

MENTORING OUR NEXT GENERATION • PLUGGING THE INTXICATED TEENAGER INTO CHRIST

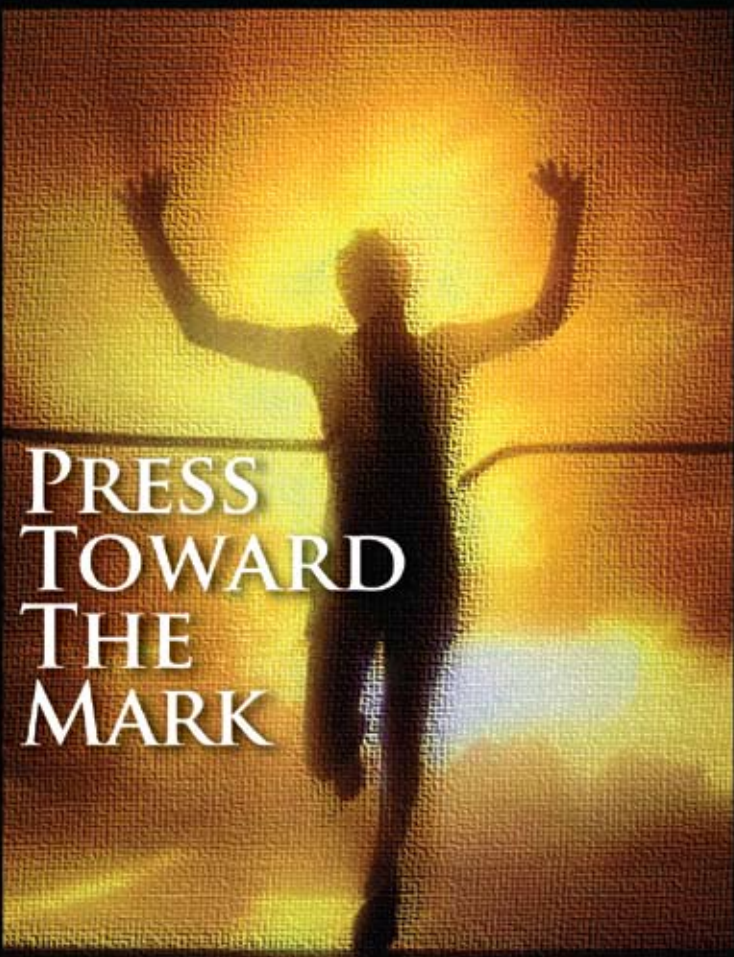
FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

January/February 2008 • \$3.95



Temptations
Teenagers Face



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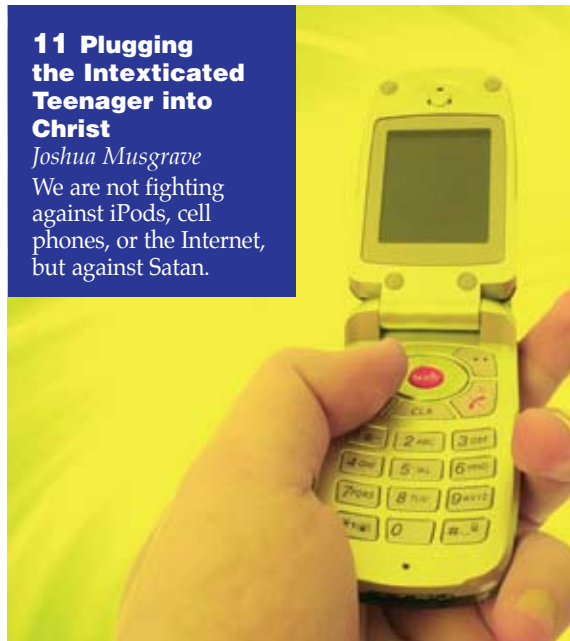
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I've just finished the [Sept/Oct 2007] edition of *FrontLine*. A ministry colleague here in the Phoenix area gave me a copy. . . . Overall the articles were well written with good content. The best article, in my opinion, was the one written by Pastor Smith of Bethel in Schaumburg.

I guess my disagreement would not be as much over what was said, but rather what was left out. If Dr. Lemp is right and an associate pastor's relationship with the senior pastor mirrors that of a wife's relationship with her husband in regards to authority, you would expect the NT to reflect that. It doesn't. What it does reflect is that the typical pattern of local churches was to have a plurality of pastors/elders/bishops in which these co-leaders give oversight and accountability to each other (Acts 20:28). There is far more evidence that a healthy approach to church government is two offices (elders/pastors/bishops

and deacons) not three (top-of-the-pyramid-senior pastor, lower level "second-man pastor," then deacons). In some of our churches significant drift has taken place. In some cases one finds four or five offices/levels. Big guy ("BG") on top (first level), a few instrumental ministry leaders or deacons just below the BG (second level . . . I call this level, "the group"), then the other deacons or ministry heads under "the group" (third level), followed by "little pastors" (fourth level), then the rest of the leadership after them working its way down the pyramid, with the "BG" always on top. Always alone.

