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The Mail Bag

Thank you for the Chaplain News. I am an FBF-endorsed police chaplain, and both my wife, Marie, and I serve as POS.T-certified chaplains with the local Law Enforcement Department. We had the wonderful privilege of attending the chaplains’ meetings at the FBF Annual Meeting and the chaplains’ meeting that followed it. It was great to put faces with the names of the chaplains that we pray for. We were humbled to pray for the military chaplains’ wives. They have a very important part in their husbands’ ministry.

F. D. (Doc) Hensley
Georgia

I am writing to clarify a statement written in the editor in the September, October 2005 issue of FrontLine. Let me begin by saying that I am quite sympathetic to cautions against errors propagated by the media (there are, indeed, many). However, in the matter of Spurgeon as evidence that Piper’s priority of regeneration to faith is “extreme Calvinism,” I believe a factual error was made.

Much has been made in recent publications of Spurgeon’s statement of September 20, 1863, that a pastor need not preach saving faith to a regener- ate person because he is already saved (“Warrant of Faith,” Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, v. 532). Context clearly reveals, however, that Spurgeon was responding to a true Hyper-Calvinist position—one that denied the warrant of preachers to offer the gospel freely to the lost but instead urged preachers to withhold the gospel message until positive proof of regeneration was manifest in their hearers. Spurgeon’s statement was not intended to delineate the relationship of faith to regeneration, but to affirm the free offer of the gospel to all.

Less than six months after delivering this

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On the Front Line

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

John C. Vaughn

not too long ago, a lady who had agreed to visit our church at the invitation of a friend explained to me why she was returning to her Charismatic megachurch to enjoy its more aerobic service. “I need worship. You people don’t worship here.” That charge certainly got my attention, but the serious reflection that followed did not lead me to incor- porate any of her preferences into our services. She was not rejecting what she thought was merely boring; she was rejecting what is actually Biblical. She was not looking for more adora- tion, but for more adrenalin: a quest that provokes a question, “Which is more fundamental to revitalizing worship?”

Contemporary discus- sions of worship are often driven by concerns about contemporary styles of wor- ship. Yet, revitaliza- tion of worship can be detoured by the road- blocks of ritualism or the lack of it. If our focus would be directed to meaningful revitalization—putting the life back into a thing—then we would do well to seek the fundamentals from the Psalms. There we find the word “worship” more times than one, and it always a translation of a Hebrew word that means “to prostrate one- self” or “to bow down.” Its first appearance is in Psalm 57, where David declares what must be vital before it can be revitalized: “But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.”

Spiritual life begins with God’s mercy. Revert to (“in thy fear”) wor- ship is provoked by the realization of that mercy which draws the wor- shipper toward God. The argument will be made that the more physically expressive are simply more excited about the mercy they have received. Even if we could yield the point that what seem to be “revellings” are actu- ally a species of reverence, we still come to Psalm 29:2 (cf. 96:6). “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”

Whether we argue that the “beauty of holiness” means no more than “in His holy sanctuary,” or the more liturgically writing, “in the splen- dorous array of reli- gious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean- ing is underlined a restoration, perhaps the first half, “Give unto Jehovah the glory that He deserves.” Exalta- tion is at issue here, “in the splen- dorous array of religious vestments,” or even the more practical application, “wear your best to church,” it cer- tainly does not promote the causal approach. It would not do violence to the text to suggest that matters of Bible interpretation, not the outward expressions of separation.” However we apply the second half of Psalm 29:2, its mean-}
During this Christmas season many Christians will listen to the music of Handel’s Messiah. We will join in singing Wesley’s beloved carol “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” or his less well-known “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus.” In each case we will hear musical settings of God’s prophet when he said, “and the desire of all nations shall come.”

We understand that God’s promise in some sense speaks of Christ’s advent. A Jewish rabbi who wrote before the time of Jerome understood the term to mean “Messiah shall come.”1 Let us look at this promise as we worship Christ. Haggaí prophesied to Israel after the captivity. Ezra records that old men who had seen Solomon’s temple when the foundation of the new temple was laid (Ezra 3:12). The new edifice was nothing in its glory like the old house of worship. The new temple seemed almost nonexistent compared to the previous one (Hag. 2:7). Yet God commanded them to work and build the structure before the time of Jerome understood the term to mean “Messiah shall come.”1 Let us look at this promise as we worship Christ.

The Preparation for the Desire of All Nations

Before the desire of nations comes, God declares that He will do some shaking. He announced that He will shake the physical creation, including “the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land” (Hag. 2:6). We must understand this as a literal prophecy that God will fulfill. The author of Hebrews urges his readers to hear and obey God’s Word. He tells us that God shook the earth once at Sinai (Heb. 12:25; 26; Exod. 19:18) and goes on to remind us that God has promised to again shake the earth and the heavens (Heb. 12:26). Peter tells us of that time when God will destroy the earth and bring in “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:10–13; cf. Isa. 65:17; 66:22). Believers are part of that eternal kingdom which will never be shaken (Heb. 12:28). Christ’s kingdom is unshakeable and unmovable.

God also declares that He will shake the nations (Hag. 2:7). Babylon had already fallen by the time Haggai wrote, Persia would follow soon, and Greece would fall as a world empire before Christ’s birth. God fulfilled this promise in Israel’s sight (Hag. 2:21, 22). In about two hundred years God shook and removed three world empires, demonstrating man’s frailty and the futility of worldly power.

The Promise of the Desire of All Nations

The promise “the desire of all nations shall come” confronts us with some difficulties in interpretation. First, in the Hebr. verb “come” is plural, and the noun “desire” is singular. The grammar seems to indicate that the “desire of all nations” is a collective term which indicates “the things desired by all nations.”

Some scholars think these things desired of all nations are their wealth, power, or glory, which during the millennial centuries will glorify our Jerusalem (Isa. 60:5-7). It is true that this will happen when the nations come to worship God. His house will be filled with glory at that time. However, it does not seem that these things are what the nations desire. No matter how steeped in manmade religion, or however obsessed with his own power he is, man is still aware of a great lack in his life. There is that deep and dark feeling of the necessity of supernatural light and influence. Bewildered in the mazes of error and superstition, they could find nothing satisfactory respecting the Divine Being, pardon, emancipation from the power of moral evil, and a future state of existence; and more or less earnestly desired to obtain information in regard to these important and necessary points.2

Fred Delitzsch, commenting on Isaiah 4:2, noted the same reality.

It is an actual fact, that the cry for redemption runs through the whole human race, i.e., an earnest longing, the ultimate object of which, however unconsciously, is the servant of Jehovah and his instruction from Zion (Isa 2:3)—in other words, the gospel.3

The Personification of the Desire of All Nations

“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD” (Hag. 2:7). The new temple never matched Solomon’s temple in its physical beauty, nor did the Shekinah Glory (the brilliant light symbolizing God’s presence) ever dwell there. Herod later took the temple down to its foundations and rebuilt his temple on the site. Though it was a new structure, in popular and religious language Zerubbabel’s temple and Herod’s were viewed as one. Accordingly, nothing is more customary than for Jewish writers to speak of only the first and the second temple. Though the new temple never housed the Shekinah Glory of God, God did fulfill His promise and fill the house with glory. When Joseph and Mary brought the infant Jesus into the temple, Simeon the prophet held Him and declared, “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32). Instead of the light symbolic of God’s glory, He who is the glory of God came into that temple!

Paul tells us that we proclaim “the glorious gospel of Christ” (literally, “the gospel of the glory of Christ,” 2 Cor. 4:4). He explains by declaring, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the glory of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

The author of Hebrews teaches us that God spoke to Moses in the burning bush and to David in the name of his “greatness of his glory” and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:3). The same verse proclaims that the purpose for which Christ was incarnated was to “[purge] our sins.”

John informs us that the eternal Word, who is the Creator God (John 1:1-3), “was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of as the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

God did fill the second house with His glory. This time He did not send the symbolic manifestation of His glory to fill the house with light. Rather, He who is the light and the revelation of God’s glory came to that temple. The second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ our Lord, graced that house with His blessed presence.

God revealed His glory in Christ for a specific reason—to bring the saving gospel of the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:3-6), to cleanse us from our sins (Heb. 1:3-5), and to take away the sins of the world (John 1:14, 29). One day He will literally shake the heavens and the earth, and He will bring everlasting righteousness (2 Pet. 3:10-13). He satisfies the longings of the heart when He forgives, cleanses, and saves a sinner.

Conclusion

Handel and Wesley were right to refer to Christ as “the desire of all nations.” He alone can fill the longing of sin-scarred hearts. He satisfies the desires of the heart. He is the glory of God who came to fill the temple with God’s glory and to bring salvation to Adam’s fallen descendants. If you do not know Christ as your Savior, I urge you to turn from your sin and receive Him (John 1:12).

Let us remember that we do not worship the beauty of a physical house of worship, but we worship the God who revealed His glory to save us. He alone must be the object of our worship and service. Let us enjoy the benefits of this Christmas season and treasure the time we spend with family and loved ones. But we must remember that Christ is the glory of God, He is the fulfillment of things desired by the nations. We must put Him first in our observances and celebrations.

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free; From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee.

Fred Moritz is the Executive Director of Baptist World Mission.


1 Henderson, 356.
3 Henderson, 358.
The Puritans reacted against this abuse and determined that they would effect change. These were not ignorant and unlearned men. Many of them were graduates of Oxford University who became Anglican priests in an effort to change the system from within. In time they discovered that internal change was impossible. They were driven from the official church and forced to preach wherever they could find opportunity.

These godly men encouraged direct personal religious experience, sincere moral conduct, and simple worship services. A major focus of change for the Puritans was the area of worship. They were motivated by intense theological convictions and definite expectations about theological convictions and definite expectations about the principles of true worship. They appealed to the Bible alone for their standard of worship. They, therefore, concluded that anything that is not in accord with God’s Word commands their view of worship in the Regulative Principle. In short, the Regulative Principle stated that God commands true worship. They, therefore, concluded that anything that is not in accord with God’s commands must not be considered true worship. They appealed to the Bible alone for their standard of worship.

