prayer that Hyde modeled. 

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

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In a day when evangelicals espouse evangelistic cooperation with Roman Catholics, it is necessary to contend for truth. J. I. Packer, Chuck Colson, Bill Bright, Norman Geisler, and others count Catholics as brethren in Christ. They use little Scripture to prove their presupposition that Catholics are actually born again. Instead, they employ broad theological presuppositions that call into question one of the three key beliefs forged during the Reformation—salvation by grace through faith alone. Catholics believe in salvation by grace through faith, though they define justification differently from Protestants. The critical word in the *sola fide* formula is “alone.” Some evangelicals have granted “salvation by grace through faith” dogmatic status while relegating “alone” to the category of systematic theology. Any doctrine placed on the level of dogmatic theology is considered a test of orthodoxy; but one given systematic status, though potentially very important, is not critical enough to be a test of salvation.

What has happened in contemporary literature on the Evangelicals and Roman Catholics Together movement is interesting. Evangelicals who posit the need for “alone” view this issue from a soteriological standpoint; those who downgrade the importance of “alone” perceive this controversy from the standpoint of unity. One group uses Scripture on justification to prove its point while the other uses the New Testament’s emphasis on unity to substantiate its beliefs. Geisler, in *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences*, states that Protestants and Catholics can work together in four areas: social action, education, combating the demise of Western culture, and evangelism. That he refers to only nine passages of Scripture in his chapter on evangelism is noteworthy. Of those nine, only one is used to support the thesis of cooperative evangelism—Philippians 1:15-18 (428). Therefore, it is necessary to determine if Geisler’s use of this text is valid.

The Magnanimity of Philippians 1:15–18

In this passage, the apostle Paul speaks of two groups who preach the gospel. The first group consists of his friends who preach Christ out of “good will,” “love,” and “in truth.” The other group is his rivals who preach Christ out of “envy,” “strife,” and “contention.” Their preaching is insincere because their motive is “to add affliction to [Paul’s] bonds.” Therefore, Paul says that the latter group proclaimed Christ “in pretense” (in falsehood). Geisler claims that the “magnanimity of the apostle Paul is not always reflected in conservative Protestant circles” (428). Since Paul rejoiced regardless of the preacher’s identity, conservative Protestants should do the same. However, the presupposition that Catholics do indeed preach the gospel is unacceptable. Fundamentalists believe that the “gospel” preached by the Catholics is more

akin to the message proclaimed by the Judaizers. Paul’s spirit was anything but magnanimous toward them. He forthrightly stated that the “gospel” they preached was no gospel at all; those who propounded such error were anathematized (Gal. 1:6-9; for Geisler’s perspective on the error of the Galatians see pp. 236-37). Paul’s magnanimity extended to those with faulty motives not faulty content. Those who were preaching Christ out of false motives were still preaching a pure gospel.

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

The Meaning of Philippians 1:15–18

The identity of those within the second group is critical to the interpretation of this text. The key to understanding the potential difficulty of this section is to realize a poignant truth: certain men were envious of Paul; they were Christians who were normally timid when it came to evangelism. They knew that bold evangelism might stir up more strife and potentially damage Paul’s trial or cause him to be mistreated in prison. Paul concludes that the motivation, whether in pretense or in truth, for the preaching of the gospel does not detract from its viability. But Paul is nowhere advocating, condoning, or conceding to a false gospel. Thus, Paul could be gracious because his rivals were preaching Christ out of false motive but were not preaching another gospel. Since Philippians 1 gives little detail about either group that preached the gospel in Rome, we must consider other passages that shed light on their identity.

The *crux interpretum* revolves around the quality or purity of the gospel that Paul’s rival party preached. This text does not indicate that a different gospel was preached, but it is difficult to be dogmatic on that point from this passage alone. Lightfoot believed that “these antagonists can be none other than the Judaizing party” (*Philippians*, 88). This identification, however, does not fit the facts in other Scripture passages. Thielman, who has written extensively on Paul’s view of the Law, says “those whose preaching is motivated ‘out of envy and rivalry’ are not . . . Judaizing opponents similar to the troublemakers in Galatia” (*Philippians*, 62). He asserts that Galatians 1:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 11:13-14 prevent any interpretation of Philippians 1 which deduces that the gospel of the rival party is impure; the rivals to whom Paul refers, he concludes, were orthodox.

Geisler, normally a careful expositor of the Word, is driven to his conclusion by preconceived ideas that cause him not merely to eisegete this text but to twist its meaning in order to prove his point. That the only text he uses to support his argument for cooperative evangelism is used incorrectly is a foreboding thought, given the ramifications of cooperative evangelism. If Philippians 1 is the best passage he can offer for support, then obviously his conclusions are unfounded and unscriptural. ☞

Terror! Since September 11, that very word has taken on a new meaning to Americans across the land, and fear grips the hearts of many. After all, America has been known as the “Land of the Free,” but surely “911” has taken on a new meaning in our society. While Americans of many political and ideological backgrounds attempt to cope with such fear, Bible-believers have an added burden as they witness continuing encroachments upon soul liberty. In fact, the liberal hermeneutical principles of the Supreme Court, with its convoluted logic, has so distorted the once honored First Amendment of our Constitution as to make it the enemy of religious freedom.

Bible-believers in America have been lulled to sleep by the freedom that, through the influence of our godly Baptist forefathers, has become our national trademark. However, we must understand that this short historical interlude of freedom has not been the norm in civilization. Prior to His ascension, our risen Lord warned His disciples, saying, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” It is apparent that if our Lord shall tarry, a resurgence of persecution can be expected in America even as it has been experienced in many parts of the world. Bible-believers in South America, Africa, and Asia have sustained injurious harassment throughout all these years of America’s religious liberty. We believe in the pretribulation coming of our Lord and Savior to receive His own unto Himself. But until that time, American saints are just as vulnerable to suffering as any other member of the Body of Christ. Surely our sovereign God is able to make His grace abound unto present-day saints, causing each one to experience His victory while enduring trials and suffering, even as He did in days gone by.

One is caused to remember and honor the sacred memory of Michael Sattler, Anabaptist hero of another day. After authoring the Schleithem Confession of Faith, the first such statement by the Anabaptists, Michael Sattler was captured by the authorities in Rottenburg, Germany. At his trial, as Sattler delivered his discourse of defense, the judges laughed him to scorn. The town clerk of Ensesheim said, “Oh you infamous, desperate villain and monk, you would have us engage with you in a discussion! The executioner will dispute with you, we think for a certainty.” Sattler was totally composed as he responded, “Let the will of God be done.”

He was found guilty, and his execution took place on May 25, 1527. Sattler had agreed to a signal that would be given to his congregation if the martyr’s death was bearable. He would raise the two forefingers on both hands and wave them in victory.

Sattler was taken from prison, and a piece of his tongue cut out. Hot tongs were applied to his body twice. He was dragged to the city gate, and again hot tongs tore pieces of flesh from his body five more times. He was then tied securely and elevated by a rope to a ladder. At the signal he was pushed into the flames. Despite his pain and his injured tongue, Sattler prayed aloud that God would grant him grace to be a faithful witness. As soon as the ropes were burned and his hands released, he waved in triumph and exclaimed, “Father, I commend my spirit into Thy hands.”

I never read this account without a feeling of inferiority. However, I am reminded that when asked if he had grace to die, D. L. Moody responded that he did not have dying grace at that time, rather he had living grace. But, said he, “When it comes time to die, I am assured that God will grant me dying grace.”

The early days in the colony of Massachusetts were difficult for our Baptist forefathers. Dr. John Clarke had established a Baptist church in Newport, Rhode Island. When William Witter came to Baptist convictions, he left the state church in Massachusetts and united with the Baptists in Newport. Witter traveled from Lynn, Massachusetts, as long as he was physically enabled, that he might attend the services. However, being elderly and losing his sight, the 80-mile trip became almost impossible.