The problem with too many churches in Fundamentalism . . . is that senior pastors have no *real* accountability. When congregants confront the BG, he pulls out the Hebrews passage that teaches them to submit. When a leader confronts the BG, he pulls out the pas-

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Temptations Faced by Teenagers

John C. Vaughn

Most preachers know what it is like to prepare a message on an assigned topic. I was once asked by a conference host to preach on the subject "The Enemies of Fundamentalism." Immediately I began to compile a mental list of outspoken individuals who oppose the doctrine of separation and important ecclesiastical movements eroding the fundamentals. Then, I felt sure I had to include the matter of music. Hmmm . . . there was a possible outline: The Enemies of Fundamentalism—Men, Movements, Music. But as I prayed and considered what the Bible had to say, I was led to a different approach: The Enemies of Fundamentalism—The World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

These are also the enemies of Christian teenagers, their main areas of temptation. They are your enemies because they are the enemies of Christ (and like Judas, these enemies betray Him with a kiss). Teenagers and youth workers should study the Gospel accounts of the temptation of Christ and see there how Satan tempted Him just as he tempts you. You are not greater than your Lord. As you deal with these same temptations, you will face persecution (2 Tim. 3:12), ridicule (Matt. 5:10–12), and hatred (John 15:18–20). You need the strength of spiritual maturity to overcome these temptations in a hostile environment. Christian teenagers live in enemy territory!

Defeating an enemy requires you to know your enemy. The world hates Christ, and it hates you too. James tells us that if we join the enemies of Christ, we make ourselves "the

[enemies] of God" (James 4:4). John explained further why we are not to love the world (1 John 2:15–17). The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—desiring pleasure, possessions, or power instead of desiring God—reveal that the love of God is not in us. The meaning of these verses is clear, in spite of the endless quibbling about their application in Christian life. Worldliness deals with motives.

"Why won't my parents let me listen to CCM? It draws me closer to the Lord," you reason. But if you want to be closer to the Lord, then why not honor your parents as the Lord commands? If you will listen to your own defenses with a spiritually open heart, the Lord will show you how you are being influenced by the world rather than influencing the world for Him. Biblical examination of your heart is one of the ways you engage in spiritual warfare. Galatians 5:16–21 lists the works of the flesh and tells us how they lust against the Spirit. That passage is very helpful as you prepare for this battle.

You know that the Devil is the enemy of Christ and a great source of temptation. We are quick to blame temptation on the Devil. Are we quick to blame our own flesh? James 1:14 tells us that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." The flesh is allied with the world and the Devil; it is a friend of the enemies of Christ. It cannot be made to cooperate with the Spirit, for they are "contrary the one to the other." It must submit to the Spirit, so that the life can be "led by the Spirit." The war between the flesh and

the spirit will continue until we are delivered from the flesh, but it is not a hopeless battle. In fact, James tells you to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." God does not tempt you, but He allows temptation to bring you to spiritual maturity.

God promised you that He would never allow you to be tempted to the point at which the only alternative you have is to sin (1 Cor. 10:13). You cannot overcome the world with worldly weapons, the flesh with more-disciplined flesh, or the Devil with his own devices. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2 Cor. 10:3–6). You have victory over a specific temptation when your thoughts and actions about it are Christlike—when your "obedience is fulfilled."

The temptations faced by teenagers are the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, specialized for the vulnerabilities of teenagers. How you deal with them will determine your progress toward spiritual maturity. Have courage: though the Devil rules this world and you live here in the flesh, you can overcome them all, for "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."



Mentoring

Our Next Generation

Jeno's pizza, rock quarries, and filing cabinets are three items that to most people do not mean much of anything. But to me they symbolize times in my teenage life when someone mentored me. To this day, whenever I eat a Jeno's pizza, I remember the graciousness and sacrifice of a young couple who invited me over to their home just to get to know me better. They were financially strapped but used ninety-nine-cent pizzas to help bridge the gap between me and them so that they could attempt to minister to me.

As a teenager, I loved guns, but my dad knew very little about them. A rock quarry close to my home was the place where a man in my church would take me to teach me how to use a shotgun. While I learned to shoot, I also remember that the man challenged me to give my heart to the Lord.

And I can hardly use a filing cabinet without recalling the night a businessman from my church asked me to help him move filing cabinets. While trying to move the first filing cabinet, I cut four of the fingers on my right hand. I was rendered practically useless with this injury, but the man for whom I was working bandaged me up and challenged my walk with the Lord while he did it.

Looking back, I am amazed to think that none of these people were a part of the youth staff at my church. They did not have a position that would have prompted their involvement in my life. What they did have was a heart that was burdened for me and a big enough concern to pursue me and challenge me to walk with God. They mentored me!

The Magnifying Glass Principle

A number of years ago I began a study in Scripture to determine what it meant to Biblically mentor those around me in my ministry. I began my study by asking myself how Christ developed those around Him. In my reading, I came across Mark 3:14: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." This verse grabbed my attention because it teaches us one of the primary classrooms that the Lord used to develop those around Him. This classroom did not involve desks or lecterns but rather simply "being with Him."

Have you ever wished that more of the details of Christ's daily life were recorded? What did the Lord find humorous? What were the conversations around the

campfire like? What was Christ like late at night after a hard day of ministry? Scripture does not give us answers to these questions, but the twelve disciples would have known them: they were with Him! They saw and observed all of those things.