The Puritans were humans and often evidenced the warts of human character. But, for the most part, they were people who loved God and respected God’s Word. They were determined to live life according to the standard they discovered in God’s Word. That is a good pattern for modern Christians to adopt in their quest for the principles of true worship. The Bible is replete with descriptions of the kind of worship that God ordains. Psalm 29, for example, is a concise statement of the foundational principles of authentic worship.
The Call to Worship (vv. 1, 2)
The psalmist's call to proper worship, stated in the first two true sections of Psalms 29, demands our attention. David repeatedly called out, “Give unto the Lord glory.” The title he chose for God is deeply significant. It is the unique name for God, the name the Jewish scribes held so sacred that they refused to write it completely. He is Yahweh, the self-existing, eternal, creator God. This God calls on His creation to glorify Him. Yahweh created the world for His own glory. No power constrained Him to create. He chose to create; therefore, it is only fitting for the Creator to expect His creation to reflect His glory in the beginning. It was so. When Yahweh completed creation, He, who is by nature good, announced that His creation reflected His goodness (Gen. 1:31). Reflection of God’s character is an essential feature of true worship. God’s announcement that His creation was good was saying that it was pleasing and excellent—just like Him. To some extent the creation responds positively to this call to reflect God’s glory. The heavens still declare the glory of God (Ps. 19:1) even though they are tainted by the sin principle. The human body, which is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14), reflects God’s wisdom. But sin limits the glory creation is able to give. Stars that reflect God’s glory die out, and bodies that reflect His glory are without excuse if we fail to offer God authentic worship. He makes His glory and majesty known in nature (Rom. 1:20), in our consciences (Rom. 2:15), and in His written Word (Rom. 3:4). What kind of worship is due a God like that?

The essence of worship is humble submission.
The Danger of Unbelief

We might not immediately link our noisy souls to unbelief. To understand the connection, let’s define some important terms:

Truth—Truth is what which corresponds to reality.

Most of us stopped believing in Santa Claus when we learned that the whole story was just a fairy tale. There is nothing in reality that corresponds to the events of a large man in a red coat sliding down every chimney on Christmas Eve with a large bag of toys, and reindeer do not fly.

We do know, however, that Jesus was born in a virgin in Bethlehem, that His birth was announced by angels to shepherds, and that He is the Son of God. This story is true because the components of the account correspond to reality. These events happened!

Belief—A belief is what you accept to be true. Believing in Santa Claus does not make the story about him true. We can believe something that is not true. It has little effect when we are children, but a grown-person still leaving cookies and milk under the tree and writing letters to the North Pole would raise some eyebrows.

Unbelief—Unbelief is rejecting what God says is true. We tend to think of an unbeliever merely as one who rejects the message of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus. However, anytime we know something to be true about God, we are living in unbelief if we reject that reality. Consider these truths about God—these statements of reality.

1. God is always good—always! That means . . .
   a. He will always meet my genuine needs—always!
   b. He will always forgive my sin—always!
   c. He will always give me the grace I need—always!
   d. He will always love me personally—always!
   e. He is always in control of all things—always!
   f. He is always wise in what He does—always!
   g. He is always present with me—always!
   h. He is always up to something good in my life—always!
   i. He will always meet my genuine needs—always!
   j. He is always in control of all things—always!
   k. He is always love us. believing the idea that God does not love us
   l. He is always the same—always!

2. God is always great—always! That means . . .
   a. He is always in control of all things—always!
   b. Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 14:27; 46:9, 10
   c. He is always present with me—always!
   d. Psalm 139:7–12; Isaiah 41:10; Jeremiah 23:24
   e. He is always the same—always!
   f. Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 1:10–12
   g. He is always trustworthy—always!
   h. 2 Timothy 2:13; Psalm 36:5; Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 7:9; 31:8
   i. He is always wise in what He does—always!
   j. Romans 11:33; Colossians 2:3; Revelation 15:3, 4

To reject any of these statements is unbelief. For example, it is easy when faced with a difficult or devastating circumstance to believe—accept to be true—that God must not love us. Believing the idea that God does not love us is on the same plane as believing that Santa Claus delivers our presents at Christmas. Both of them are fantasies because they do not correspond to reality.

The reality is that a world where God does not love His children does not exist. Neither can He be living toward us at some times and not at other times. God always loves us—always! To reject that truth is unbelief, which starts us on the path of our own disintegration—the day down.

The Way Down

When we accept as truth the idea that God has not provided what we need today and God Himself is not enough for us today, we have believed a lie and are walking in unbelief. That unbelief shows up first in discontent—if only thinking.

—“If only my spouse would appreciate me more.”
—“If only I had more money.”
—“If only I had better health.”
—“If only I hadn’t been abused.”
—“If only I had grown up with different parents.”
—“If only I were married to someone who loves me.”

Discontent is dangerous because the lust for more is the basis of every temptation in the heart—including the temptations to worry, to be angry, and to despair.

From Unbelief and Discontent to Anxiety

Once we have decided in our unbelief that we do not have what we need for peace and joy, we are easily tempted to worry. Worriers meditate upon all the possibilities of what might happen and scare themselves with their imaginations and fantasies. Worry is the root cause of the “anxiety disorders” of today—the panic attacks, obsessive thinking, compulsive behavior, many sleep disorders, and the self-inflicted injury we see in the form of anorexia, bulimia, and cutting.

The “if only” thinking of discontent leads to the “what if” thinking of worry.

—“What if my husband is into pornography?”
—“What if I get up to sing and I forget the words?”
—“What if I have another panic attack, but this time the effort is greater?”
—“What if I can’t sleep again tonight?”
—“What if someone breaks into the house and kills all of us?”

Anxiety is driven by unbelief and the resulting discontent. This is why anxiety is always portrayed as a spiritual problem. We will not be anxious if we know God well and are content with what He has

S

Shavna can’t seem to “click off” at nights, and her mind races nonstop replaying the events of the day.

Fran was released from another job because of low productivity. She obsesses about cleanliness and orderliness to such a degree that she can never finish a job.

Bob just received his second job warning. He was late to work again. He sleeps fitfully and feels paralyzed as he awakes and considers the day’s responsibilities. His despair seems to sit on his chest, making it feel impossible to get out of bed.

These believers carry heavy burdens—failed relationships, health problems, shattered dreams, and spiritual doubt. Together these matters make for very noisy souls. How can we help them, and how can we avoid the same battle? To begin, let’s stop and listen to the noise.

Noticing the Noise in Your Soul

Noise in the physical realm consists of waves created by a disturbance of some kind. We see it in the concentric circles made by a pebble thrown into a quiet pond. Noise in the soul consists of thoughts—responses to our circumstances on a fallen planet.

• Sounds of fear—thoughts of worry, vulnerability, uncertainty
• Sounds of despair—thoughts of hopelessness, defeat, self-pity
• Sounds of anger—thoughts of hurt, demands, thwarted goals
• Sounds of bitterness—thoughts of injustice, contempt, revenge
• Sounds of lust—thoughts of indulgence, covetousness, ambition
• Sounds of guilt—thoughts of sinfulness, remorse, embarrassment
• Sounds of obsessions—thoughts of habits, self-imposed demands, cover-ups
• Sounds of entertainment—thoughts of movies, music, sports, video games, adventures

God’s Noise Abatement Plan

The collective noise is deafening! How different is the noise in the souls, but our pride walks hand in hand with another thing that pleases him” (John 8:29). We must learn to say, “I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28–30). Quieting the noise in our souls is linked to our willingness to learn certain things from and about the Lord Jesus.

Our pride is the godfather of noisemakers. Pride whines, poops, demands, argues, debates, covets, retaliates, shifts blame, indulges, manipulates, schemes, obsesses, and frets. Pride cries out, “I will not . . .”; “I must have . . .”; “I don’t have to . . .”; “I won’t let . . .”; “I can’t take any more of . . .”; and “I don’t like . . .”

In utter contrast to this is the life of the Lord Jesus, whose mission was not about Himself. He clearly said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always what . . .” (John 17:23).

We must learn this kind of dependence and humility to quiet our noisy souls, but our pride walks hand-in-hand with another enemy—unbelief.

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provided because we have found Him to be more than enough for us.

From Unbelief and Discontent to Anger

Anger is the strong emotion of displeasure that is fueled by frustration, hurt, or fear. This, too, is the result of believing that something must be different in my life if I am to be content and at rest. We will not be angry if we know God well and are content with what He has provided because we have found Him to be more than enough for us.

From Unbelief and Discontent to Despair

Despair is sorrow over loss coupled with hopelessness. When God’s true nature is not in the picture, our thoughts of hopelessness only multiply, and when that hopelessness is laced with self-pity, the condition is even more toxic.

Feeling down is not sinful and can be caused by bodily conditions, but thinking hopeless thoughts is entirely a matter of the heart and is an indication of spiritual needs. We will not despair—even when our bodies are suffering— if we know God well and are content with what He has provided, because we have found Him to be more than enough for us.

The Way Back

Liz was fighting battles on many fronts. She was dangerously overweight, her marriage was in trouble, she could not sleep, her work situation was disintegrating, and she had alienated her adult children by her controlling ways. She testifies, “I did not see that my discontent with life could not sleep, her work situation was disintegrating, she was overeating, her marriage was in trouble, she had alienated her adult children by her controlling ways. She testifies, “I did not see that my discontent and she had alienated her adult children by her control- lingly overweight, her marriage was in trouble, she could not sleep, her work situation was disintegrating, and she had alienated her adult children by her control- ling ways. She testifies, “I did not see that my discontent were suffering— if we know God well and are content with what He has provided, because we have found Him to be more than enough for us.

Noisy Souls Need a Savior, Structure, and Satiety

Liz knew she needed a Savior to deliver her from eternal judgment, but she had never realized she needed a Savior to deliver her from her pride and unbelief. God allowed her mediocre Christianity to unravel until she was desperate enough to see her need of Him again.

“The way back” started with a brokenness over her self-reliance. She sought and received forgiveness from the Lord she had given only lip-service to before. She committed herself to pursuing the knowledge of God, realizing that to become godly she needed discipline (1 Tim. 4:7).

Liz started a systematic guided study of who God is and worked on exercises that taught her to look at the destructive patterns of her thinking. She learned to track her thinking, not her feelings. She learned to see the self-centeredness underlying her impatience, critical spirit, angry outbursts, and nagging.