Witter then requested that some of the men of the congregation journey to Lynn to visit him at his home. Taking two men with him, Dr. Clarke set out on the trek that would take his team two full days to accomplish. The man of God was accompanied by Obadiah Holmes and John Crandall, an elderly deacon. The men arrived at the home of Mr. Witter on a Saturday evening, but the authorities in Boston had been alerted to their presence in the jurisdiction of the colony. Being weary from the long journey, the men determined to spend the night with Mr. Witter, and then before leaving, they would encourage their brother with a private service of worship on the Lord’s Day.

Just as Pastor Clarke began reading his text, the door was thrown open, and for the heinous crime of conducting divine service without the consent of the state church in Massachusetts, the three men were arrested and hurried to a tavern where they were kept until they could be arraigned before the Bay Colony Court. Doubtless, Mr. Witter escaped the trial only

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

Charles Spurgeon

because of his age and infirmity.

The trial judge agreed with the prosecutor, John Cotton, that John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes, and John Crandall were worthy to be put to death, but he would let them off with a fine. If they did not pay the fine and immediately leave the territory of the colony, they should be well whipped. Friends at the Newport congregation readily raised the money for their release. John Crandall was fined only five pounds; Clarke was levied 20 pounds, but because Obadiah Holmes was

Bible-believers in America have been lulled to sleep by the freedom that, through the influence of our godly Baptist forefathers, has become our national trademark. However, we must understand that this short historical interlude of freedom has not been the norm in civilization.

found guilty previously of preaching in Massachusetts without a license, he was fined 30 pounds.

In the course of time, both Pastor Clarke and John Crandall were released, for their fines had been paid by others. Learning of their dismissal by the court, Obadiah Holmes refused to allow the payment of his fine, feeling that this would “constitute admission of wrong-doing.” The assigned day of whipping, September 5, 1651, finally arrived. Holmes was stripped to the waist and tied to the whipping post. According to his own testimony, the flogger used a whip with three hard leather lashes, and during the whipping he stopped three times to spit on his hand that he might gain a firmer grip of the whip. He then applied the whip with all his might. Each of the 30 strokes cut three gashes as it lacerated Holmes’ skin. Some of the crowd lifted their voices of praise and encouragement to the flogger!


But listen to Holmes’ own testimony: “As the man began to lay the strokes upon my back, I said to the people, though my flesh should fail, yet God will not fail: so it pleased the Lord to come in, and fill my heart and tongue as a vessel full, and with audible voice I broke forth, praying the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge, and telling the people I found He did not fail me, and therefore now I should trust Him forever Who failed me not: for in truth, as the strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God’s

presence as I never had before, and the outward pain was so removed from me, that I could well bear it, yea, and in a manner felt it not, although it was grievous.” Following the whipping, as soon as he could gain sufficient strength, Obadiah Holmes was able to testify to the judges with a smile on his face as he said, “You have beaten me as with roses.”

As we consider an uncertain future where possible trials, persecution, and suffering may exist, let us remember the 44 Baptist preachers who were incarcerated in Virginia just prior to the Revolutionary War when Virginia existed as a colony. Some of those old Baptist preachers revealed an indomitable spirit as they sang hymns of victory while being led to jail. Their spirits were invincible as they preached through the open grates of the prison cells. Many times they experienced the power of God with the salvation of the lost, and ultimately, Baptist churches were established as a result of their jail preaching.

While preaching through his prison cell in Accomack, Virginia, Elijah Baker was invited by a Christian traveler to preach in Delaware if he was ever freed. Of course, he could not immediately accept the invitation, and he continued to preach from his grated jail window. The jail keeper was angered by Baker’s Christ-exalting sermons, and thus Elijah Baker was consigned to a privately owned warship. Feeling he now had a captive audience, the man of God began preaching to the crew. The captain of the ship had been given orders that Baker was not to be released in the colony of Virginia, but he could not abide the man of God. He transferred Baker to a second ship, where he continued preaching. But when the wind subsided, the captain blamed Baker, and he was delivered to a third boat. The new crew presented another opportunity, and Baker went on preaching. When the third captain became incensed, the Baptist preacher was finally delivered on shore. Discovering that he had been landed in Delaware, Elijah Baker looked up his layman admirer, and again he began preaching the gospel. In the course of time, a number of Baptist churches were established in Delaware. What Satan had meant as a trial for the man of God was used of our Lord for the furtherance of the gospel!

And let us not forget the Baptist preachers in Missouri who were imprisoned for refusing to sign the “Loyalty Oath” at the time of the Civil War. William Vardemann was arrested by federal authorities “without a single act against the government or any individual in it, and incarcerated in the Gratiot Street Prison in St. Louis” on April 23, 1863. Rather than despairing, Vardemann preached 50 gospel sermons during his 60 days of imprisonment.

These our brethren have found God’s grace to be sufficient through every possible distress. He who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever is able to make all grace abound toward His own today. May we rest in that sweet assurance as we face an unsettled future. 

Dr. David L. Cummins is Deputation Director of Baptist World Mission.



Overpopulation and

In Genesis 1:28, God commands Adam and Eve to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth.” Some critics of the Bible object to this verse, and their criticism amounts to this: “If God is supposedly all-seeing and all-knowing, why would He tell the human race to keep multiplying without end? Wouldn’t He have foreseen that, by the beginning of the 21st century, the world would be overcrowded and in danger of mass starvation?”

This objection is based on the widely held belief that the rapid increase of the human population is destined to overwhelm the earth, and a loving God would never want such a thing to occur. It is also a frequent argument to justify the abortion holocaust, since unwanted babies, it is maintained, should not be brought into an overcrowded world whose resources are running out.

The fatal flaw in this argument is the very belief in a never-ending population explosion in the first place. However, despite popular assertions of a burgeoning population with no end in sight, population experts now know that this frightening scenario is not grounded in reality. Population growth is actually beginning to taper off, according to demographer Wolfgang Lutz of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, who has stated that claims of overpopulation have been unscientific and alarmist: “International agencies put together population projections that were rather mechanistic and did not include too many scientists. A small in-house group defined what assumptions were going to be made.”¹

To refute claims of overpopulation, Dr. Lutz assembled a team of 20 experts in mortality, fertility, and migration, the three most important factors in human population. The panel found that, in the most likely event, earth’s population will peak at 10.6 billion in the last half of the 21st century and then drop off. Also, the scientists discovered that fertility rates are actually falling, even in countries where

these rates have usually been high. If this trend continues, they noted, fertility rates will eventually fall to 1.7 children per woman. This is below what is known as “replacement level,” which will result in a shrinking population.²

In agreement with Dr. Lutz is Joel E. Cohen, professor of populations at Rockefeller University and co-recipient of the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement in 1999. Dr. Cohen, who also heads the Laboratory of Populations at Rockefeller and Columbia Universities, has discovered that, since 1965, the world’s population growth rate has dropped by one-third. The absolute increase in population peaked in 1990; since then, the absolute annual increase has been dropping. Dr. Cohen wrote in *Harvard Magazine*: “The population growth rate is dropping so rapidly that some demographers think there is a better-than-even chance that the world’s population will never double again from the current 6 billion people. Absolute population growth is very likely to slow further, and perhaps even to end.”³

Also in agreement is MacArthur Foundation “genius grant” recipient William Clark of Harvard, an authority on the environment. At a population symposium held at Columbia University in 1999, Dr. Clark told his listeners, “For your children, each passing year will add fewer people than it did the year before. That is a statement that could not have been made from this podium any other time in the last 1,000 years.”⁴ He also remarked, “The world population seems unlikely to double again, a statement that could not have been made at any other time in the last 1,000 years.”⁵ According to the *Boston Globe*, which reported Dr. Clark’s statements, many demographers believe that the earth’s population will level off by the year 2100.⁶

Moreover, believing that a burgeoning population will outrace its ability to feed itself is a mistake. The oversimplified picture is that, if population continues to increase, we will soon run out of farm-

God's Command to Multiply

Stephen Caesar

land on this finite planet. The ever-expanding human race will starve to death when there is no new land left to cultivate. This cultivation of new land is known as *extensive* farming. However, what critics have failed to grasp is that *intensive* farming—increasing the per-acre yield of already-cultivated farmland—is actually outpacing population growth. In other words, the agricultural output of every acre of farmland that *already exists* is outstripping the increase in the earth's population.