As I reflected on Mark 3:14, I realized that there is an inseparable link between proximity and ministry. The great fear that we face when we allow people to get close to us is that they may see that we have flaws—and indeed they will! But the constant awareness that people are seeing the “real” us challenges us to make sure that we are constantly growing and staying in a position in which Christ is magnified in our lives. I like to call this “the magnifying glass principle”—the closer people get to us, the more vividly they see the details of our lives. In Philippians 1:20, the apostle Paul tells us of his challenging desire: that Christ would be “magnified” in his body, whether it was by life or by death.

One of the most sobering truths that God reminds me of regularly is that God did not call me into the ministry because He needed me in the ministry; rather, God called me into the ministry because I needed the ministry. So what is the point? Mentoring is in essence allowing people to get close enough to us to see the Person we are pursuing and into whose image we are being changed. The bonus is that in the mentoring process, we are challenged to grow too.

For a number of years now I have taught this magnifying glass principle of Mark 3:14 to my church. When our church started, we did not have a teen ministry, simply because we had no teens. But when our church was about two years old, God sent Daniel, a young teen, into our church. His parents were not believers and did not show an interest in coming, but he came faithfully. We did not have an official bus route, but we did have a number of men who took turns picking Daniel up and bringing him to church. I do not underestimate the value of the teaching and preaching he has heard in our church from the pulpit, Sunday school classes, and now youth meetings. But I also cannot ignore the great value that has come from the time spent by different men picking him up and taking him home from church. It is interesting to me that he got saved after a conversation that took place at the end of a car ride home from church. As I look back over Daniel’s life from the time when he began coming to our church up until now, I see a number of different men who have spent time with him, teaching him how to build decks, shoot a basketball, grill hamburgers, and much more. All of those things were simply men taking opportunities to help shape Daniel’s life.

We now have a strong youth ministry with a number of youth workers. But I am thankful that those youth workers are not the only ones who minister to our teens. Instead, a

host of adult men and women have grasped the Mark 3:14 principle. They have chosen to go after specific teens and to allow those teens to get close to them so that these adults can challenge the teens and help them become useable for God.

The Goal of Mentoring the Next Generation

Christ’s goal in having His disciples with Him was to be able to send them out. Our goal in mentoring this next generation ought to be the same—to send out the ministers of tomorrow. While God may not call all of them to be pastors or missionaries, what a joy it would be if they became mentors in the local church they will be a part of one day!

As I look on Sundays at the faces of our teens, I marvel at how many of the ones that now come to our youth group have specifically come because Daniel invited them. He is already putting into practice what he has seen others do in his life. And then as I look at the faces of the men who have been involved in Daniel’s life, I see men who have grown spiritually because of their involvement in mentoring him.

I will never forget that night I moved those filing cabinets and sliced my fingers. At that time in my life, I was a teen who was running from God and seeking to live my life apart from Him. But that businessman at my church developed a burden for me. He had plenty of employees who could have moved filing cabinets for him that night, but he chose to call and ask me to help him. He drove to my home and picked me up and demonstrated genuine concern in my life as we drove and talked. And when I cut my fingers and was unable to help him anymore, he did not get angry or frustrated with me. I am convinced that the reason for his not getting frustrated was that I was not there primarily to move filing cabinets but so that he could mentor and invest time in me. That night as he bandaged my hand, he

exhorted me to get right with God. To this day, I clearly remember his words: “When you do get right, you ought to consider going to a place called Ironwood to work. I think God could use you in that type of ministry.”

Nearly two years later I did get right with the Lord and just a year after that I found myself counseling for a summer at Ironwood, a Christian camp in southern California. That conversation paved the way for God ultimately to lead me to California to live. Every day as I minister here, I am reminded that God uses mentors in local churches to change the lives of teenagers. The youth ministry is not limited to the people who specifically work with the teens in their weekly services. Rather, it includes any church member with a burden for teens and with a concern deep enough to challenge them in their walk with God—to mentor them.

Ron Perry pastors Faith Baptist Church of Newberry Springs, a church he planted in southern California in 2002, and is the director of Spoke Ministries at Ironwood, a Christian camp in Newberry Springs.

Mentoring is in essence allowing people to get close enough to us to see the Person we are pursuing and into whose image we are being changed.



The Role in

Last year my wife and I bought our first home. We were blessed to find a home with a large yard. Yet, with the blessing of a usable yard came significant upkeep and maintenance to keep the landscaping looking nice. Up to that point in my life I had had little lawn-care experience, so moving to this house and yard put me on a pretty steep learning curve! Right from the start, I learned an important lesson about yards: without constant cultivation, they go into immediate decline!