Through His Word, God confronted and changed Liz’s view of Himself. She saw with illuminated understand- ing that God was loving, merciful, wise, powerful, and continually present with her. The day-by-day saturation of the Word along with the penetrating questions of her study materials taught her to examine her thoughts— her beliefs— not just respond to her feelings.

The Master’s Promise

Christ promised that those who would come to Him to learn from Him would, indeed, find rest for their noisy souls. His words aren’t mere hype. They are statements of reality to those who will seek a Savior and saturate their minds with the knowledge of who He is and what He has done.

Jim Berg is Dean of Students at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina.

This article was adapted from the Quieting a Noisy Soul interactive personal growth program published by BJU Press, 2005 (www.QuietingASoul.com).

American worship is as faded as present American society. The slickly marketed, high-energy, fast-moving approach to worship, so popular in the 1980s and ’90s, is giving way to the calmer, more highly saturated worship that is emerging in some churches and is now called Montessori-style worship of the Emergent Church movement. The problem with all these worship styles—is that worship is centered on people and what they think, feel, and need. It is never centered on God and is all centeredness underlying her impatience, critical spirit, angry outbursts, and nagging.

Through His Word, God confronted and changed Liz’s view of Himself. She saw with illuminated understand- ing that God was loving, merciful, wise, powerful, and continually present with her. The day-by-day saturation of the Word along with the penetrating questions of her study materials taught her to examine her thoughts— her beliefs— not just respond to her feelings.

The Master’s Promise

Christ promised that those who would come to Him to learn from Him would, indeed, find rest for their noisy souls. His words aren’t mere hype. They are statements of reality to those who will seek a Savior and saturate their minds with the knowledge of who He is and what He has done.

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A woman diverted the conversation from her own troubled domestic life to the theology of worship. She gave our Lord opportunity to express words that rivet our attention and rock our assumptions.”

Nature of the Question

With her question she drew from our Lord one of the most significant statements on worship found in Scripture. As an utterance on worship, by its very nature, is about God, not about us. Planning worship forms around the worshippers is much like giving my wife a power saw for her birthday. I like it, I will enjoy giving it, but it’s not what she asked for and is certainly not what she wants.

If we want to understand the type of worship that God desires we need to find out what Jesus said about worship.

Jesus’ Teaching on Worship in John 4:19–26

Jesus went to Samaria with a purpose. The Samaritans represented the vestiges of the Israelites who remained in the land of Israel during the Babylonian exile. They had intermarried with the occupying nations and were considered half-breeds and outcasts by the Jews who returned from the exile. They had continued the Samaritan form of worship begun by Jereboam when he rebelled against Reheoboam after Solomon’s death. When Jereboam rebelled, he changed the place where Israel worshipped. For political and practical purposes, he made Samaria the new place of worship for the Northern Kingdom. Jesus sat next to an historical site—Jacob’s well—built by the patri- arch, a common ancestor to both Jews and Samaritans. As Jesus waited for the disciples to return from the city with food, a woman of the city came to draw water. It was the wrong time of day for women to draw water. She was a social outcast because of her many sins. When Jesus began to talk with the lady, she was at first startled, then intrigued by His words. But when the conversation got uncomfortably personal, she quickly switched the subject to an issue that had been a flashpoint of conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans—worship. “The Samaritan woman diverted the conversation from her own troubled domestic life to the theology of worship. She gave our Lord opportunity to express words that rivet our attention and rock our assumptions.”

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She brought up a contradiction between the Samaritan teachings on worship and the Jewish teachings. She wanted to know which was the correct way of worship—Samaria, where her fathers told her, or on the temple mount in Jerusalem. Whether or not her question was sincere is beside the point. It is Jesus’ answer that astonishes.

**Jesus’ Answer**

Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship. “The heresy of Samaritanism—the practice of worship does not include the physical, but rather, worship that is not in genuineness of spirit, is not worship at all. Bodily actions or words without heart do not count for worship.”

Jesus’ Teaching on Worship in Matthew

Jesus referred to an Old Testament passage to drive home His argument about the nature of worship. Hosea 6:6 demonstrates that in the Old Testament, God was more concerned about a man’s relationship with God than his practice of worship ritual. Jesus used the Old Testament that Pharisees revered to teach the error of their practice.

We who consider ourselves Bible-believers ought to regularly examine our worship. Do we see in it conformity to the teaching of Christ. Changes happen subtly, and it’s easy to miss them, especially as churches get larger, more diverse, and more talented. Do we worship our way into the church? Is how we worship, the way we carry out our worship, determined not by the Word of God but by the needs of people? Could we ever worship God above and beyond what we feel like doing, or what we think will bring the most change?

**Jesus’ Teaching on Worship in Matthew 12:1-8**

Another passage that reveals significant teaching of Christ on worship is found in Matthew 12:1-8. At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hunred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, tidisciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and man not for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

**Jesus’ Teaching on Worship in John 4:21-24**

The Samaritans worshipped in ignorance, He said. True worship must be focused upon God. “True worshippers shall worship the Father” (John 4:23). The nature of worship is dictated by the nature of God. It is not a place or a process that is most important, it is a person. As soon as worship makes creation the end, it ceases to be worship. Jesus moves the emphasis from worship, but so is genuineness of heart. Jesus is not saying that worship does not include the physical, but rather, worship that is not in genuineness of spirit, is not worship at all. Bodily actions or words without heart do not count for worship.

**God is actively seeking worshippers.** “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23–24).”

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We leave our places of worship, and no deep and inexpressible wonder sits on our faces. We can sing these lilting melodies; and when we get out into the streets, our faces are one with the faces of those who have left the theaters and music halls. There is nothing about us to suggest that the waters and music halls. There is nothing about us to suggest that our interests have displaced our worshiping the right object or a mere act. At the essence of Biblical Worship

Defining worship is notoriously difficult. It is perhaps better described than defined. And, of all the various descriptions writers have put forth, the one by William Temple is most striking. He said,

"For perplexity and for dulled conscience the remedy is the same; sincere and spiritual worship. For worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the surrender of will to His purpose—and how and by whom is it offered? In short, what is its essence?"

We are by nature worshippers. Instinctively we all worship something or someone. Left to ourselves we end up either worshipping the wrong object or worshipping in wrong ways. When the focus of worship shifts away from God and to the worshipper, it ceases to be worship.

Unfortunately, the discussion must go beyond the idea that worship is good and necessary. Any profitable discussion must be radically committed to a certain kind of worship—worship that is acceptable in God's sight. And that worship will of necessity be Biblical. What is it? It is neither acceptable to God nor profitable to the worshipper. James Montgomery Boice observed the disastrous results that come from careless or un-Biblical worship when he stated,

"When the church in biblical authority has been lost, Christ has been displaced, the gospel has been distorted, or faith has been perverted, it has always been for one reason: Our interests have displaced God's and we are doing His work our way. The loss of God's centrality in the life of today's church is common and lamentable. It is this loss that allows us to transform worship into entertainment, gospel preaching into marketing, believing into technique, being good into feeling good about ourselves, and faithfulness into being successful. As a result, God, Christ, and the Bible have come to mean too little to us and rest too inconsequentially upon us." 1

But how are we to approach such worship? What constitutes it? How, where, why, and by whom is it offered? In short, what is its essence?

The Essence of Biblical Worship

"When the focus of worship shifts away from God and to the worshipper, it ceases to be worship. When worshippers are more impressed or affected by the worship experience than by the glory and majesty of God, something is dangerously amiss. It is time for the Church to return to authentic worship that is Biblical rather than cultural or experiential—worship that leaves us awed and transformed more than entertained and satiated. This requires us to make our way back home alone by the quiet paths, so that the hush of the Almighty might remain on our awed and prostrated souls. It is not enough that we turn our interest to worship, to discuss it, or even to engage in it personally. We must worship corporately! Is it not the aim and duty of the Christian in personal worship to render through his daily life acceptable worship and service to God? On the one hand, we should be thankful that the Church has turned again to the pravity of worship. On the other, we should be concerned that the worship espoused be acceptable to God and not just to man. After all, worship is not about us but about Him, and therefore, as both the Source and the Object of all Biblical worship, God not only merits but has mandated that men everywhere worship acceptably in His sight. It is not enough that we turn our interest to worship. Nor is it sufficient to discuss worship, even in a setting like this. At the end of the day we must worship, engaging in it so acceptably in the sight of Him whom we worship.

We are by nature worshippers. Instinctively we all worship something or someone. Left to ourselves we end up either worshipping the wrong object or worshiping in wrong ways. This danger makes it necessary that any profitable discussion about worship begin by observing that man is a worshipper and that he is such necessarily rather than accidentally or incidentally. There is no such thing as an accidental worshipper. Furthermore, this resulting conversation must be confined within the context of what God has said rather than merely with our personal, experiential, religious, cultural, or social observer.
FrontLine Sunday Time!

Pastors! Many of you have indicated a desire to help by having a FrontLine Sunday in your church. Now is the time to call the home office (800.376.6856), and we will mail all the necessary materials and instructions.

March 13–15, 2006
Northwest Regional Fellowship
Monroe Baptist Church
1405 W. Main Street
Monroe, WA 98272
360.805.6200

March 23–24, 2006
Arizona Satellite Fellowship
Tri-City Baptist Church
2150 E Southern Avenue
Tempe, AZ 85282
480.838.5430

April 1–4, 2006
Mid-Atlantic Regional Fellowship
Calvary Baptist Church
2000 Board Ave
Findlay, OH 45840
419.422.6842

April 10–11, 2006
South Regional Fellowship
Kennerly Road Church
1526 Kennerly Road
Irmo, SC 29063
803.732.9797

June 13–15, 2006
86th Annual Fellowship
Hamilton Square Baptist Church
1212 Geary Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
415.673.8586

First Partaker

Megiddo and Me

Nothing in the Bible seems to provoke public imagination like the one terrifying word “Armageddon.” Books and movies blazon it as their title, depicting it as some coming horrific disaster. A Public Television series, Avoiding Armageddon, investigated the grim prospect that it will be Armageddon if terrorists acquire biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons. For ecologists and astronomers, the word serves to alarm readers about an overwhelming future natural disaster—a mega tsunami, a super volcanic eruption, or earth’s collision with a giant asteroid. Someone even posts a hypothetical clock on the Web that’s counting down the final seconds to the midnight of Armageddon.