The facts bear this out, as the *Boston Globe* reported: "Farm productivity has skyrocketed since 1950, requiring less land to feed more people. As a result, tens of thousands of acres of abandoned cropland have grown back."⁷ Jesse Ausubel of Rockefeller University similarly noted: "From one hectare in 1900, a US farmer could provide enough for three people. Now [he] can supply 80 people with a single hectare . . . Knowledge, not more cropland, now grows productivity."⁸ T. R. Reid, a correspondent for the *Washington Post* and National Public Radio, similarly noted that "human production on the farm has done a superb job of keeping up with

human consumption at the table."⁹ He went on to observe:

Thirty years ago, according to the United Nations, the global food supply represented 2,360 calories per person per day. By the mid-1990s total food supply had increased to 2,740 calories per person per day. Supply will continue to grow faster than population at least through 2010, the UN predicts.

The big jump in population in the second half of this century has created much greater demand for food. But supply has increased even faster than demand, and the price of staple foods has fallen dramatically. Over the past 40 years the price of wheat, in constant dollars, has declined by 61 percent; the price of corn has dropped 58 percent.¹⁰

This fact contradicts the dire predictions of economist Thomas Malthus, who warned in 1798, "The power of population is infinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man." More recently, environmentalist Paul Ehrlich claimed that

humanity was on the verge of "famines of unbelievable proportions." In 1976, he predicted that when earth's population reached 6 billion (which it has already done), humanity's ability to feed itself would be "totally impossible."¹¹ Reid commented on how incorrect both of these men were, noting that "improvements in agriculture have kept food supplies high enough to meet the growing world demand. What Malthus called 'the power of population' has been matched and exceeded by the power of innovation. Global food production today is sufficient to provide everyone on Earth [with] an adequate diet."¹²

The driving force behind this explosion in intensive rather than extensive farming has been the private sector. America is the planet's breadbasket largely because its farms are privately owned and operated, and free competition among these farms induces each farmer to produce more food per already-cultivated acre (intensive farming) or go out of business. For example, the owner of a private farm in Colorado told Reid, "The only way you can stay in business as a farmer is to boost yield and reduce your costs." He then went on to

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state that when his farm was established 50 years ago, a given acre yielded 200 50-lb. sacks of onions. Now, if he does not come up with 800 sacks per acre, he will be put out of business.¹³

Conversely, collectivized or socialized agriculture has been a gargantuan failure. Reid used the example of Communist China: "During Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s [when agriculture was forcibly collectivized], China was ravaged by famines that killed tens of millions and reduced average calorie intake far below the recommended level. Today, with a market-oriented economy that has produced the world's highest growth rates, some Chinese have a different food problem [obesity]."¹⁴

This must be why the Bible is so adamant about maintaining the private ownership of farmland. Deuteronomy 19:14 forbids the removal of a person's landmark (boundary stone), thus forbidding the theft of his farmland. Micah 4:4 predicts that, after God has set up His kingdom, every man "shall sit . . . under his [own] vine and under his [own] fig tree." In Matthew 20:15, Jesus quotes a private farmer as being able to do whatever he wants with his own money, thus reaffirming the sanctity of private agricultural enterprise.

It is also interesting to note that the information discussed here has come from university professors and mainstream media outlets, not from conservative political or religious groups bent on pushing a certain agenda. God's command to multiply is not a recipe for planet-wide suffering and starvation, as critics suggest. The answer to the problem of keeping food production apace with human multiplication is found in the very Book that commands us to multiply in the first place: the Bible holds sacrosanct the private ownership of the means of producing food. God, in His infinite wisdom and perfect foreknowledge, ordained this particular economic system so that we may safely and confidently obey His command to go forth and multiply without fear of ever running out of food.

Stephen Caesar is currently completing his master's degree in anthropology/archaeology at Harvard University. He is the author of the e-book *The Bible Encounters Modern Science*, available at www.1stbooks.com.

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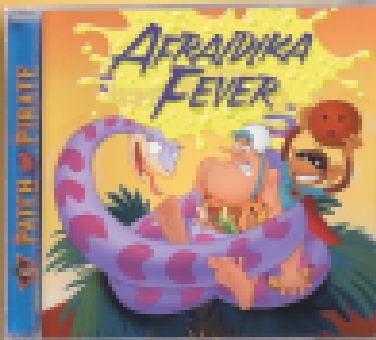
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Spring is a season that says it with flowers. —Unknown

Revival and the exclusive love of comfortable truths are bitter enemies. —Richard Owen Roberts

The most delightful saint is the one who has been chastened through great sorrows. —Oswald Chambers

The most influential of all educational factors is the conversation in a child's home. —William Temple

Spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil. —Reginald Heber

One woman was so co-dependent that when she had a near-death experience, someone else's life passed before her eyes. —Anonymous

The pursuit of happiness is a most ridiculous phrase: if you pursue happiness, you'll never find it. —C. P. Snow

Those that are too merry when pleased are commonly too angry when crossed. —Philip Henry

There is a God. You're not Him. —Gary K. Odle

Football combines the worst elements of society: violence and committee meetings. —Houston Post

The devil can cite Scriptures for his purpose. —William Shakespeare

If you are afraid of being lonely, don't try to be right. —Jules Renard

A narrow mind and a wide mouth usually go together. —Unknown

Some of us have to over-do it because there are so many professing Christians who under-do it. —Bob Jones Jr.

Live near to God and so all things will appear to you little in comparison with eternal realities. —Robert M. McCheyne

Paul's preaching usually ended in a riot or in a revival. —Orin Philip Gifford

He who comes up to his own idea of greatness must always have had a very low standard of it in his mind. —William Hazlitt

If you think too much about being re-elected, it is very difficult to be worth re-electing. —Woodrow Wilson

A government that is big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take it all away. —Barry Goldwater

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in times of prosperity would have lain dormant. —Horace

People only leave (Washington) by way of the box—ballot or coffin. —Claiborne Pell

What the country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds. —Will Rogers

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing. —Theodore Roosevelt

Iron chains are nothing compared to the shackles made of red tape. —Paul Greenberg

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. —Sir Winston Churchill

What is the use of being elected or re-elected unless you stand for something? —Grover Cleveland

The nearest approach to immortality on earth is a government bureau. —James F. Byrnes



"... THIS NEW SECRETARY WE HIRED THOUGHT WE HAD A COMPUTER..."

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

The American Dream

Lorraine F. Parry

To help more Americans own their own homes, the article said, would help them to fulfill the "American Dream." This well-known, time-honored term was by no means new to me, so why was it that in the days and weeks to come I could not get it out of my mind? Perhaps it was the way it was defined that made that phrase stick with me. After all, I felt that I had already fulfilled the American Dream, though I have never owned my own home. In time, I began to search for a more appropriate meaning for this term.

Perhaps, to some, owning their own home and providing a comfortable life for their family would constitute attainment of the American Dream. Others, no doubt, would go beyond that and say that the amassing of great wealth so that they could have anything they might ever want or need would fulfill that dream. Still others, I am sure, would feel that achieving great success and prestige, "climbing to the top of the ladder," would fulfill their dream. However, none of these accomplishments struck me as a satisfactory definition of the term.

The more I thought about it, the only definition that seemed adequate was found in one word: freedom. Reconsidering the matter from that angle, I began to realize that it was not an original definition. Was it not the dream of freedom that compelled the Pilgrim fathers to risk their very lives, abandoning their former homeland and setting out on that vast expanse of water to an unknown destination and uncertain future? While they did not find comfort, wealth, or prestige, they did realize the fulfillment of their dream.