When people pass a beautifully landscaped golf course, they automatically know that someone has put an enormous amount of time and effort into shaping and maintaining those grounds. We could say that children are much the same, in that no child naturally grows into a mature, Christlike adult without an enormous investment of time and effort on the part of a mature, Christlike disciple-maker. Without persistent cultivation, the next generation will fall into spiritual decline just like an overgrown lawn. This is precisely why youth ministry is so incredibly important. Yet, in order to have a proper foundation, a youth ministry must be built on a very important principle.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses gave the children of Israel his final exhortation before they entered the Promised Land. His concern was that they remain faithful and that they teach the generations to come to be faithful as well. How did he expect them to achieve this? He told them in 6:4–9,

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Moses was saying that in order to raise another generation of godly Israelites, the *parents* must persistently and thoroughly disciple their children in their relationship to the

one true God. I believe any understanding of youth ministry must start right here—with the primacy of the parents' role in personally discipling their children. This passage, therefore, contains some weighty implications for parents.

Parents Must Personally Love the Lord

In verses 4 and 5, Moses told these parents where their discipleship efforts must begin—with their own personal relationship with the Lord. These verses, known as the *Shema*, tell us that the Lord, Yahweh, is the ultimate reality; He is the only true God. Parents must know Him and must show Him to their children. We live in a culture that is increasingly pluralistic. Even some Christian parents today have bought into the world's fallacy that we shouldn't force Christianity on our children, that we should allow them to investigate and come to their own conclusion—"their truth." We must not be so deceived as believers. Our God, Yahweh, is the only God. He is the ultimate reality. If we ourselves are not increasing in our knowledge of Him and are not grounding our children in the knowledge of this God, we rob them of an accurate perception of the world around them. Young people must grow to know this God if they are to know how to function in ways that please Him in His world.

We are also told in these verses that He is the ultimate pursuit. In Matthew 22:37, Christ referenced this passage in Deuteronomy and articulated the greatest commandment in the law: to love the Lord with all one's heart, soul, and mind. He must be the number one pursuit in our hearts. It is not enough simply to teach our children about God; we must let them see in us a personal love relationship with Him. In a very real sense, this kind of passion for God is not taught, it is caught. And it *must* be caught! Unless they are motivated out of a growing love for God, our young people will lead Christian lives that are driven by a sense of duty at best, and that are hollow and short-lived at worst. They may learn to obey because they believe they should—it is simply what Christians do. Or, as often happens, they will see in their parents a joyless life of dos and don'ts, and (understandably) turn to something more fulfilling. Parents must show by example the joy of living for Christ that springs from their personal love for Christ.

of the Parents Youth Ministry

Joe Vaughn

Parents Must Consistently Teach Their Children

While the previous verses show us where our discipleship efforts must begin, the next two verses tell us that they cannot stop there. It is not enough merely to love the Lord around our young people. Parents must take every opportunity they get to instruct their children in the truth. This includes routine times of Bible study and family devotions, but it also means capitalizing on the many opportunities that come when they are least expected. This kind of persistence and constant readiness to teach the Word requires two things.

First, the Word of God must be our *meditation*. “And these words . . . shall be in thine heart” (Deut. 6:6). It is not enough for the Word of God to be in our heads; it must be the constant meditation of our souls. Reading the Bible at the family dinner table can be pretty well maintained with a mere head-knowledge of the Word, but seeing Bible principles while cleaning a carburetor with your son or while doing the dishes with your daughter requires a mind that easily reverts back to the Scripture. In working with teenagers, I have found it difficult to steer a given conversation toward spiritual things unless I have started that day filling my soul with meditation on the Word. When my heart is full of the truth of God, I can’t help but overflow it into the young people around me.

Second, this kind of consistent teaching requires that the Word be our *conversation*. “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Moses is telling them to be teaching the Word all the time! It is to be a regular and frequent part of your conversations with your children. If the only time they hear their parents talk about the Bible is on Sunday or at night before they go to bed, they won’t learn that the Bible is to be the basis for all they do in life. Yet, if God’s Word is truly what you as their parents rely on for every circumstance in life, it will naturally come out in your dealings with your children. Children need to see in their parents a life that is governed by the Word. And a life that is governed by the Word will readily and easily revert back to Bible principles when issues come up. Yes, routine times of family devotions are right and necessary. But some of the most significant teaching times that parents can have

with their children come when they are least expected. Times when Johnny comes home from school with a failing grade on a test; or when Susie’s heart is broken over a boy at church; or when they see Dad come home early from work because he has been laid off. Moments like these sneak up unannounced, but they bring with them a golden opportunity to teach Bible principles. All the time, parents are to be directing their children’s attention to the Word of God.

A word needs to be said here about the parents’ personal responsibility in teaching their children as it relates to the youth group and Christian school. Perhaps God has blessed you to be in a church with a strong, Biblically based youth program or has put you in an area where you have access to a solid Christian school. These things are genuine blessings indeed. Yet, where these kinds of influences are available, parents will often ease into spiritual “cruise control” when it comes to discipling their children. The mentality of many is that as long as they pay the tuition—albeit a great personal sacrifice in and of itself—they are fulfilling their responsibility to disciple their children. Or as long as they get their family into a strong church and see that their children are there each week for youth group, they are fulfilling their responsibilities. The instructions in these verses in Deuteronomy, however, lay responsibility squarely at the feet of the parents first. It is the parents’ job to be faithfully living and teaching the Word. The Christian school and church youth program are tremendous assets at the parents’ disposal but should only supplement the discipleship being received at home, never replace it. People often perceive that my job as youth pastor is to help our teenagers. In reality, my primary job is to help our *parents* help their teenagers. I have come to see that heart issues in our young people often reflect parent issues in their home. If, in trying to help a teenager or young person, I neglect to bring the parents into the picture, I bypass the number one disciple-making influence that God has ordained in the life of that young person.