Actually, Armageddon is not an event at all. It’s a place. It’s named “Armagaddon” in Revelation 16:16 by the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word Armagedon. It’s actually a geographical term for mountain or hill, by the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word Armagedon. The result is Har Megiddon, Hill of Megiddo, or Armageddon.

Megiddo’s Strategic Importance

Ancient Megiddo sat on the east end of the middle—most of just three passes that penetrate from the Mediterranean coast through the Mount Carmel range into the heartland of upper Israel. Though crossing the upper part of the country horizontally. It’s no overstatement to say that whoever controlled Megiddo controlled the narrow passage between the two poles of the ancient world.

This past summer I co-led a tour group that spent a soul-expanding two hours at Megiddo. I came away with several impressions related to my own life and ministry as a pastor and preacher that I’d like to share.

Megiddo, Canaanites, and Leadership

Megiddo consists today of a single twenty-acre hill, about three or four football fields’ length in each direction at its top. It’s the kind of hill archaeologists call “a tell.” A tell is an earthen mound piled up over many centuries with the accumulation of ruins from successive human occupations. To the unformed

On the Home Front

INSPIRATION FOR THE PASTOR’S STUDY

Hold fast the form of sound words—2 Timothy 1:13

“ ‘The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits’” (2 Tim. 2:6)
sought for protection. An ancient prayer to him reads, O Baal, please drive away the strong one from our gate.

As the Baal cult was already a threat to the people before Christ, when Abraham first entered Canaan, someone was living at Megiddo.

Abraham’s first settled encampment in Canaan was at a place called Shechem, located in the hill country that looks out east over the Jordan rift forty miles below the Sea of Galilee. From Shechem ran an important road northwest right up to Megiddo, just thirty miles away.

The Bible says that when Abraham encamped at Shechem the Canaanite was then in the land (Gen. 12:6). From what archaeologists conclude, that included Megiddo, because there they’ve excavated an immense ancient Canaanite worship complex.

Leaders often have multiple reasons for toleration and accommodation, but over and over again Scripture testifies that one of the most tempting is the complaint or criticism of their followers. It can be pressing. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us (Exod. 32:1).

The people said unto Aaron, The people have sinned against the Lord, and it shall be well with us.

The people spared the best, and they put the best into one.

The glory and honor of God requires that His Name be invoked in the lives of those who claim to be His. Baal worship did not require it. And that should have been a dead giveaway that they were not the true people of God.

There are Christians, even preachers, all across this country who have tolerated enemy forresses in their own churches.

The battle is not to be fought just in the thick of it. Those people have to be dealt with out of the presence of the altar in those early days is uncertain. But we do know that in the Canaanite pantheon Baal was the popular deity credited with controlling thunder, wind and lightning and were the evidences of his work. He was also included Megiddo, because there they’ve excavated an immense ancient Canaanite worship complex
dated to Abraham’s time. Its centerpiece is a circular stone altar five feet high and twenty-six feet in diameter. Seven steps ascend it from the east. Extending from its two sides for up to fifty yards are the ruins of temples. One is the largest from its era ever discovered in Canaan.

Even the altar is gigantic. I have a picture of an adult man lying spread-eagled in the middle of it. He appears small and vulnerable. From the looks of it, several dozen men could lie down up there like that. Two or three of those of worship place on that altar in those early days is uncertain. But we do know that in the Canaanite pantheon Baal was the popular deity credited with controlling thunder, wind and lightning and were the evidences of his work. He was also

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two hundred years ago. O my fathers and brethren, let it never be said of us on whom this task has fallen, that we never make more to make polishes, eloquent orators or men of more learning, to form and able and faithful ministers of the New Testament.

And here’s the alarming conclusion not of a Fundamentalist, but an Evangelical.

If there is not loving confrontation, but courageous confrontation, and if we do not have the courage to draw lines which we wish we did not have to, then history will look back at this time as the time when certain “evangelical colleges” went the way of Harvard and certain “evangelical seminaries” went the way of Union Seminary in New York, and the time when other “evangelical institutions” were lost to Christ’s cause—forever (Francis Schaeffer).

**Remember Where It Begins**

Lost to Christ’s cause—forever. On a corner table here in my study sit several potsherds from Megiddo. They’re small, broken fragments of larger pottery vessels. One is part of a handle, another three inches or so from a rim, a third a concave piece about the size of my palm. Tells us not a word. Disgregates hundreds of thousands of these. Only the best and most identifiable are kept by the archaeologists who oversee the digs. I brought back these discs, all from a section of the dig dated between Abraham and Elijah, to remind me of where the irretrievable loss to Christ’s cause begins. Solomon, the son of Abraham. Somewhere after the courage and obedience of Joshua. Somewhere when ambition, fear, and insecurity come up against entrenched culture, iron, and obstacles. Somewhere that pragmatism will temporarily succeed, somewhere when ambition, fear, and insecurity come up against entrenched culture, iron, and obstacles. Somewhere that pragmatism will temporarily succeed, somewhere when ambition, fear, and insecurity come up against entrenched culture, iron, and obstacles. Somewhere that pragmatism will temporarily succeed. It’s somewhere that pragmatism will temporarily succeed. It’s not merely the presence or power, but even the very identity of God was in question. Years of tolerating idols will finally do that. Then and now. At first it’s, ‘I think it’s a better idea. I think it’s, I’m not sure it’s. It’s not sure it’s. But it’s not sure it’s. And finally, it becomes, Maybe He’s not God. Do we think that unlikely?

Here are some of Harvard’s laws for students three hundred years ago:

All Scholars Shall Live Religious, Godly, and Blameless Lives according to the Rules of God’s Word. Reading the holy Scriptures, the Fountain of Light and Truth; and constantly attend upon all the Duties of Religion both in Publick and Secret.

Here’s one sentence from Archibald Alexander’s inaugural address at Princeton Seminary less than four decades ago:

The accounts in the book continue to be of great value today. Although Spencer was not a Baptist, every Pastor burdened to care for his sheep will find much help in his examples and in his commitment to press lost men to come to Christ for salvation. Many accounts describe in detail both the questions or objections to the gospel raised by real men and women and the answers to them. Additionally, there are several examples of both God’s power to draw a resisting soul to Christ as well as examples of man’s ability to continue on in his hardness to the gospel. On one occasion he was asked how he knew exactly what to say to each individual inquirer, to which he responded:

I am to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. If I perceive any one truth has impressed the mind, I am to make that impression deeper; because the Holy Spirit has already made that impression, and I should not diminish it by the adding of something else. If I perceive any error in the individual’s mind, I am to remove it; for I know that the error is of sin, and not of the Holy Spirit.

I have profited immensely from Spencer’s accounts and am sure they will be a rich source of blessing, encouragement, and help to all who desire to minister more effectively to individuals God brings across their path.
Do Doubly the most important chapter in the Bible on the doctrine of sanctification (holiness) is Romans 6. In the first two verses of that chapter Paul says, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? “

Paul’s statement in verse 2 that the believer is presently “dead to sin” has been the source of some unfortunate confusion concerning sanctification. This is somewhat understandable since “dead to sin” might seem to indicate that the believer is somehow immune to the influence and effects of sin. However, the tense of the Greek word translated “dead” does not actually indicate a state of being but a past, completed action, i.e., “How shall we who died to sin live any longer therein?” But even the more accurate “died to sin” does not clear up all the difficulties. After all, what does it mean that the believer has “died to sin”?

Romans 6 has often been understood to mean that the believer has the potential for victory over sin so that he can live a life above sin, possibly free from temptation. Paul is understood to be giving instructions in Romans 6 for how a believer can have this Life. Paul’s exhortations in verse 1 argue that “yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive unto the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,” a formula is deduced for “righteously yielding yourselves unto God as those that are alive unto the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,” a formula is deduced for “yield yourselves unto God.”

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH (2 Tim. 2:15)

So we see that in Romans 6 Paul is speaking of a freedom from the dominion of sin which is the actual, not merely potential, possession of every born-again believer. “For sin shall not have dominion over you” (v. 14), and the unbeliever is “under sin” (v. 15).

For example, in 1928 Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin and related antibiotics have reduced the emergence of life’s brevity all around them. A century ago, the average American earned about $3,000, adjusted for today’s dollar value. He had no indoor plumbing and owned no car or telephone. Today, our teenagers can earn that much during a summer of hard work. Many have their own cars and cell phones. Life in twenty-first century America is incredibly different from what it was one hundred years ago. It is little wonder that we Americans in general display little awareness of our own mortality. Many young adults simply assume that a long life is their prerogative and pay scant attention to evidences of life’s brevity. The Bible addresses our mortality in forthright, sobering terms. “To go now, ye say, to day or to morrow we will go into the city and buy and sell, and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is thy life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boasted: all such rejoicing is evil” (James 4:13-15). This passage goes on to wonder how many of life’s fleeting moments are missed. On April 10, 1912, the White Star Line, one of the world’s leading shipping companies, launched the largest and biggest ship in history from Southampton, England. The majestic vessel had three powerful screws to propel it through the water. The liner was a marvel in modern technology, the RMS Titanic was considered “unsinkable.” On her maiden voyage were a number of prominent Americans—members of the rich and famous—including John Jacob Astor IV, a 47-year-old heir to the Astor fortune and builder of New York’s Astoria Hotel. Astor, with his second wife Madeleine Talmadge Force, whom he married after a scandalous divorce, sought refuge from New York gossipies by traveling abroad. Learning his new wife was expecting, Astor booked a first class cabin aboard the Titanic so that his heir might be born in the States. They sailed with his father-in-law, Henry Guggenheim, wealthy son of Colorado mining magnate, Mayer Guggenheim, and Isidor Straus, a German-born former Democratic Congressman and co-owner of New York’s R. H. Macy department store.