Most Americans have never left the shores of this "sweet land of liberty" and know no other way of life than their own. For them, taking freedom for granted is easy, and many do not realize how extensively it affects every aspect of their lives. The freedoms that we enjoy help to shape our very personalities. Travelers who visit nations with tyrannical leaders see first-hand that the citizens of those countries have personalities strikingly different from those of free peoples. Certainly, American "liberty and justice" have been tainted in recent years, but we can still expect that "the wrong shall fail, the right prevail."

One need only spend some time in another land with a different culture to realize what a blessing freedom really is. For instance, the freedom to worship and serve our God as He directs is one that we Christians have taken for granted for far too long. Not only do we need to do more to preserve this freedom, we need to be more consistent in thanking God for it. As other

examples, education and employment are available to all. We travel, or even move entire households, "from sea to shining sea" without pausing to reflect that many countries are smaller than many of our states. However much freedom their citizens may enjoy, the borders of such countries restrict their movements unless they meet the requirements of international travel. The illustrations of our liberties are limitless.

As I pondered this subject more, however, I realized that many people in our "land of the free" may own a comfortable home or may be wealthy and prestigious, but are not really free. Oh, they believe that they are free and would be quick to argue the point. As the religious leaders of Jesus' day argued their case before Him, our compatriots, too, would claim that they "were never in bondage to any man" (John 8:33). Nonetheless, the truth remains, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Without God's Son, they are still in bondage to sin. Let us do everything possible to get this truth to them that they may meet the Author of liberty and may enjoy true freedom.

This truth has an even wider application, as we can see that our physical circumstances do not produce liberty and freedom. The Israelites of Christ's day were under the domination of Rome. Those who followed the One who was "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) discovered true freedom despite their earthly circumstances. So it has been through the centuries that followed. Those who know the truth have been free indeed, and we need to do everything within our power to preserve our freedoms and to propagate the truth.

Here in America, we have the opportunity to enjoy both types of freedom. We are undoubtedly blessed of God, but we must not take these blessings for granted. The price of freedom is indeed eternal vigilance. We must not tire of the task nor slack in our responsibilities. We must stand for that which is right and good even in the face of opposition. We must be willing to speak up against evil and to encourage righteousness, not only in our homes, but in our churches, our communities, and our nation. We cannot salve our consciences with the thought that what others do is their own business, because eventually their actions will affect our lives whether we like it or not. Let us stand together, work together, and move forward together in the cause of Christ, and "from every mountainside let freedom ring."

Lorraine F. Parry serves with her husband, Frank, on the mission field of Panama.

The Real Enemy

Jack Shuler

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15)

The scene at Shechem was not peculiar to Joshua's day. It was the enactment of a drama as old as the human race and as young as today. It was the age-old story of human choice, whose principal characters are always the same—Almighty God, His prophet, and the people. Yet had men eyes to probe the skies they might have beheld angelic hosts poised to watch on every battlement of heaven, so momentous is the significance of man's reaction to God's final warnings.

As today God's Word is God's voice, so in the days of Joshua did the prophet stand between God and the people to administer the ultimatums of heaven. It was the voice of the Almighty that day thundering across the summits and down the valleys; and when God speaks it always settles the question. Adam knew that as he beheld his nakedness and shame in Paradise lost. Pharaoh knew that as the Egyptians mourned their dead at midnight. King Saul knew that as he buried his sword in his wretched breast on the battlefield at Gilboa. "Choose you this day!" It was final then. It is final now.

Neglect is the most dastardly of all the enemies of mankind because of its unpretentious demeanor. It does not scowl menacingly or brandish a flaming sword. It wears a disarming smile. Yet its dagger drips with the blood of far more victims than does that of open infidelity and rebellion against God. It stabbed Pilate and damned his soul. Its sharp blade hewed down the mighty Felix and the august Agrippa. It was chief executioner in the wilderness as Moses implored the Israelites to look to the brazen serpent and live. Its vanquished lie sprawled grotesquely upon every page of history from the Egyptian Passover to the last Sunday service in your local church.

In a recent campaign I stood in a hotel lobby and heard a man curse God and defy Him openly. Such blatant arrogance shocks the most callous among us. Yet the man with burning oaths upon his unregenerate lips is not in a worse plight than he who says, "Tomorrow!" Some souls steam full speed over the precipice, whereas others simply drift to their doom. The tides of time will bring them to the same place. Indecision is not a vote for God, and Christ's words are decisive: "He that is not with me is against me."

Neglect never won a battle, or garnered a laurel, or erected a monument to fame. It doesn't plant, so it cannot reap. It doesn't attempt, so it cannot gain. It doesn't assail, so it cannot win. If Noah had waited to build the ark of safety, he would have perished in the flood. If Lot had hesitated to obey the angel's command to flee the gates of Sodom, he would have been consumed in the fires of destruction.

If the devil can get a man to postpone salvation, he is as sure of that man's soul as though the grave were already occupied and the judgment past. The human soul undergoes a hardening process as the years add themselves to a man, and woe to that one who awakes too late to the frightful fact that salvation's day is forever past and opportunity lies mutilated and dead in some frightful sepulcher. There is a tremendous note of urgency in the prophet's challenge, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found." For too many it shall become the forerunner of the fateful assize, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Open defiance toward God and willful rejection of His terms of grace are not essential to man's damnation. Judas didn't bring down the lash on the naked back of Jesus: a Roman soldier did that. Judas didn't plait the crown of thorns that tore an ugly gash in His regal brow; the palace guards did that. Judas didn't nail Jesus to the Cross; other Jews did that. But the same hell that contains those whose spittle ran upon Christ's face contains Judas. He took the losing course. He chose merely to neglect the golden day of opportunity, and through that neglect forfeited eternal life.

How does God's warning read in Hebrews 2:3? "How shall we escape, if we . . ." Destroy the Bible? No! "How shall we escape, if we . . ." Demolish the church? No! "How shall we escape, if we . . ." Take up stones to slay the preacher? No! Hear God's reason for man's final and absolute destruction, and flee from its terrible implications: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" That question has no answer!

To neglect salvation means doom, death, hell. There is no escape.

Jack Shuler passed away at age 45 in 1963, having served his Lord in city-wide evangelism for 25 years. He was the brother of evangelist Phil Shuler, who may be reached at philshuler@juno.com.

Dr. Ehud's E-mail

OCCASIONAL CONVERSATIONS OVERHEARD ONLINE

Hude: "Hey, Ehud, I got that prescription to Frontline. Seen your column. Read the mail. You musta stirred up a ruckus on that textile controversy."

Ehud: "It ain't about textiles, Hude. It's . . . Oh, never mind. How'd you like the magazine?"

Hude: "It was right nice. Purty. I hear they gonna do one that's patriotic."

Ehud: "Good idear. Did you read the one ya got?"

Hude: "Well, I'm working on it. Can I ask ya a question?"

Ehud: "Why shore, Hude."

Hude: "Now, I 'preciate the prescription and all, but are you a real doctor, Ehud?"

Ehud: "Well, sort of. I got me an ornery doctorate."

Hude: "Now, that ain't no surprise. Can you get me one?"

Ehud: "Naw, Hude, it don't work that way. Feller give it to me had one hisself. I heered somethin' about 'second degree separation' or other. I figger a feller with an ornery doctorate can only give one to one other feller, but that feller has to stop it right there. I think that's the way it works."

Hude: "I reckon that's fair. I heered Lester Roloff on the radio years ago talking about his'n. Said it was sorta like puttin' whip cream on an onion."

Ehud: "So, you really think I done stirred up a ruckus?"

Hude: "Well, you got some folks riled."

Ehud: "Why do you reckon they got riled?"

Hude: "I think they think you think they don't think much."

Ehud: "Well, sometimes I think them real doctors think I don't think much."