Parents Must Saturate Their Children’s Environment with the Word

Verse 8 says, “And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” These verses and others like them were taken quite literally by the Jews throughout their history. Even today,

faithful Jews carefully don their tefillin or phylacteries before reciting their daily prayers. They literally bind the Word upon their hands and between their eyes. Moses' intention here, though, was not that they physically apply the Word to their bodies but that they be always reminded of it and constantly guided by it. As a married man, I wear on my left hand a constant reminder of my relationship with my wife. It serves as a perpetual reminder that I made some specific vows to a specific woman and that she made them to me. Children must also be reminded on a regular basis of the Word of God. If asked, how often would your children say that they are reminded of the Word of God in their home? Are their questions answered with, "What does the Bible say?"

Not only must children be constantly reminded of the Word, they must also be constantly confronted with it! In verse 9 we read, "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." This is another prescription that the Jews have taken quite literally.

A few years ago I had the privilege to travel to the Holy Land. While there, I noticed that on nearly every door I went through there was a little box fixed to the doorframe with Hebrew writing on it. I learned that this was called the mezuzah. It contains verses of the Old Testament and is faithfully installed on the doorframe in accordance with this verse—to "write them upon the posts of thy house."

Not only must children be constantly reminded of the Word, they must also be constantly confronted with it!

But Moses was not talking about literally posting the Word to the door of your house; he meant that your home must be recognized as a place where the Word of God is.

He meant that as folks pass by your home, they should immediately recognize the Word there. Is the Word this much a part of your home? Does it influence all that goes on therein? Could your children look around their home and family life and see the effects of Bible principles on why they do what they do? For instance, does the music in their home reinforce Bible truth and a correct understanding of the character of God? Are the family

standards consistent and based on Bible principles? Young people have a keen sense of what is authentic and what is phony. When they hear their parents talk a lot about the Bible yet see no rhyme nor reason as to why certain things go on in their home, they receive a very conflicted message.

Scripture must be at home in your home; it must permeate all your family does. If it doesn't, don't be surprised if you have a hard time teaching your children to consistently turn to the Word.

Joe Vaughn is the youth pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina. He holds a BA in History from Bob Jones University and is currently working on a Master of Divinity degree from the Bob Jones Seminary. He and his wife, Kimberly, were married in 2006.

Adaptation

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Plugging the Intoxicated Teenager into Christ



Joshua Musgrave

Why are so many teens today so techno-savvy but so uninterested in spiritual things?

Many of us have seen a youth group sit down to hear preaching and look as if they were attending a funeral—yet, fueled by energy drinks, they will stay up all night long playing video games or surfing the Net.

They forget to bring their Bibles to church; however, they wouldn't be caught dead without their cell phones.

Although many teens will spend hours updating their MySpace or Facebook profiles, they couldn't care less about their spiritual testimony in front of their friends.

Some can text faster than they can speak, but they can't find the book of Ephesians in their Bible.

They will send and receive over 200 texts per day, yet their parents and other spiritual leaders can't seem to get a word out of them.

This is the first generation to grow up with high-speed computers accessing the Internet as a standard item in every house. Many of today's teens live in a constant virtual world: iPods plugged into their ears 24/7, cell phones ready at all times, and the Internet at their fingertips. How can we show them how to use this enthusiasm for technology in their relationship with Christ? How can we unplug the headphones and plug these "intoxicated" teenagers into Christ?

To answer these questions we must look at what this technology is putting into the minds of our teens. Music, TV, video games, the Internet, and the counsel of peers are available at the touch of a button, and they can all send potentially dangerous messages to our teens (2 Tim. 3:1-13): Why obey your parents? Why confine yourself to the rules of the Bible? Why don't you drink? Why wait until marriage for sex? What's wrong with pornography? Why should you go to church? Why shouldn't you listen to this music? Why is it bad to watch that show or movie? The answers to these questions can leave Christian teens feeling like outcasts. According to the media and their unsaved or carnal friends, they are missing out on some of the best parts of life. Many times, technology is the only way for our teens to feel as though they fit in with their culture.

A Different Way of Thinking

Because of these advances in technology, teens of today communicate and think differently than we do. Many parents hardly know how to text message, let alone think that it is a valid means of conversation. (I have found that many of the conversations in my youth group start with the question, "Hey, did you get the text I sent you?") Text messaging is not simply a GPS locator for your wandering teen. Try using text messaging to tell your teens that you love them, ask them how they are doing, thank them for something they did, or let them know that you are praying for them. This is what their friends are doing, but it doesn't mean that you need to spend endless hours practicing your texting so you can respond quickly or really communicate your heart. Although text messaging does not replace meaningful conversation, it gives a foundation on which to start one. Do what you can to open the communication lines.