After stops in Cherbourg, France, and Queenstown, Ireland, to disembark and board passengers, Titanic made its way across the Atlantic. Four days out, she was nearing Canada. Captain Edward J. Smith ordered the Titanic to veer ten miles south of the normal shipping lanes after receiving reports of icebergs. The evening of April 14 brought additional reports of danger into the wireless radio room on board the Titanic from the steamer America and Mesaba. Icebergs lay in the path of the great ship. Oddly, no message was conveyed to the bridge or the captain. Shortly after 11:30 p.m. on a calm, moonless night, a lookout spotted impending disaster. The ship’s crew made a frantic effort to avoid a collision. However, at 2:20 A.M. on April 15, the Titanic collided with the iceberg, tearing a 300-foot gash in its starboard side. Within an hour, the captain realized the ship was doomed and gave the order to abandon ship. Unfortunately, the ship was outfitted with lifeboats that could handle fewer than half of the 2,223 people on board. The women and children were given priority. Astor attempted to board his wife’s boat on account of her “delicate” condition but was turned away. Exactly 2.5 hours after impact, the “unsinkable” Titanic slipped beneath the waves. Benjamin Astor, John Jacob Astor IV was among the 1,517 that perished. Madeleine survived and gave birth four months later to a son, John Jacob Astor VI.

The Brevity of Life
Alfred, who received the bulk of the family fortune after his elder brother Cornelius III was disinherited, was an avid horse-breeder. In May 1915 he found himself bound for Liverpool, England, to moderate a meeting of the International Horse Breeders Association. Despite warnings of impending danger in the German U-boat-infested waters off the coast of England during the Great War, the thirty-seven-year-old Vanderbilt booked passage on the RMS Lusitania. Six days out of New York and within sight of the southern coast of Ireland, the Lusitania fell victim to a torpedo from the German submarine U-20, captained by Walther Schwager. With only three torpedoes left in its hold, the submarine accidentally hit the Lusitania. The two ships collided, causing the benzol onboard the unsuspecting mark. On the 7th of May, U-20 found that mark in the unprotected Lusitania. That lone torpedo hit amid ship, and a subsequent explosion, perhaps created by a detonation in the cargo hold of a cache of ammunition bound for the war effort, tore a gaping hole in the hull. In twenty minutes the Lusitania sank, claiming the lives of 1,201 of the 1,965 passengers and crew, including Alfred Vanderbilt. Sudden death was no respecter of persons.

War brings other tragedies to noncombatants and causes those touched to come face to face with life’s unpredictability. The city of Halftax, Nova Scotia, boasts one of the finest harbors in North America. It has been an important harbor for vessels bound between Europe and the United States. During the Great War it served as a major port for ships laden with supplies and ammunition for the European conflict. It was far from the battlefields of Europe or the dangerous waters of the North Atlantic, but it was within reach of sudden, unpredictable tragedy, and suffered one of the greatest calamities in its recent century.

Less than a year before the end of the war, Halifax Harbor’s Bedford Basin was the staging area for Allied convoys headed to the European conflict. On the morning of December 6, 1917, a French steamer, the Mont Blanc, was ordered to join a flotilla of Allied ships bound for England. The Mont Blanc was a floating powder keg, loaded with more than 2,000 tons of picric acid, a powerful explosive used in artillery shells; 200 tons of TNT; 10 tons of explosive gun cotton; and 35 tons of benzol, a highly flammable liquid, packaged in thin metal cans. A Norwegian ship, the Imo, working with the Belgian relief effort, was headed out to sea at the time the Mont Blanc was moving to join the convoy. As the Imo encountered heavy shipping traffic at the harbor narrows, she was forced to swerve out of her own lane and into the path of the Mont Blanc. At 8:45 A.M., local time, the two ships collided, causing the benzol onboard the Mont Blanc to ignite. With the crew unable to reach fire-fighting equipment on the Mont Blanc, the captain ordered them to abandon ship, leaving the distressed vessel adrift within the harbor.

Halifax was just beginning its day that ill-fated morning, with the streets of the town of 50,000 bustling with children headed to schools and adults headed to work. The burning ship, moving in toward the town with the incoming tide, began to draw a crowd. Totally unaware of the danger that was rapidly approaching them, the citizens assembled in large numbers to watch the conflagration. At 9:05, as the ship rested against Pier #6 in the heavily industrial Richmond district of the city, the Mont Blanc suddenly exploded, decimating nearly 350 surrounding acres. It was the largest manmade explosion in human history until the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, August 6, 1945.

The devastation of the Halifax explosion was severe. More than 1,900 people were killed by the blast, including 250 people whose bodies were never identified and others who were never found. Over 1,600 homes were razed, and another 12,000 were damaged. Thirty-seven people were completely blinded by flying glass and debris. The tragedy touched the young and old, the rich and the poor, the believer and the unbeliever with hapless disregard. A Presbyterian minister lost his wife and daughter. Also killed was four-year-old Reginald McKernan, son of Baptist parents, whose tiny body was never found. In a moment hundreds were swiftly ushered into the presence of God.

Tragedies like these are not the only things that remind us of life’s tenous nature. As I write, America is dealing with what President Bush is calling the greatest natural disaster to hit American shores in our lifetime. In the early hours of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hurled winds of more than 140 miles per hour down on the citizens of New Orleans. Only three other such powerful hurricanes have made landfall since records began to be kept—Camille, which hit the gulf coast of Mississippi in 1969; Andrew, which pummeled Miami-Dade in 1992 and did more than $25 billion in damages; and Gilbert, which hit Mexico in 1988. This tragedy brought back memories of the worst such disaster in American history—the hurricane that hit Galveston, Texas, September 8, 1900. The storm claimed more than 6,600 lives and devastated that city. Galveston was then home to 37,000 and a major shipping port for U.S. cotton, with more than 1,000 ships visiting annually. Winds were estimated at 130-140 miles per hour. With the highest homes at the time scarcely eighty or ninety feet above sea level, Galveston was an easy target for the 15.5-foot waves that surged over the island and demolished everything in their path. The destruction stands as a compelling reminder—man’s life is all too brief.

Sobering are the words of Hebrews 9:27, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Life indeed is marked by brevity, and all must be ready to stand in the presence of God at any moment. 

4 John Jacob Astor IV was the grandson of John Jacob Astor IV’s uncle, John Jacob Astor III.
The Want of Worthy Worship (Continued)

witness of the truth and remind men that He is the truth (16:13). It is through His truth that men will be saved and sanctified (17:17, 19). So when Jesus stated that God was seeking worship in “truth,” He was stating that all acceptable worship must be offered in Him. Just like all accept-

able worship in the Old Testament had to be offered in the place of God’s choosing—the tabernacle/temple—all acceptable worship in the New Testament had to be offered in a place of God’s choosing—a new temple. Jesus replaced the temple (John 2:19, 20), and He is the head of a body that has become the new temple of God—the Church (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). The way one becomes a part of such worship in such a temple is by being “in Christ.” Only worship that is offered “in Christ,” “by Christ,” and “for Christ” is genuine worship, and only those who are joined to Christ can be such worshippers.

The third important adjustment to worship made in the New Testament is the expansion of the sphere of wor-
ship beyond corporate formal worship to personal daily worship. This is most clearly seen in Paul’s demand that all worship be offered in the context of personal daily liv-

ing as an acceptable sacrifice (Rom. 12:1, 2). Such instruc-
tion does not replace or even supersede the importance of regular corporate worship; rather, this instruction demands that such worship be offered by transformed individuals who reflect their worship in daily living.

This is significant because it fleshes out Jesus’ original statement that the Father is seeking worshippers who will worship in Spirit and in truth. Such worship will go beyond merely offering external sacrifices, gifts, and verbal praise. Such worship can come only from worship-

ers whose lives have been radically transformed by Him, whom they worship. As “priests” in the new temple of God, their priestly service must be offered from a life that is walk worthy—a life that is in line with the stipulations of the new covenant, it manifests the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, and it is in line with the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made.

What of the final question—the purpose or goal of accept-
able worship? The End of Biblical Worship

To be sure, worship God’s way brought great blessing to the worshippers, but their well-being was subordinate to God’s greater purpose—exalting and extending His glory. This is not just an Old Testament concept. It lies at the heart of all New Testament worship. God’s first and primary purpose is to exalt and expand His glory throughout the entire universe, and one of the ways He has chosen to do this is by receiving acceptable worship from worshippers whom He has made worthy and equipped to offer such worship. Nowhere is this more evident than in the book of Ephesians, where worshippers are exhorted to live in light of their calling as worshippers (4:1). The reason we are to walk worthy is so that all the universe may see the praise-
worthiness of God (1:16, 12, 14) by observing the surpassing riches of His grace to those He has placed in the Church (2:7) and by seeing His manifold wisdom revealed through the Church (3:10). God’s surpassing wisdom in the plan and design of the gospel is worthy of praise (Rom. 16:27).

The goal of each individual worshipper is that every action in every sphere of life be done to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 1:11). The goal of corporate worship in the Church is the glory of God (Eph. 3:21). God’s express goal in calling, redeeming, indwelling, and gifting a com-

munity of saved sinners for His-Sen to rule over in love is to show through them the wonderful magnificence of His wisdom, the lavishness of His grace, and the unsurpassed brilliance of His wisdom to all the intelligent beings in His creation (Eph. 3:10) to the praise of His glory. If this is the true end of worship, then only worship that meets His requirements, is in line with His goals, and centered on His glory is worthy and acceptable. All other worship is worthless and empty, regardless of how exciting, accept-
able, and attractive it might be to the worshippers. For the most part, such worship is sadly lacking in the modern Evangelical church, and the results have been both tragic and devastating on the corporate level as well as in the personal, moral, and spiritual condition of individual believers.

May God give His people the grace, wisdom, and understanding necessary to return to a commitment to Biblical worship and to render such worship in a way worthy of Him who alone is worthy!

Dr. Sam Horn is Executive Vice President of Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin.


2 Perhaps the best and most theologically developed definition of worship is the one proposed by D. A. Carson in his book Worship by the Book. His lengthy definition is followed by a chapter that carefully examines, explains, and defends every phrase from biblical texts. Carson defines worship as “the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delight-

fully so. This side of the Fall, human worship of God properly responds to the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made. While all true worship is God-centered, Christian wor-

ship is no less Christ-centered. Empowered by the Spirit and in line with the stipulations of the new covenant, it manifests itself in all our living, finding its impulse in the gospel, which restores our relationship with our Redeemer-God and therefore also with our fellow image-bearers, our co-worshippers. Such worship therefore manifests itself both in adoration and action, both in the individual believer and in corporate worship, which is worship offered up in the context of the body of believers, who strive to align all the forms of their devout ascription of all worth to God with the panoply of new covenant mandates and examples that bring to fulfillment the glories of antecedent rev-

elation and anticipate the consummation” (Worship by the Book [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], p. 26).
For thirteen years Operation Renewed Hope has followed this pattern. It is not a new pattern; to the contrary, it is a very old one. Jesus first mentioned it in Matthew 9 when He urged prayer for laborers in the harvest. It was because of His ministry to the physical needs and preaching that He urged prayer for laborers in the harvest. It was because He hugged the entire family at one time. He prayed with them and wept with them right there on the street.