Hude: "You better watch it, Ehud, some of them real doctors write for Frontline, don't they?"

Ehud: "They do. Some of them fellers are real sharp, too. That's why some of these here conterversies don't make much sense to me."

Hude: "What do ya mean, Ehud?"

Ehud: "Well, I mean two fellers that knows that much about some of this stuff ought to be able to talk polite and hep the rest of us, seems to me."

Hude: "What do you figger's the reason they don't?"

Ehud: "Well, I figger it's like ol' Festus told Paul, ya know, 'Much larning done made 'em mad.'"

Hude: "That what made 'em mad at you?"

Ehud: "Naw, they mad at me cause they think I think they ain't very smart."

Hude: "Well do ya?"

Ehud: "I think a feller who is worried that other folks thinks they don't think too good is wasting a lot of good thinkin' time."

Hude: "Well, I think they's way too much thinkin' goin' on right now. Ya got me all swimmy headed, Ehud."

Ehud: "You keep readin' that Frontline,

Hude. That'll keep ya straight. Ya might even want to join up with the FBF."

Hude: "You a member, Ehud?"

Ehud: "Sort of, Hude. I'm a ornery member."

Hude: "That figgers. They wouldn't let a hillbilly like you join up for real."

Ehud: "Why Hude, the hillbillies is runnin' the FBF. One of 'em is from West Virginny. Another one's a briarhopper from Ol' Kentucky."

Hude: "Sounds like my crowd, Ehud."

Ehud: "Mine too, Hude."

Hude: "Why do ya reckon some folks says the FBF boys is gettin' soft? Sounds like some fine fellers from what I see in that Frontline."

Ehud: "Well, I think some folks are just cantankerous and other folks are just loyal to them that's cantankerous. That's usually the way it is."

Hude: "Anybody cantankerous in the FBF?"

Ehud: "I'm in it, ain't I?"

Hude: "If being in it ornery counts, I reckon you are."

Ehud: "Well, they say ornery is as real as the real thing, so I reckon I am."

Hude: "Well if they'll take you maybe they'll take me. Besides, if I get riled I can't get out unless I get in first. Now that I got me a prescription to Frontline, I can cancel it if it makes me mad, right?"

Ehud: "Now yer thinkin', Hude. You keep it up and you'll get a ornery degree yet."

As a collector of trade tariffs in the seaside town of Capernaum, Matthew was an agent of the Roman government and, as such, a reminder of Jewish subjugation to Rome. Consequently, many of his fellow Jews viewed him as a traitor at the bottom of the list of hated individuals (ranked with prostitutes, loan sharks, gamblers, bandits, and cattle thieves). Men of his profession were called “licensed robbers” and “beasts in human shape” (Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels*, 142–143).

Here was an unlikely candidate to pen what would become the transitional introduction from the Old Testament to the New. All three Synoptic Gospels, however, record his calling and conversion, and the banquet he hosted to introduce as many of his former associates as possible to the Lord. Luke 5:27–32 adds that Matthew “left everything” to become the Lord’s disciple. That’s the kind of person the Lord can use greatly, regardless of his past.

Jewish Orientation

The Gospels form the introduction of Jesus the Christ to the world. Matthew is the doorway, the introduction to that introduction of Christ as the Fulfiller of all that was revealed and anticipated in the OT. That Matthew is God’s providentially intended transition from the OT to the NT is evident from a number of literary and thematic features that are unique to this Gospel.

- Matthew opens with a **genealogy** rooting Christ back into the royal and racial pedigree of the Jewish nation.
- Matthew makes 17 references to **David** (all other gospels combined mentioned David only 21 times), including 8 uses of the significant Messianic title **Son of David** (only used 5 times in all other Gospels combined).
- Matthew, of all the Gospel writers, most frequently includes **OT quotations** (51 times; all other Gospels combined quote the OT directly only 66 times).
- Matthew repeatedly uses a “**fulfillment formula**” (12 times) throughout his Gospel to highlight when certain events explicitly fulfilled specific OT Scripture (“that it might be [or, and it was] fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet”—1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54–56; 27:9).
- Matthew also employs a “**query formula**” 6 times (“Have ye never read . . . ?”) to underscore the Jews’ ignorance of spiritual truth despite their familiarity with the Scripture itself (12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31).
- Matthew contains a strong focus on the **Kingdom** theme of the ministry of Christ—a concept that had close and very obvious ties to the OT anticipation of Messiah. Besides his use of the terms “king” and “kingdom” (70 times; cf. Mark 25 times; Luke 48 times; John 21 times), the Kingdom is a major topic in two of

MATTHEW: INTRODUCING

Matthew’s major discourses—the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5–7) and the Parabolic Discourse (Mt. 13).

Universal Orientation

Given these highly Jewish-oriented devices and motifs, it seems clear that the Jews were Matthew’s primary, initial target audience. A strong Jewish flavor permeates Matthew’s Gospel. At the same time, a number of factors indicate that the value and divine intent of Matthew’s Gospel extends beyond that original Jewish target audience to the world and the Church at large in all ages:

- Matthew is the only Gospel to record the visit and obeisance of the Gentile magi shortly after the birth of Christ (2:1ff.). Interestingly, these Gentiles are the first to attach the title “King of the Jews” to Jesus.
- Matthew is the only Gospel to attach prophetic significance to a Gentile orientation to Jesus’ ministry (4:12–16; note “Galilee of the Gentiles [or, nations—“a foreshadowing of the commission to ‘all nations’” (Carson)]”).
- Matthew is the only Gospel that records Jesus’ use of the term “church” (16:18; 18:17) in apparent anticipation of future revelation.
- Matthew records the longest version of the eschatological Olivet Discourse (24–25) and is the only one to include the connection between the coming of Christ and His reign over all the nations (25:31–46).
- Matthew is the only Gospel to include Jesus’ express declaration of universal authority (28:18).

Structure

Many people assume that the Gospels record events in chronological order. While that is Luke’s express aim, and Mark generally follows a chronological sequence, Matthew’s Gospel is markedly different by design. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Matthew purposefully selected and arranged his material not chronologically, but thematically. Matthew often intentionally ignores chronological sequence and, instead, selects and groups together certain events that support a particular theme he wishes to emphasize at various points in the structure of his Gospel.

Matthew’s is a remarkable and brilliantly conceived structure, consistently alternating between narrative and discourse. He records 5 major discourses (chapters 5–7, 10, 13, 18, 24–25). We are not left to guess at this structure. The end of each discourse is clearly marked by another formula, “when Jesus had ended these sayings/commands/parables” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), which simultaneously introduces the next narrative section. The structure of Matthew, then, looks like this:

GOD'S KING TO THE WORLD

- 1–4—*Narrative* (birth and preparation)
- 5–7—**Discourse** (Sermon on the Mount)
- 8–9—*Narrative* (various miracles)
- 10—**Discourse** (Missionary Discourse)
- 11–12—*Narrative* (controversies with the Jews)
- 13—**Discourse** (Parabolic Kingdom Discourse)
- 14–17—*Narrative* (ministry in Galilee)
- 18—**Discourse** (Ecclesiological Discourse)
- 19–23—*Narrative* (ministry in Judea)
- 24–25—**Discourse** (Olivet Discourse)
- 26–28—*Narrative* (passion and resurrection)

Matthew 11–12 marks the hinge on which the book pivots. At this point there is a major shift in the nature and receptivity of His ministry, as the official Jewish response to Jesus hardens into a wall of resistance.

Thematic Emphasis: The King's Authority

Matthew presents Jesus as King. A king possesses absolute authority. Jesus was no different. Throughout his presentation Matthew carefully weaves assertions of Jesus' absolute authority. For example, let's zoom in for a moment on an extended segment of Matthew's Gospel to see how this authority theme is developed.