Teens are communicating through social networking sites. Many parents are aware of the dangers of social networking, yet they don't realize that their teenager has a MySpace or Facebook profile. Other parents, who know that their teen has one of these, don't know how to check his profile or help him make good choices. Because of this, these networking sites are a world with virtually no adult accountability. As parents and youth workers, we need to be aware of what our teens are saying and doing on these sites. You wouldn't let your teenagers go out with a group of friends whom you know nothing about or let them stay out all night long and not know what they are doing. Don't let them do this online either. Look around on the site and determine whether it is something that is safe from inappropriate content and sexual predators. Determine whether you want to allow your teen into that environment. If you approve, then get your teen's password or start your own profile. Have your teen add you as a friend and keep him accountable for what he says and does online. Find out how to use the privacy settings on the sites so you can help your teen protect him or herself from bad people and bad content. These networking sites can be dangerous places. Make sure that you know what your teens are doing, and don't let them live in a virtual world without adult accountability. You are not spying on your teens or invading their privacy by doing this; you are protecting them from evil (Prov. 22:3).

It is important to understand that teens think differently than we do. They live with a mindset that views right and wrong as relative. This thinking comes from our postmodern culture, and, in my experience, it is virtually unavoidable no matter how sheltered or protected a teenager may be. This thinking differs drastically from that of most of our youth workers and parents, who believe that we can take certain facts and prove that we are right on any given issue. This does not matter to our teenagers because they believe what is true for you may not necessarily be true for them. These thinking patterns are polar opposites and require sympathetic teaching (Jude 22). This does not give any excuse for their wrong actions. It is simply a change in the way we teach. We must teach that the Bible is the basis for truth, that there is a right and wrong, and that they can know the difference.

Helping Teens Change

I have always been taught that the only person whom you can change is yourself. Although we cannot force our teenagers to change, we can change our actions towards them. How can we make changes in our lives that affect their lives? First, we must show our teens that we love

them. Consistent correction, which is what our teens need, without the balance of love will breed contempt (Eph. 6:4). When was the last time you showed your teenagers that you love them? When was the last time that you took a break from teaching them and just had fun with them? Teaching has its place, but you will find that your teaching will be much more effective when built upon a foundation of love.

Second, we must back up our teaching with our lives (James 1). Practice what you preach. So many times we are spinning our wheels with our teaching because our teens clearly see that our lives don't back up our teaching. Are you available when your teens need you? Will you stop what you are doing to listen to them? Do your teens see church as important to you, or do you skip when you are tired, had a hard week at work, or would simply rather do something else? You may not see church as important to your spiritual walk with Christ, but what kind of a message are you sending to your teens? Do your teens know that you spend time daily with God? Do you let them know how God is working in your life? It really comes down to this: do your teenagers see Christ in you (2 Cor. 3:18)? You can't change your teens, but Jesus can change them through you if you will let Him change you.

Lastly, teach your teenagers (Prov. 22:6)! Teach them when they should or shouldn't use their iPods and cell phones. Teach them how to think Biblically and why they shouldn't listen to certain types of music or watch certain things on television. Teach them how they can have a good testimony on MySpace and Facebook; teach them how to choose their friends wisely. Most importantly, teach your teenagers who their God is (Josh. 4:5-7). Teach them that Jesus wants a personal relationship with them. He loves them and cares for them. Don't sit back and think that someone else more qualified than you will magically teach your teenagers or that your standards and convictions will simply rub off on them. Teach them lovingly, consistently, and Biblically.

We must realize that we are in a battle for our teens' hearts. We are not fighting against iPods, cell phones, or the Internet; we are fighting against Satan (Eph. 6:12). Don't get discouraged and quit (Eph. 6:13). We are not fighting *for* victory in Christ—we are fighting *from* a position of victory in Christ (Eph. 1:7-12). This is a battle that must be won and can be won only through Christ in us. Only a relationship with Christ can unplug these teens from the world. Let's show our teenagers Christ's love, life, and teaching in our lives (Phil. 2:5-11).

Joshua Musgrave is youth pastor at Highlands Baptist Church in Centennial, Colorado.

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God's Word for High-Tech Teens

Rand Hummel

Unlike many technologically challenged church leaders today, our technologically unchallenged young people and young couples in our churches are asking, "What does God's Word have to say about the high-tech world that we live in? Just show me a chapter and verse that has anything to say about cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, texting, P2P accounts, blogs, game systems, or e-mails!" A quick look into *Strong's Concordance* will leave you hard pressed to find any of the above-mentioned items.

We need to recognize that . . .

- Today, more people have cell phones than fixed telephone lines, both in the United States and internationally.
- There are more than one billion cell phone users worldwide.
- China's mobile phone market, the world's biggest, has over 400 million users.
- The average American spends about seven hours a month talking on his cell phone.
- More than 60 million teenagers now carry cell phones, and most take them everywhere they go.
- Related headlines from around the world remind us that we do have a problem:
 - "New Zealand Teen Sends 8000 Texts a Month"
 - From the UK: "Text Messaging Addiction"; "Cell Phones the Newest Teen Addiction"
 - "Germany Faces Epidemic of Text Message Addicts"
 - "Three out of Ten Korean Youths Are Addicted to Mobile Phones"

■ From Spain: "Warning: Mobile Phones Are Addictive"

■ "World SMS Mania Hits Russian Teenagers"

(Information above is taken from dan@youra.com.)