This type of spontaneous ministry is happening all over the Katrina and Rita disaster area, four states wide. Two months ago this was unheard of and unwelcome, but today it is welcomed by churches and citizens. Pastors have called me to tell me of people being saved and ongoing ministry. This is the type of ministry available to the church today. We must be prepared to do it.

I had a phone call from a brother impacted by Katrina when Rita was on the way up the Gulf. He said that his church was praying that Rita would follow the previous path of Katrina so that no new disaster would occur. What bravery and courage of God’s people. Disaster can and will bring out the best in God’s people.

Our churches have answered with authority and power. They mobilized and within a short time were supplying food, water, building teams, demolition teams, gospel teams, havens for the homeless, and, most importantly, hope to the church in which he was helping. As they were going down the street attempting to minister to people, they found a family weeping in front of their damaged home. He said that this fellow with him, being of great size, got out of the vehicle and approached this hurting family. In his big arms he hugged the entire family at one time. He prayed with them and wept with them right there on the street.

The work of Operation Renewed Hope over the years has helped those in need physically, and we have always reached the gospel of Christ. Katrina offered an opportunity to do this in our own nation. This disaster brought many to the realization of how temporary this life actually is. It made all saints and sinners aware that no matter how strong or wealthy they may be, they need the assurance of divine help—God Almighty and His Son, Jesus Christ. As a result, our temporal physical labors accentuate the importance of the gospel and exalt the Savior.

Currently we are engaged in directing an effort to help churches rebuild facilities. We are helping Christian schools resume classes. We are helping pastors, church members, and missionaries rebuild their homes. We are putting food boxes, chainsaws, rakes, and other tools into the hands of the converted. It is not a new pattern; to the contrary, it is the type of spontaneous ministry happening all over the United States an opportunity to use their talents to rebuild God’s work. We are getting the gospel to thousands and ministering to thousands.

One such example came in from a person who was on a work team from one of our helping churches. I can’t even remember who gave me the report, but I remember the report so well. He said that he was out with a member of the church in which he was helping. As they were going down the street attempting to minister to people, they found a family weeping in front of their damaged home. He said that this fellow with him, being of great size, got out of the vehicle and approached this hurting family. In his big arms he hugged the entire family at one time. He prayed with them and wept with them right there on the street.

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Okay, I admit it. I love Christmas and just about everything associated with it. Our family has our tree up December 1 (or before) with Christmas music playing during all waking hours! I love the candles, white lights, the fresh greenery everywhere, the nativity scenes, the special smells coming from the kitchen (yes, I do try to bake a little extra!), the annual gingerbread cookies, and hot tea and chocolate around the fireplace. I eagerly anticipate the cantata, the birthday party for Jesus, the ladies’ cookie exchange, and our Christmas Eve service. And of course, when else can you see The Nutcracker and hear live performances of Handel’s Messiah? I also enjoy the special time with my sister, her family, and the grandparents. But I think the element of Christmas that I anticipate the most year after year is the music. I love Christmas music! If you don’t believe me, ask any choir member when I start planning the Christmas concert and Christmas Eve service!

Have you really taken a look at the words to Christmas music? I am amazed at the number of references to “peace,” “joy,” “glory,” and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The writers use each song to point the listener to Christ and the wonderful message and glorious purpose of His birth. With excitement the listener is taken back to circumstances surrounding His birth. Wise men, shepherds, angels, and even the animals are all highlighted in various songs. Even the weather does not get left out, such as in the carol “In the Bleak Midwinter.” Christmas carols help keep the focus on Christ. Each one points to Him, His birth, His mission, His love for His people, and those who surrounded Him at that time. We don’t see any other focus. The listener can’t miss it. Yet do we?

Why is it that sometime around December 22 I find myself feeling less excited about this season? I feel rushed, overwhelmed, tired, a bit on edge, and a few other “not so spiritual” descriptions. As I have tried to analyze this phenomenon year after year, I have come up with my problem. I go into the Christmas season with my focus on Christ and what He did for me, but somewhere in the middle of the month, I turn my focus onto myself: what I have to purchase, wrap, bake, give, practice, perform, minister, serve, clean, and on and on. Do you understand my dilemma? I must remind myself that Christmas is not about me or my family but about Christ and His mission of providing salvation for mankind. That is when I turn my CD up a little louder and sing at the top of my lungs those wonderful carols of the season that point to Christ!

This year, join me and my family in keeping the focus on our Lord Jesus Christ. Let the music of this season help by pointing to Jesus—the only reason for the season. Sheri Privett serves alongside her husband, Michael Privett, pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Williamsburg, Virginia.

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In the last two articles I’ve presented the areas of discipline that are crucial in our lives. First, the discipline of the mind is comprised of memorizing and meditating on the Scriptures. Second, the discipline of the body by eating properly and exercising regularly. Now I’m going to discuss the third area of discipline, which deals with the heart.

We often say of someone, “He has a tender heart,” or “He has a heart for others,” or “He has a heart for the things of God.” What we are referring to is the inner being of that person. The apostle Paul said in Romans 10, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God is for Israel, that they might be saved.” This is what consumed the life Paul, he wanted to see the Jews saved. I have often said that we must keep our hearts warm for souls and our vision clear for service. Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” You don’t have to be around a believer very long until you sense what dominates his inner being, for it will come out of his mouth! The same is true of an unsaved person, what dominates his heart will come out of his mouth. In Matthew 15:19 the Lord said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” When you hear an unsaved person cursing, telling filthy jokes, and talking of his affairs, he is exposing his heart—that is, the longings of his life. A true believer wants to guard his heart, and he’ll desire to have a disciplined heart. This desire can be accomplished in two ways.

First, by worshipping the Lord. Recently I had meetings out in Arizona. The pastor invited a lawyer to attend our services. The lawyer was disturbed about the direction his own church was going and made the following statement to this pastor friend of mine: “The God that messes with my life demands worship.” She replied in the next verse, “I know that Messiah cometh, which is called christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.” Then in verse 26 we read, “Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.” When she recognized that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah, her immediate response was to witness to others about Christ. She said in John 4:29, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the christ?”

When we truly worship the Lord, we cannot be silent in proclaiming what He has done for us. Worship should be followed by witnessing for our Lord. For example, in John 4 when Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman at the well, she was shocked that He would even talk to her. In John 4:9 she said, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman?” The Lord wants us to worship Him, and many of His people are ignorant of how to do this. I can’t go into all that’s involved in true Biblical worship, but I will state a few thoughts. Worship must always be with a clear concept of who God is; that is, His personality and attributes. Jeremiah 9:23, 24 declares, “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things delight saith the Lord.” We need to know Him! He is God (Elohim), which means He is the all-powerful, faithful Creator of the universe. He is Lord (Jehovah), which declares that He is the self-existent One whose main attribute is holiness. When a person worships the Lord, he will praise and glorify Him for who He is. Pastor David Whitcomb from Greer, South Carolina says, “True worship is centered on God’s Word and is only for those who believe that Word.” Worship that goes contrary to this is false worship.

Second, we discipline our hearts by witnessing. True worship should be followed by witnessing for our Lord. For example, in John 4 when Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman at the well, she was shocked that He would even talk to her. In John 4:9 she said, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman?" The Lord wants us to worship Him, and many of His people are ignorant of how to do this. I can’t go into all that’s involved in true Biblical worship, but I will state a few thoughts. Worship must always be with a clear concept of who God is; that is, His personality and attributes. Jeremiah 9:23, 24 declares, “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things delight saith the Lord.” We need to know Him! He is God (Elohim), which means He is the all-powerful, faithful Creator of the universe. He is Lord (Jehovah), which declares that He is the self-existent One whose main attribute is holiness. When a person worships the Lord, he will praise and glorify Him for who He is. Pastor David Whitcomb from Greer, South Carolina says, “True worship is centered on God’s Word and is only for those who believe that Word.” Worship that goes contrary to this is false worship.

The Evangelist's Corner

The Three Dimensions of Discipline—Part 3

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty

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everyone understands that prayer is crucial to the Christian life. Yet many seem to assume that prayer is a practice that must develop independently and instinctively. Prayer is, after all, just talking to God. What could be more natural? And yet, we might make the same argument about preaching or teaching—it’s just talking to people. What could be more natural? Both are simply forms of communication. But the difference between simple conversation and actual communication is often significant. Substantive and successful communication involves communication skills. Communicating oneself to someone else clearly and effectively is hardly instinctive.

Much teaching, ministering, and discipleship overlook the importance of instruction in the discipline and method of prayer. Yet, at the core of academic training in the ministry, we can invest a great deal of time and energy in the study of how to interpret, exposit, illustrate, and apply the Scripture (preaching). And we should. We must have courses devoted to teaching the next generation the appropriate interpretation and handling of every portion of God’s Word. We should never assume that everyone can learn on his own to preach or teach God’s Word—effectively, earnestly, powerfully, transformingly—or that students would not benefit from training, mentoring, and the experience of focused practice in this area. Likewise, we should not assume that everyone ought to be able to learn on his own to pray—effectively, earnestly, powerfully, transformingly—so that he would not benefit from training, mentoring, and the experience of focused practice in this area as well.

Ever since I began teaching on the seminary level, I have incorporated a prayer project into my courses whenever possible. The exercises below are designed to cultivate a variety of disciplines in prayer, to broaden one’s view of different kinds of praying, and to deepen one’s appreciation for the relational and transformational value of prayer. For those to whom an “assignment” to pray and the requirement to pray in a certain way sound unnatural or artificial, here is what I tell my students: One does not have to be trained to pray, even to pray in a certain way or for at least a specified period of time, so long as you do not see any more artificial or unnatural than an assignment to prepare and preach a sermon, even a certain kind of sermon on a specific passage that should last a specified amount of time. Doing either “assignment” purely as an academic exercise is hypocrisy. Rightly approached, both are important aspects of spiritual tasks. Both may be, and should be, pursued as acts of personal worship.