- 5–7—**Discourse**: sermon on the mount
Key point: *Jesus' authority asserted*. Note, for instance, the recurring phrase "But I say unto you" (6 times), Jesus' independently declarative tone throughout the discourse, and the crowd's clear impression of his authority (7:29).
- 8–9—*Narrative*: miraculous ministry in Galilee
Key point: *Jesus' authority demonstrated*. Matthew's record of Jesus' spiritually revolutionary and authoritative teaching (5–7) is immediately followed by a record of Jesus' spiritually revolutionary and authoritative power over every realm of danger to man: disease, disaster, demons, death, and last but *not* least, sin. Thus, His authoritative words (5–7) are backed up by His authoritative works (8–9). Matthew selects and topically (not chronologically) arranges ten miracles to demonstrate emphatically Jesus' authority. Note the emphasis on Jesus' authority and the importance of faith in and submission to that authority (8:8–9, 10, 13, 16, 26, 27, 31–32; 9:2, 6, 8, 22, 28, 29, 33).
- 10—**Discourse**: missionary charge to disciples
Key point: *Jesus' authority invested* in the disciples (the word "power" in 10:1 is "authority" [*exousia*]). Things appear optimistic. Several statements up to this point have hinted at Jesus' unmixed and growing popularity and impact (4:23–25; 7:28–29; 8:1, 16; 9:8, 26, 31, 33, 35). But the next section introduces a major shift.
- 11–12—*Narrative*: inception of rejection
Key point: *Jesus' authority challenged* (note 11:27, 12:8, 28

/12:2, 10, 14, 24, 38). Events recorded in this narrative segment include Jesus' rebuke to Jews for rejecting both John and Jesus (11:16–19), His woe to unrepentant cities (11:20–24), Sabbath controversies (12:1–8, 9–14), the Beelzebul controversy (12:22–32), the Jews' demand for a sign (12:38–42), and the parable of unclean spirit (12:43–45). This opposition/rejection explains and sets the stage for the next discourse section.

■ 13—**Discourse**: kingdom parables

Key point: *Jesus' authority exercised*. These parables form Jesus' response to opposition and rejection. Parables are normally illustrations designed to shed light. These parables had the deliberately opposite effect of eliciting confusion in those who were rejecting Jesus' authority. Christ's response to the willful and repeated rejection of truth is *concealment* of truth, in parabolic form (13:10–17). "Willful hardness is commonly punished with judicial hardness. If men shut their eyes against the light, it is just with God to close their eyes. Let us dread this as the sorest judgment a man can be under this side of hell" (Matthew Henry).

Finally, when one observes the broad sweep of Matthew's overall construction, a remarkable structural point has been made. Matthew 1 begins by establishing Jesus' Authority as King of the Jews (by human right of lineage). Matthew 28 ends by establishing Jesus' Authority as King of the Universe (by divine right of appointment—"all authority is given to me in heaven and in earth," 28:18ff.). Everything in between demonstrates the reality and recognition of His innate authority.

Conclusion

In his superb overview of NT revelation, *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*, T. D. Bernard observes,

The record of St. Matthew, ever recognized as the Hebrew Gospel, is the true commencement of the New Testament, showing how it grows out of the Old, and presenting the manifestation of the Son of God not as a detached phenomenon, but as the predestined completion of the long course of historic dispensations. . . . It founds itself on the ideas of the old covenant. It refers at every step . . . to the former Scriptures, noting how that was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets. It is a history of fulfillment, presenting the Lord as the fulfiller of all righteousness, the fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets. . . . It sets him forth as a King and Lawgiver [positions of authority] in that kingdom of heaven for which a birthplace and a home had been prepared in Israel. . . .

Thankful for the Moments

Steve Skaggs

For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (James 4:14).

Tonight I held my son Jason for a few minutes after giving him his bedtime bottle. He wasn't asleep yet, and I watched his tiny little hand explore, fingers extended, over the back of my hand. His hand is tiny; mine, large. His hand is smooth; mine, rough. His hand is chubby; mine, hard. And yet very little time really separates our two hands—a mere 36 years, less than the wink of an eye, if we use God's timetable.

I wonder if the 36 years since I was born have gone as quickly for my father as they have gone for me. I find it astonishing to think that the number of years I spent from birth to high school graduation is the same as the number of years I have spent from high school until now. The first 18 seemed to take so long! The last 18, encompassing college and commencement, courtship and marriage, childbirth and career, have blurred past me.

My wife Cindy and I have a collection of photo galleries documenting our life together, starting with snapshots of us as two college kids peeking at each other from behind a tree. Currently these albums run up through our adoption of Jason several months ago and his first Christmas.

We also have taken enough home videos since the birth of Matthew, our oldest, to bore even the most adoring grandparent. And yet we have to confess that we don't spend much time looking at the snapshots or watching the videos. Something about watching a chubby little boy squealing as he runs through the sprinkler in his diaper brings a lump to your throat when you see him now, legs sprawled across the arms of an easy chair, grinning at his childish image.

God has given us these four—three boys and a girl—as a gift, a trust, and we are honored that He has blessed us this way. I think the sadness actually is a type of grief, because somehow that little boy in the sprinkler is gone and can never return to us. We are thankful for the boy who sprawls in the chair, but at the same time we miss the little child he used to be.

Tonight I vowed to try harder to savor each moment with each child right now. Not only is each child God's special gift, but each moment with that child is His gift, too. Today's moment may bring joy because of some small victory; tomorrow's may bring sorrow or frustration because of some failure on a child's part—or on mine. But how much better to thank God for the gifts He is giving *right now* and look to the future with no regrets!

I'm thankful for those few moments when Jason's little hand played over the back of mine. I'm thankful for Jason, who is seven-months-and-six-days old. And I'll be thankful again tomorrow when he's seven-months-and-seven-days old.

Steve Skaggs supervises the Secondary Authors Department at Bob Jones University Press. Since the writing of this article, the Lord has blessed the Skaggs family with a fifth child.

Southern Baptist Journal Publishes Sexually Explicit Issue

The quarterly Southern Baptist journal, *Review & Expositor*, recently published a "Sexuality and the Church" edition. The lead article, by Leslie Kendrick Townsend of Louisville, Kentucky, used graphic sexual terminology. The issue included a sermon calling for a "feminist liberationist" revision of Ephesians 5. Other articles opposed voicing "the 'right' response" on homosexuality and promoted church sex education programs that teach contraception as well as abstinence. (Baptist Press, 12/12/2001)

Vermont Supreme Court Upholds "Civil Unions"

Vermont's Supreme Court has rejected a challenge to the civil unions law granting homosexual couples many of the rights and benefits of marriage, the Associated Press reported. In a December 26 order signed by all five justices, the court turned aside claims brought by taxpayers, legislators, and town clerks. (Baptist Press, 1/4/2002)

Georgia Defense of Marriage Act Upheld

The Georgia Court of Appeals upheld preeminence of the Georgia Defense of Marriage Act,

limiting marriage to one man and one woman, and ruling that a Vermont civil union is not the equivalent of a traditional marriage regardless of other states' interpretation. The Georgia court ruled unanimously, saying, "even if Vermont had purported to legalize same-sex marriages, such would not be recognized in Georgia. . . . [The Defense of Marriage Act] clearly states that it is the public policy of the state of Georgia to recognize the union only of a man and a woman. Marriages between persons of the same sex are prohibited in this state." (*The Federalist*, 2/1/2002)

No Grace at VMI

A U. S. District judge tossed out student-led nondenominational prayers of grace at the Virginia Military Institute, ending a 50-year-old tradition at the academy. Family Research Council's Jan LaRue objected, "We have absolutely no evidence that the intent of the framers of the First Amendment or any other part of the Constitution was to prohibit or obliterate these practices. . . . I don't think the ACLU's got a prayer [of succeeding on appeal]." (*The Federalist*, 2/1/2002)

State Farm Decides Against Domestic Partner Benefits . . .