When we look at all this new technology, we must remember that God's Word is and has always been profitable (useful) for any time or age. We cannot isolate those God has called us to serve from the world, but we can give them

Bible principles to help insulate them from the world's evil. A thorough study and meditation of many common passages will open many simple yet life-changing principles for the high-tech world we live in.

Cell Phones and Texting

What does God have to say about cell phones and texting? Although it takes most adults fifteen minutes to text the word "dog," teens can text the Gettysburg Address while walking from class to class in school. Communication is communication whether it is talking, texting, or typing. A quick understanding and application of Romans 12:9-12 is needed in this incredibly increasing wireless world.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

Let your love be real! ("Let love be without dissimulation.")

- Are you ignoring others or being rude just because a friend calls?

Hate evil and love good! ("Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.")

- Are you careful about what you talk and text about?

Be kind, loving, and considerate of those around you. ("Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;

in honour preferring one another.”)

- Are you conscious of those around you? Do you keep your phone on vibrate? Do you keep a ten-foot zone between yourself and others when you talk? Do you keep your phone off in public places?

Keep a zealous, intense testimony for God. (“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”)

- Do those you talk to know that you love God more than you love them?

Blogs and P2P Accounts

What does God have to say about the world of blogs and P2P (person-to-person) accounts? Many have never visited these Internet cities, but we cannot deny that this is the world in which those in their teens and twenties live. If we are to help them understand that they can please God in a high-tech world, we must teach them to meditate and apply verses such as Philippians 4:8 to their high-tech communication. This verse commands us to “think” on the things that would best bring honor to our Lord and holiness to our lives. So let’s “think” about how we communicate in blogs or P2P accounts according to Philippians 4:8.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Whatever things are true!

- Have you ever lied online? Have you lied about your age, your looks, your accomplishments, or your relationship with God?

Whatever things are honorable!

- Have you ever dishonored your parents with your friends online? Have you ever dishonored God by refusing to take a stand for Him online?

Whatever things are just!

- Have you been fair to your friends by talking to them

before talking to others?

Whatever things are pure!

- Have you involved yourself in impure conversations? Have you downloaded or uploaded pictures that would cause impure thinking? Do you filter your computer to keep you away from the constant invitations to porn sites?

Whatever things are lovely!

- Have you ever been ugly or unkind to authorities or friends in your wall-to-wall conversations? Are you viewing YouTube videos that are inappropriate?

Whatever things are commendable!

- Could your testimony be weakened or destroyed by any of your recent conversations or posts? Is there anything in your online world that you would be embarrassed for other family or church members to find out?

Whatever things are excellent!

- Have you lost your spirit of excellence by compromising your positions on sin? Have you become mediocre in your walk with God because of the inordinate time you spend communicating with your friends rather than God?

Whatever things are praiseworthy to God!

- Do you please God with what you say? Do you please God with the type of friends you choose? Do you please God with the time you spend with Him compared to the time you spend with your friends?

The simple principles of God’s Word can insulate us from the world’s evil that we wish we could isolate ourselves and our families from. God’s Word is still profitable (useful) and should be used by church leaders to encourage those young people and young couples that God has called them to serve to keep their walk with God strong as they travel through this electronic world.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. . . .

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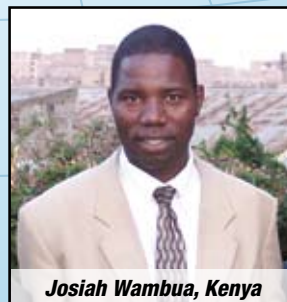
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Helping Our Christian Youth in America's Hidden Health Crisis

Dan Borkert



I first met Janet¹ for a well-child evaluation; she was six years old. Her family had selected me as their family doctor. I remembered reviewing her medical history and noting that she was quite inactive. She didn't enjoy sports or like to play outside with other children but rather preferred to watch TV and play video games. Her physical exam was normal except for her height and weight ratio: she was in the 99th percentile in weight while only in the 50th percentile in height. When discussing this issue with her mother, I was told that they were a family of "large people."

Janet's father, though only in his late thirties, suffered from obesity with the secondary complications of diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. He subsequently developed kidney damage and loss of vision—both as a consequence of his poorly controlled diabetes. Her mother also was overweight and struggled with depression.

By the time Janet reached early adolescence, she was morbidly obese (twice the average body weight for her age). She often missed school and asked for excuses to miss PE because her "knees hurt." She told me that she didn't like being around other kids because they referred to her as "fatso." Though I counseled her and her parents on numerous occasions about exercise and diet, minimal efforts were made to change her habits. By age thirteen her blood analysis indicated early diabetes. I knew that unless

she changed her lifestyle and lost weight, she, like her father, would suffer many of the complications of diabetes and likely die a premature death.