Thanksgiving

This has been a favorite with students. It is a great practice for personal devotions at special seasons (Thanksgiving or birthday, Christmas or New Year). For starters, spend at least one unbroken half-hour in private prayer, adoration, and testifying to the Lord. Reflect on and thank Him for His attributes, for His creation, for His works, for His gifts, for His providential provisions in your life. Spend no more than ten minutes or so, and then for anything and everything that you can bring to mind. The greatest challenge is to do this “unbrokenly”—i.e., without being broken in by any request. You will probably find yourself habitually lapsing into “request mode” within the first couple of minutes. Stifle the habit, and focus your spirit on God and His gifts, not on you and your needs or desires. I tell my students not even to get sidetracked by asking God to make them more grateful—-at least not until the end.

Begin simply by quieting your heart before the Lord. You may find it helpful to preface your prayer time by reading through a selected prayer psalm or other appropriate Scripture or hymn that will prime your thinking and focus your attention on specific things for which to thank the Lord. (By the way, I heartily recommend reading through hymns. I have been surprised at the fresh insights I have gained into songs I have sung for years, just by paying attention to the words and punctuation and to the image it evokes.) Some show us that God’s Word can help us see in His Word; to ignore the contributions of others to our understanding of Scripture (on the principle that we insist on being taught only by God directly) displays, at best, a serious misunderstanding of the relationship between God and His children as joint-members of a body and community of believers (and at worst, arrogance and pre- semblance of knowledge). There is always a way to set down truths and to solidify them in your mind. There is truth and your awareness of the goodness of God; it also brings profound pleasure to the heart of God. “by him therefore we offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15, 16b).*

**Doctrinal Passages**

Pray through a doctrinal passage, meditating and phrase by phrase (e.g., Eph. 1:2–3; Col. 1:17–19; 2:1–15; 1 Tim. 1:12–16; Eph. 6:14–17). Elaborate from using any commentaries or other reference works—just your English Bible (or Greek Testament if you know Greek well enough to use it without needing to consult references). The point is to arrive at a specified “take” or “emphasis” or “signature” of the text.

Focus your mind worshipfully on the words of God, phrase by phrase, meditating consciously in God’s presence over the truths revealed in the passage, praying it back to God, and thinking through their reality and ramifications for you personally. Just like the apostles “looked upon” and “handled” the “word of life” Himself (see 1 John 1:1, 2), “handle” the written Words of life with the fingers of your mind, turning them over and pondering the phrases. The aim is to “goze on God” through His Word and allow the appropriateness of the “word of life” by God’s words to ransack your mind and soul—in short, to think His thoughts after Him. Rather than talking or listening to others (commentaries or those who have written study Bible notes), talk and listen to God about His words. This is in no way to denigrate the value or appropriate- ness of diligent study with such tools and helps. We can and should learn many things from such helps and tools. But we must allow the Word to remain the final authority, even for the purposes of teaching the next generation the proper interpretation (preaching). And we should. We must have courses devoted to teaching the next generation the proper interpretation (preaching) to the Lord not only deeply enriches your spirit and your awareness of the goodness of God; it also brings profound pleasure to the heart of God. “by him therefore we offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15, 16b).*

**Passion Narratives**

This is a variation on the suggestion above, and one that is particularly appropriate and profitable prayer-focus for Easter. Pray through one of the Passion narra- tives in the Gospels. Again, no commentaries or reference books, just your English Bible. Don’t be distracted by technical curiosities so that you start pulling books off your shelves. Focus worshipfully on what the Spirit has selected for you to know about the passion of your Savior for your salvation. Prayerfully personalize the events and what they mean for your salvation. Read through the passage (I suggest aloud) consciously in the Lord’s presence; read it to the Lord (like Hezekiah did with the letter from Sennacherib, Isaiah 37, praying it back to Him, meditating consciously in God’s presence over the truths revealed in the passage. Talk with the Lord about what happened; express your shame, your outrage, your amazement, your worship, your gratitude. This specific prayer-focus engages your spirit in a conscious, prayerful, interactive meditation on the central event of soteriology, of theology, and of human history. It, too, is a conscious exercise of 1 John 1:9: “truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”—a fellowship in, over, and through a portion of His Word that is so central and vital that it is repeated fully and in meticulous detail four times over in your Bible.

**Biblical Prayers**

Why does God bother recording something so private, personal, and intimate as someone’s prayer in the Bible? And soon after they are recorded? What possible value and emulation? Interestingly, you can find Biblical prayers that exemplify the very kinds of praying that I have suggested above. You can use these Biblical prayers to discover more about the nature of your own praying, and explanation than space allows here, so this will be the subject of the next column. May the Lord use some of these suggestions to enrich your walk with the Lord, to deepen your understanding of God as well as your knowledge of yourself, and to reinvigorate your prayer life.

**Recommended Reading**

Carson, D. A. A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers (Baker, 1992).
Talbert, Layton. Not by Chance (BJU Press, 2001), Chapter 13, “Provident and this Topic.”

The “sacrifices” that please God in verse 16b obviously include doing good and sharing in verse 16a; but the operative word is “include.” Clearly the God-pleasing “sacrifices” refer back to the “sacrifice” of praise mentioned in the previous verse.
Traveling? Vacationing? Moving? Where will you attend church?

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Catholic Church Questions the Bible

“The Catholic bishops of England, Wales and Scotland are warning their five million worshipers, as well as any others drawn to the study of scripture, that they should not expect ‘total accuracy’ from the Bible. In their book, The Gift of Scripture, they state that no one should expect to find scientific and historic accuracy. Apparently, these leaders of Romanism take aim at the Books of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The first 11 chapters of Genesis, in which two different and

times conflicting stories of creation are told, are among those that this country’s Catholic bishops insist cannot be ‘historical’. At most, they say, they may contain ‘historical traces’. These Romanists also take issue with the prophecies of the last Book of the Bible. Specifically, they refuse the apocalyptic prophecies of Revelation, the last book of the Christian Bible, in which the writer describes the work of the risen Jesus, the death of the Beast and the wedding feast of Christ the Lamb.” (http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,13509-181332,00.html, accessed 10/10/05)

As one atheist critic put it, “Having been obliged at last to make these concessions, I wonder how much longer it will take for the virgin birth, the divinity of Christ and the resurrection also to be conceded as ‘symbolic.’” (http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/2005/10/05/05-evolution,bible.html, accessed 10/12/05)

Physician-Assisted Suicide


Views on Man’s Origin

According to a survey published by CBS News, most Americans do not accept the theory of evolution. In fact, 51% say that "God created humans in their present form.” 30% believe that evolution was guided by God. Only 15% believe that humans evolved without assistance from God. (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/10/22/opinion/polls/main696223.shtml)

Physicians’ Beliefs Concerning Origins

The Louis Finkelstein Institute for Social and Religious Research at the Jewish Theological Seminary and HCD Research in Flemington, New Jersey, released the results of a survey conducted on May 13–15. This institute specializes in studies of issues confronting the U.S. healthcare system. When asked whether they agreed more with intelligent design or evolution:

88% of Jewish doctors choose evolution.
65% of Jewish doctors agreed that humans evolved without supernatural involvement.
60% of Catholic doctors agree with evolution more than intelligent design, while 54% of Protestant physicians agree with intelligent design more than evolution.
78% of all the physicians surveyed accept evolution rather than reject it. 50% of those surveyed believe that schools should be allowed to teach intelligent design.
83% of the Jewish doctors and 51% of the Catholic doctors believe that a theory of intelligent design is “a religiously inspired pseudo-science.” (http://www.jtsa.edu/research/finkelstein-surveys/evolution.shtml)
The public worship is that which produces the best private Christianity.—J. C. Ryle

Prayer is the best expression of the total life. All things being equal, our prayers are only as powerful as our lives.—A. W. Tozer

I do not want to lose time or money in fruitless efforts. If nothing else, I have learned that when I present the plan of the gospel correctly, I will not lose money. We must face the cruel fact that we have little chance of saving the sinner if we cannot save ourselves.—A. W. Tozer

The more I study religion the more I am convinced that man never worshipped anything but himself.—Sir Richard F. Burton

Worship is what makes us feel at home spiritually, and understanding the meaning of worship can change a lifetime.—Don Wilder

I believe that modern man needs to be taught the importance of worship. The way we worship can make us feel that we belong to a community, and that we are important in the life of the church.—Rev. Dr. John Green

Quieting the Noisy Soul

When the emotional upset of anger, anxiety, guilt, and fear become chronic—when they become serious obstacles to worship and everyday functioning—sufferers and those seeking help may not know how to turn. And when destructive behaviors—eating disorders, obsessive/compulsive habits, or addictions of various kinds—enter the picture, secular resources may look like attractive, readily available alternatives. Self-help books and a relatively new craze—life coaches—promise everything from peace of mind to the realization of long-lost dreams. But individuals often find they are ill-equipped and too overwhelmed to sift through the hype, catalog, and implement the recommendations of so-called self-help books. And while the advantages of personal attention with a strongly “parental” approach cannot be discounted, life coaches are not an option for the majority. Coaching fees can add up to thousands of dollars—a high price to pay for accountability and cheering from the sidelines, especially for methods void of any Biblical foundation whatsoever. The desperate condition of the troubled soul certainly calls for simple, Bible-centered instruction and will often benefit most when that instruction is presented in a mentoring style. A unique and timely new interactive DVD program developed by Jim Berg, Dean of Students at Bob Jones University, seeks to help those who become spiritually paralyzed and struggle with destructive patterns of thinking and behavior. Titled Quieting a Noisy Soul, the program engages even severely troubled individuals in recovery and spiritual transformation, helping them back to the place of inner tranquility and worship. It begins with the introduction of the self-help book and operates from a vastly different premise than the humanistic notions of modern therapy resources. It has individuals through four sections of study to help them find the path to a personal relationship with God, to learn the way back, to overcome their obstacles, and to maintain a free and close walk with Him.—Richard Baxter