After polling employees, State Farm Insurance Company has decided to

abstain from offering domestic partner benefits to homosexual employees, much to the approval of their national network of community-based agents. A plan to offer domestic partner benefits to homosexual employees sparked a massive outcry from policy-holders threatening to cancel their insurance if the plan succeeded. AFA President Don Wildmon said local agents were bombarded with calls, while State Farm's national office heard from hundreds, if not thousands of long-time customers. (*AFA Action Alert*, 12/11/2001)

. . . While Firestone Caves

In a news release, company spokesman Michael Fluck said Firestone is "extremely pleased" to include homosexuals, bisexuals, lesbians, and transgenders in a targeted marketing effort. Fluck said Bridgestone-Firestone will direct company profits to sponsor exclusive agreements with Triangle Television Network and major homosexual magazines, such as *Out*, *Genre*, *Curve*, and *The Advocate*. In addition, Bridgestone-Firestone will sponsor homosexual web sites. (*AFA Action Alert*, 12/13/2001)

AIDS Research Overfunded

AIDS research spending mushroomed after the Clinton administration granted the sexually trans-

mitted disease "protected" status, while AIDS deaths were falling after 1995 and were always lower than deaths related to heart disease and breast and prostate cancer. "Since Sept. 11, we've had a new concern in this country called bioterrorism. And looking at the [Health and Human Services Department] budget, the AIDS and sexually transmitted disease [part] has over a billion dollars in it," noted Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Michigan). "But in bioterrorism, we have only about 18, 17 percent of that budget, like \$180 million." The National Institutes of Health spends some \$200 million a year for AIDS vaccine research alone, while the U.S. is hard-pressed for vaccines to protect more than 280 million adults and children against deadly anthrax and smallpox outbreaks from potential terrorist attacks. "Since I've become president, we're spending 10 times as much per fatality on people with AIDS as people with breast cancer or prostate cancer," boasted President Clinton in 1997. (*The Federalist*, 11/30/2001)

Those Dangerous Toy Soldiers

In North Carolina, Kids Gym Schoolhouse owner Laura Johnson received rating demerits from the Early Childhood Environmental Rating System after an evaluator found nine "violent" toys—little green plastic

soldiers. "If stereotyping or violence is shown with regard to any group, then credit cannot be given," wrote evaluator Katie Haselden. Her supervisor, Anna Carter, supervisor of North Carolina's Division of Child Development's Policy and Program, agreed: "[Toy soldiers] don't enrich the environment and can be potentially dangerous if children use them to act out violent themes. They'd be more likely to use the toy soldiers to hurt the other army men or to shoot the stuffed animals." (*The Federalist*, 11/30/2001)

University Courses on 9/11

"Terrorism and Sexuality," a course at California State University at Hayward, describes wars as a form of "eroticism" for those "patriarchs" who fight them. Professor Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, formerly active with domestic terror groups Students for a Democratic Society and the Weather Underground, says, "I have no obligation to be loyal to any government that I don't feel is just—free speech is free speech." The course description for UCLA's "Terrorism and the Politics of Knowledge" says the class reviews the U.S. "record of imperialistic adventurism." (*The Federalist*, 2/13/2002)

New Politically Correct NIV

Five years ago the International Bible Society (IBS) and Zondervan Publishing House denied that they had plans to publish a gender-neutral New International Version (NIV).

NOTABLE QUOTES

A cleansing wind is blowing through the land, clearing away cobwebs in the minds of those accustomed to unquestioningly obeying the elite. You say you're uncomfortable with references to God in the pledge? Tough. America was founded on religious principles. The pilgrims weren't secular humanists. The Declaration of Independence appeals to the Supreme Judge of the World, not the chief justice of the Supreme Court.—Don Feder

To promote true religion is the best and most effectual way of making a virtuous and regular people. Love to God and love to man is the substance of religion; when these prevail, civil laws will have little to do.—John Witherspoon

The elites in our society who openly condemn difficult decisions and sacrifice usually do so because they prefer a comfortable life where no real sacrifice is required of them. This is the life that our society has allowed them for a very long time.—Sterling Rome

War is an ugly thing but not the ugliest of things; the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feelings which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.—John Stuart Mill

While the rest of the country waves the flag of Americana, we understand we are not part of that. We don't owe America anything—America owes us.—Rev. Al Sharpton

The Bible was as much America's founding document as the Declaration of Independence or Constitution. The Founding Fathers' beliefs in liberty, equality before the law and representative government came from Sinai. The Constitution is a covenant reflecting a much older covenant.—Don Feder

Never mistake our prosperity for sloth. The zeal with which we peddle Big Macs can be a dreadful thing when turned to the bloody business of war.—Richard Poe

The Bible conceives the world in very real terms, and recent events have clarified what the real world is about. It's about the struggle between goodness and wickedness, about which our Constitution is not the ultimate authority.—David Klinghoffer

On January 28, however, IBS/Zondervan announced *Today's NIV*, a gender-neutral version of the NIV. The New Testament is available now, and the complete Bible is scheduled to be released in 2005. Many well-known conservative evangelical scholars have expressed concern about the TNIV's "troubling translation inaccuracies." On February 12, IBS and Zondervan issued a five-page "open statement" defending their TNIV. The statement placed "Southern Baptist" atop a list of denominations represented in the TNIV project. Southern Baptist leaders, however, many of whom oppose the new translation, quickly denied any SBC association with or endorsement of the TNIV. The list included nine groups, and "Independent Baptist" was among those listed. (Baptist Press, 2/15/2002; *World*, 2/23/2002)

Democrats Smear Fundamentalists

Democratic strategists Stan Greenberg, James Carville, and Bob Shrum say the Sept. 11 attacks create "a moment of opportunity for Democrats." In a memo posted on the Internet, they hint that America's Fundamentalist Christians may feel the same discomfort as Afghanistan's Taliban fundamentalists with "the life choices and gender roles at the center of American life." Ed Goeas, a Republican pollster and strategist, calls that idea "Christian-bashing." "They directly compare fundamentalist Christians, or conservative Christians, with fundamentalist Muslims," Goeas

says. "The implication is very clear that there is a religious intolerance. They're attempting to demonize those people of faith that happen to be conservative." (*USA Today*, 2/19/2002)

Scouts' Honor

The national executive board of the Boy Scouts of America reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the organization's traditional morality and leadership standards, including that an avowed homosexual cannot serve as a role model for the moral values of the Scout Oath and Law and that these values cannot be modified under "local option" choices. The board further decided that duty to God is an obligation for those choosing to associate with Boy Scouts of America, which has defined good character throughout the BSA's 92-

year history. The BSA, one of the largest youth organizations in America, serves more than five million young people between 7 and 20 years of age. (*The Federalist*, 2/15/2002)

Bank Kicks Out Boy Scouts

In Auburn, New York, HSBC Bank USA kicked the local Boy Scout troop out of its building, claiming the move was required by the bank's "commitment to diversity." The company refused to continue hosting Scout meetings in protest of the group's ban on homosexual leaders. In response, the Cayuga County legislature closed its \$3.8 million account with the bank. Said county lawmaker Herbert Marshall, "Our local Boy Scout group is an asset to the community." (*The Federalist*, 4/5/2002)

9/11—Who Was Responsible?

A Gallup poll of Muslims in nine nations indicates that twice as many hold unfavorable as favorable opinions of the U.S. Of particular note—and concern—are findings that while 67 percent considered the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. "morally unjustified," 61 percent did not believe Arab groups were responsible for the attacks, and 15 percent actually held the terror murders of innocents "morally justified." (*The Federalist*, 3/1/2002)

Rev. Jackson's Ties to Terrorists

While Jesse Jackson Sr. was condemning U.S. air strikes against Libya, an old friend and former employee of his from Chicago was conspiring with Libyan agents to terrorize the U.S. The 1986 plot, foiled by federal agents, is known. Less known is Jackson's close

relationship with its mastermind, convict Jeff Fort—a relationship detailed in a new book, *Shakedown: Exposing the Real Jesse Jackson*. Against the backdrop of 9/11, details of Jackson's close and long-standing ties to an Islamic terrorist are especially alarming. And they may explain Jackson's reluctance to condemn Islamic militants for last year's terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Jackson has criticized America's bombing of Afghanistan and has demanded the U.S. government produce more evidence linking Osama bin Laden to the 9/11 strikes. Early on, he sympathized with Muslim clerics in Afghanistan and even tried to work out a deal with Taliban leaders. (WorldNetDaily.com, 3/18/2002)

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Camp Victories for Life

Carrie Ann Banks

It was getting darker every minute, and time was running out. Surely it had to be around here somewhere. I knew this campground like the back of my hand! It was the last object the teams had to find and was worth over 1000 points. Since this year's camp theme was the jungle, the staff had hidden wooden heads of tigers and bears, shields, and, the most valuable item of all, a wooden spear.

I could hear the girls screaming in the woods, guys running around searching and looking even under the cabins! Then I saw the woodpile. *Hhhmmmm*. I rushed to begin peeking through the logs. *Oh no!* I said to myself. Everyone saw me and was running like a herd of horses to *my* woodpile! By this time it was so dark I could barely see. Just when I was about to give up, my hand felt something small and long. My heart raced with excitement; this had to be it! I pulled out a long jungle spear. "I found it!" I cried, then ran as fast as my short legs could carry me for fear that one of the big guys on the other team would tackle me and take it away! "5 . . . 4 . . . 3," the announcer called out. I threw the spear in front of Mr. Berkey, our

game director, and a cheer went up for me.

Our team had won, and I made the difference! Victory was ours!

I always enjoy looking back at those wonderful camp memories, not just because of experiencing the victory in the games but because of experiencing victories in my life.

Growing up in rural Nova Scotia as a missionary's kid was very lonely at times. I couldn't wait to go to Forest Glen Bible Camp each year. For that one week I didn't have to worry about being a pastor's kid. I could be just another camper and enjoy it to the fullest!

During this time I was going to a public school. I never had any Christian friends my age who lived close by. I was the only one in my Sunday school class and never had a youth pastor or a youth group. But what I did have was a wonderful family who wanted the best for me—and who made sure I was able to attend camp each summer.

Many years later, after our family moved, I attended other Christian camps. I found that a lot of kids took going to camp for granted. Many didn't even want to be there—

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their parents “made” them come. I couldn’t understand that! To be around so many Christians, to have wonderful preaching on subjects I needed to hear all week, to have counsellors who cared about me and whom I could look up to was amazing to me! Many kids came from big churches

with big youth groups. They came from Christian schools and had lots of Christian friends. They were extremely “wealthy” in my eyes. I think it can be easy to take all those “luxuries” for granted. Instead, we need to keep a tender heart and use all the benefits we have to the fullest.

Forest Glen was in a class of its own because it had such a sweet spirit among the campers. Most of the kids went to public school. Everyone was struggling with the same issues, and we all came from extremely small churches. We all looked forward to seeing our Christian friends, some of whom we saw only once a year.

The camp may not have had a lot, and it was not very big, but it made a world of difference in the lives of kids and teens in the Maritimes. Many of those teens are now at Christian universities and Bible colleges.

I made many important spiritual decisions at camp. I thank God for Pastor Jeff Reason and his family for having a burden for the Maritimes and establishing Forest Glen. That camp helped me keep on track and to keep my focus on Christ and strive to be like Him. The guest speakers who came for the weeks at camp did a fantastic job, and the preaching always seemed to hit home when I needed it the most. I received assurance of my salvation in the summer of '94 after an evening service. I dedicated my life to whatever the Lord would have me to do shortly after. I made the commitment to honor my father and mother, not to let pride stand in my way, and to be a witness to my friends at my public school. As a result, I was able to lead many friends to the Lord and have a ministry with them as well.

If you’re a parent, let your children or teens attend a Christian camp. It could make all the difference and have an unforgettable impact on their lives.

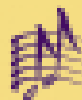
If you’re a camper or potential camper, going to a good Christian camp should not be something taken lightly. It is a *privilege*. What you do with that privilege will be the key. You can make decisions to do what is right, but if you do not put them into practice you will never grow stronger spiritually. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. . . . But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:22, 25).

Carrie Ann Banks is the daughter of John Banks, a church planter in Nova Scotia, Canada.

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Hijacked!

A generation ago, a more docile kind of terrorism invented the airplane hijacking. Multi-million dollar planes were diverted to foreign airports, passengers were terrorized, and sometimes both property and lives were destroyed. The motives of these frustrating people were not simple, but seemed to be limited to some form of selfish political pragmatism. Airport security changed, and we gradually adapted to the inconveniences imposed on us for our own protection.

September 11th introduced an entirely new meaning to the word "hijacked." As the numbing shock of the atrocities of that day began to sink in, the civilized world was forced to admit that we are no longer being inconvenienced or intimidated by self-styled freedom fighters. We are under attack by a fanaticism committed to our destruction. These enemies are not just seeking to pressure the "Christian West" into some sort of grudging appreciation of their right to exist; they seek the end of our own existence.

For us, the conflict is compounded by a double hijacking. Our would-be destroyers have hijacked our jetliners and the conveniences that we have taken for granted. Plus, our own culture has hijacked the term now used to sum up what's wrong with these people: they are "Fundamentalists." Absolutists, literalists, unyielding fanatical radicals who do the horrible things they do for no other reason than that they are so closed-minded they are beyond reason. Yes, it's almost maddening that Christian Fundamentalists should have to tolerate this kind of slanderous misuse of a

historically accurate and noble term.

Dr. Randy Shaylor researched this subject for an FBFI resolution on "The Hijacking of the Term 'Fundamentalism,'" to be presented at the National Meeting in June 2002. Length restrictions would not allow all the material to be included in the format of a resolution. In addition to his statement, "For almost a century, the term 'Fundamentalist' served as an honorable term identifying those who hold unshakably and defend militantly the irreducible foundational teachings of the Bible," Dr. Shaylor gave helpful history.

"Unlike many other names given to Christians, this name was not applied by the world at large as a term of disparagement. It was coined by Fundamentalists themselves. The publication of a series of pamphlets, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the*

Truth, 1910—1915, led Curtis Lee Laws, editor of *The Watchman-Examiner*, to propose the name 'Fundamentalist' as the identification of those who hold these orthodox doctrines and defend them against all adulterations of Biblical Christianity. He had said they were 'willing to do battle royal for the fundamentals.'"

"Yet from the beginning of its use, those who reject the fundamentals have tried to use it as a term of contempt. Nevertheless, Fundamentalists have borne the name proudly and defended it against such derision and mockery." The edited resolution will appear in *Frontline* in the near future and will be posted with the FBFI resolutions on the website

(www.fbfi.org). It speaks of the corruption of the term not only by the news media, but by the hypocrisy of non-separatists who claim it and legalists who demand conformity to their personal convictions while claiming to be the last bastion of true Fundamentalism. One good thing to come from all of this is that we are not only taking more hits from those who wish we would go away, we are also getting more "hits" on our website as the curious are coming to see who we are.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me," our grandmothers taught us. Even the name "Christian" has often been used as a term of derision. It appears only three times in the Bible, once when Agrippa told Paul, "Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian," once when Peter gave the admonition, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf," and when the term was first introduced in Acts 11:26: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Why? The context of the report was "that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people."

Commentators give more than one definition of the term. Many understand it to mean "little Christ," but it may be that the term is a combination of the Greek name for Christ and the Latin word for "slave," giving the word *Christian* the meaning "slave of

Christ," or as the mockery, "slaves of a dead man." Either way, it was not a compliment then, and often isn't now. Regardless, our duty is clear; as the proposed resolution says, we "will continue to defend aggressively the foundational doctrines of our faith."

We are under attack by a fanaticism committed to our destruction.



DR. JOHN C. VAUGHN