I follow that forms of worship should provide two things: channels for the mind to apprehend the truth of God’s reality, and channels of the heart by which to feel the beauty of that truth—that is, forms to ignite the affections with Biblical truth, and forms to express the affections with Biblical passion.—Donald Whitney

Modern man worship his work, works at his play, and plays at his worship.—Unknown

It is little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display. Fine prayers are generally very wicked prayers. In the presence of the Lord of hosts it becomes a sinner to parade the feathers and finery of tawdry speech with the view of winning the applause from his fellow mortals.—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

NOTABLE QUOTES

THE PUBLIC WORSHIP IS THAT WHICH PRODUCES THE BEST PRIVATE CHRISTIANITY.—J. C. RYLE

PRAYER IS THE BEST EXPRESSION OF THE TOTAL LIFE. ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL, OUR PRAYERS ARE ONLY AS POWERFUL AS OUR LIVES.—A. W. TOZER

I HAVE LEARNED THAT WHEN I PRESENT THE PLAN OF THE GOSPEL CORRECTLY, I WILL NOT loose MONEY. WE MUST FACE THE CRUEL FACT THAT WE HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF SAVING THE SINNER IF WE CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES.—A. W. TOZER

THE MORE I STUDY RELIGION THE MORE I AM CONVINCED THAT MAN NEVER WORSHIPPED ANYTHING BUT HIMSELF.—SIR RICHARD F. BURTON

WORSHIP IS WHAT MAKES US FEEL AT HOME SPIRITUALLY, AND UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF WORSHIP CAN CHANGE A LIFETIME.—DON WILDER

I BELIEVE THAT MODERN MAN NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP. THE WAY WE WORSHIP CAN MAKE US FEEL THAT WE BELONG TO A COMMUNITY, AND THAT WE ARE IMPORTANT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.—REV. DR. JOHN GREEN

A NEW MOVIE IS BEING MARKETED TO CHURCHES IN THE U.S. IT GREW UP IN A CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN FAMILY AND HAS NEVER BEEN EVEN IN A MOVIE THEATER UNTIL RECENTLY. IN A MOVIE APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO GET OTHERS TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, MART GREEN, A FUMC MEMBER FROM THE MID 1950S TO EVANGELIZE THE WAORANI PEOPLE. THE FILM IS CALLED “REVIVING STUDENT MISSIONS.”

OVER A CENTURY AGO, THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS MADE THE DECISION TO IDENTIFY WITH GOD’S HEART FOR THE NATIONS—HIS GREAT COMMISSION. THIS CORPORATE SURRENDER TO GOD’S WILL BECOME KNOWN AS THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT; STUDENTS BECAME PART OF THE MOVEMENT BY SIGNING THE FOLLOWING PLEDGE: “I DEDICATE MY LIFE TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. IF GOD PERMITS, TO BECOME A FOREIGN MISSIONARY.” OVER THE NEXT FORTY YEARS 20,000 STUDENT VOLUNTEERS TRAVELED TO FOREIGN LANDS, AND 80,000 STAYED AT HOME WITH A FIRM COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THEM.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1886, D. L. MOODY INVITED 250 STUDENTS TO A RURAL TOWN CALLED MOUNT HERMON, MASSACHUSETTS. THIS GATHERING WAS THE INCUBATOR OF THE MOVEMENT THAT WOULD CHANNELED THE POWER OF CHRISTIANS TO CHANGE THE WORLD. FROM HIS EFFORTS THOUSANDS VOLUNTEERED TO GO, SAMUEL ZWEMER BECAME KNOWN AS THE APOSTLE TO THE MUSLIMS. HE LED THE CHARGE AT AN AREA OF THE WORLD THAT HAD BEEN UNTOUCHED BY MISSIONS—THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. SAMUEL MOFFAT LED PIONEER WORK IN KOREA. THE FULL IMPACT OF THAT GENERATION OF YOUNG ADULTS WILL BE REVEALED ONLY IN ETERNITY.

WE ARE CONVINCED THAT WE LIVE IN A TIME IN WHICH GOD IS DOING AMAZING THINGS AROUND THE GLOBE FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE. OUR DESIRE IS TO HELP YOUNG ADULTS REALIZE THAT THEY NEED TO EARNESTLY SEEK GOD’S WILL, IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH HIS GLOBAL GOAL, AND BE FAITHFUL IN THE ROLE OF HIS CHOOSING. THROUGHOUT HISTORY, YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE REALIZATION OF A MOVEMENT TOWARD EVANGELIZING THE UNREACHED PEOPLES OF THE WORLD. OUR CHURCH BEGAN THE MINISTRY OF STUDENT GLOBAL IMPACT TO COMMUNICATE AND CHALLENGE OUR GENERATION OF YOUNG ADULTS FOR A SIMILAR MOVEMENT. OUR DESIRE IS ALSO TO MOBILIZE AND NETWORK STUDENTS ON VARIOUS CAMPAIGNS SO THEY CAN BE CATALYSTS FOR A REVIVAL OF THE SPIRIT OF THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT.

WITH THIS VISION AND BURDEN IN MIND WE ARE SERVING THIS GENERATION. WE HAVE HOSTED LEADERSHIP SEMINARS, VISIONARY PROFESSIONAL PREACHING, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET STUDENTS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT MISSIONS. MANY HAVE WALKED AWAY KNOWING OTHERS WHO SHARE THEIR PARTICULAR PASSION OR DREAM FOR A MISSION FIELD. MANY HAVE FORMED FRIENDSHIPS THAT ARE STILL BLOSSOMING. SOME FROM PAST CONFERENCES ARE SERVING TOGETHER ON THE FIELD TODAY!

THE CONFERENCE IS ALSO UNIQUE IN THAT IT FOCUSES ON THE DUAL ROLE IN MISSIONS—SENTINEL AND GOER. GODLY AND EXPERIENCED MISSIONARIES AND LOCAL CHURCH PASTORS PREACH AND TEACH AT THE CONFERENCE. THE STUDENTS SEE WHAT MISSIONS-MINDED LOCAL CHURCHES ARE LIKE BY LISTENING TO THE PASTORS. THEY ALSO SEE EXCELLENT REPRESENTATIONS OF MISSIONARY LIFE IN THOSE WHO COME FROM OVERSEAS. IN ADDITION TO SEVERAL GENERAL SESSIONS, PERTINENT WORKSHOPS ARE OFFERED, SUCH AS “BUILDING A CHURCH VIA DISCIPLESHIP IN A SPARSELY POPULATED AREA,” “MISSIONS MOBILIZATION 101,” “SUCCESSFUL MISSION TRIPS,” AND “DON’T SWALLOW THOSE BOMBS: EXERCISING DISCERNMENT IN MISSIONS.”
chaplain (LT) Tavis Long, command chaplain at the Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow, California, is no stranger to military life. His father, CDR Robert Long (retired) served in the Vietnam War as a Coast Guard pilot. Chaplain Long is the third of seven children.

Chaplain Long attended high school at Massillon Christian School in Massillon, Ohio, where he was active in the student council, vice president of his graduating class, a member of the varsity soccer and basketball teams, and a member of the National Honor Society. He graduated cum laude from Pensacola Christian College with a BS in Secondary History education and a minor in Secondary English education. While in college, he served in several capacities in student government, including as president of his class. He was also active in the soccer program and was named to numerous all-star teams. During the summers he served as the Summer Youth Camp Director of his home church.

Chaplain Long earned a master of Divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. While in seminary, he worked as a teacher and a coach at a Christian school, while additionally serving as assistant pastor, associate pastor, or interim pastor in various churches.

In December 2001 Chaplain Long was ordained into the gospel ministry by his home church. In May 2001 he was sworn in as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy Chaplain Candidate Officer Program by his father. After graduating from seminary, he applied for active duty and signed his oath of office on September 15, 2004, as the youngest active duty chaplain in the U.S. Navy.

As command chaplain, Chaplain Long oversees all ministry activities on the base. Along with his duties as a Navy chaplain, he writes a column for the local paper and has had numerous opportunities to speak at local civic functions.

Chaplain Long is married to the former Kendal Heeb. She has a degree in elementary education and currently works at the Child Development center at the marine base. She is also very involved with her husband in ministry opportunities on the base. Chaplain and Mrs. Long are members of the Faith Baptist church in Newberry Springs, California, and serve as his responsibilities and schedule at the base permit.

Bob Ellis is the National Field Representative for the FBFI Commission on Chaplains. He and his wife travel extensively, visiting Fundamental Christian colleges and seminaries, promoting the FBFI chaplaincy ministry. He is also available to speak in churches and can be contacted at (850) 261-6647.
he clattering crash on the temple floor undoubtedly drew the attention of everyone present. Why would the Lord Jesus choose this spectacle to get the attention of the crowds? Why choose this moment to angrily drive both people and things out of the temple? It was a matter of worship. He was making a statement about the nature of true Biblical worship, and that resounding crash still echoes in our hearts today.

What was that urgent matter that abruptly demanded attention? The sweet incense of intercessory prayer was missing. In fact, the Lord reported that, “It is written, ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is steadfast, because he trusteth in thee’” (Isa. 26:3). Without offering, the people were jilted by the Lord. The people were supposed to be representing the Lord’s interests. In fact, the Lord reported that even the act of prayer can be compromised! If your prayers are “living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God—through Jesus Christ” (Rom. 12:1), you can be sure that the Lord is pleased when you worship. He was making a statement about the nature of true Biblical worship, and that resounding crash still echoes in our hearts today.

It’s time to commit savagery against our own idolatry.

Believers today are called upon to join hands with the Lord as they open the doors of their personal temples to Him. Those who do so recognize the deceptive ease with which they have set up idols in their hearts (Ezek. 14:2, 3). It is as if each heart has a lining of molten silver. Rising through the sanctifying liquid is anything that we experience; anything we see, feel, smell, taste, or think can be corrupted! If your prayers are dominated by “the organ recital” for human ailments rather than the eternal destiny of human souls, isn’t that a problem? Sure, it’s a preoccupation with the material at the expense of the spiritual.

We need to turn some of our holidays back into holy days. Take some concentrated time to cast out the thieves and return to your God-given purpose: to become a house of prayer. It’s a matter of worship. Let’s honor God with some resounding crashes in our hearts as we expel the thieves from our own temples and pray for God-given revival.

Gordon Dickson is the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio.
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