A Growing Problem

Sadly, Janet and her father are not isolated medical cases in our modern culture. One needs only to look around or even look in the mirror to realize that Americans are getting bigger and bigger. In fact, the United States has become known as the "fattest" industrialized nation in the world.² Statistically approximately 71 million adults (34.3%) are classified as overweight with another 66 million (32%) considered obese.³

Historically, this phenomenon is very recent. Only since the mid-seventies has the prevalence of obesity increased sharply for both adults and children. One survey reported that among adults aged 20–74 years the prevalence of obesity increased from 15.0% (1976–80 survey) to 32.9% (2003–2004 survey).⁴ Yet more shocking, in the same survey a 5.0% to 13.9% increase in obesity was noted in children ages 2–5; a change from 6.5% to 18.8% in those aged 6–11; and for those aged 12–19 years the prevalence of obesity more than tripled, changing from 5.0% to 17.4%.⁵

Although there is a social stigma associated with obesity, the multiple related physical maladies are the main issues

that concern the medical community. Being above one's ideal body weight increases the risk of diabetes mellitus (with the complications of vision loss, kidney failure, and amputations), high blood pressure, abnormal lipid patterns, coronary heart disease, stroke, gall bladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, and several cancers.⁶ And most significantly, the Center for Disease Control estimates 112,000 deaths per year are directly attributable to obesity.⁷ In fact, with respect to lifestyle choices, death from obesity-related diseases is second only to death from smoking. It is because of this needlessly increased morbidity and premature mortality that the medical community voices such a great concern about obesity.

One of the national health objectives for the year 2010 is to reduce the prevalence of obesity among adults to less than 15%; unfortunately, mostly due to the increasing percentage of obese children and young people, current data indicate that the situation is worsening rather than improving!⁸ Approximately 80% of children who are overweight at aged 10–15 years will become obese adults at age 25.⁹ *This is why intervention needs to occur at as young an age as possible.*

When looking at obesity trends it is interesting to note that the greatest obesity rates are concentrated in the southern part of the United States, the very area that is called the "Bible Belt".¹⁰ Clearly, when compared to the rest of the population, Christians are no different, and may, in fact, as a group actually be worse!

The Bible Perspective

But what does the Bible teach on this subject? And what can Christian leaders do to make a difference? We need only look at harmful practices discussed in Scripture and look at the principle of stewardship of the physical body to guide us.

Most serious Christians would agree that alcohol consumption impairs reasoning and can directly harm the physical being; thus, many would agree drinking alcohol for social purposes is a sinful practice that should be shunned. The Bible certainly warns of the ill effects related to alcoholic drink. Likewise, today, Christians generally agree in the harm done to the body from using tobacco products or using illicit drugs. Medical science has proven this to be so. There are no direct commands in the Bible in respect to these vices. But because the principle of *proper care of our physical beings* is taught throughout Scripture, modern Biblical Christians rightfully consider tobacco and illicit drug usage to be both sinful and taboo. Let's look at some of these principles.

One of the most common passages quoted is 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye

have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The context of this passage relates to sexual immorality, but it is applicable to other practices that are harmful to the body. The main point here is that we belong to God and all our being should be used to glorify Him. Again this principle is emphasized in Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Paul is telling us that our bodies are to be a *living sacrifice* that is acceptable to God. We must care for our physical being so that we can be effective in our service

for Him. More specifically the Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that even in the most basic activities such as eating and drinking we must glorify the Lord.

Why is proper physical stewardship important to our Lord? First, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and are therefore His representatives before others. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Obviously, the Lord wants us to present the treasure of Himself to others well. Furthermore, a very important truth is realizing the fact that our only opportunity to make eternal impact is while we are physically alive! "Whatsoever thy hand find-

eth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccles. 9:10). Simply put, *we must maximize our physical life to maximize our eternal spiritual impact.*

Clearly, Christians should make every effort to care for their physical bodies, which is right and glorifying to the Lord. As modern Christians we know this principle is applicable to sexual relations, alcohol consumption, smoking, and illicit drug use. Believers must now realize similar truth with eating and exercise. Leaders in our churches must begin the discipline of caring for themselves and encouraging the individuals whom they influence to do the same. Emphatically, such behavior must be lived in the pulpit and encouraged in the pews!

The Importance of Leadership's Example

Because the disciplines of life are easier to master while young, physical stewardship should especially be emphasized with our children, teens, and young adults. We need to reach and make a difference in people such as Janet. In a practical way, youth leaders should actively practice good physical stewardship. For example, the snacks and drinks offered at activities should generally have some nutritional value—avoiding high-carbohydrate "junk food." The actual activities should involve safe fun with moderate physical exertion—doing such things as hiking,

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backpacking, soccer, etc. Finally there should be direct teaching to our children on the importance of caring for the physical body.

A national health crisis is developing in America, a crisis of improper care for the physical body that God has entrusted to each of us. We must realize the importance of proper stewardship and act upon this truth. If we as leaders are to make a change in our congregations and especially our children and young people, this problem has to be approached in a direct yet humble fashion. We must first ask God to help each one of us become different from the rest of the world, and then we must gently direct others to do likewise.

Daniel T. Borkert, M.D., received his degree in medicine from the University of Colorado. After being in private practice for nineteen years in Lakewood, Colorado, he currently works with University Medical Associates in Greenville, South Carolina.

¹ Janet is not her real name.

² Streib, L. "World's Fattest Countries." *Forbes* 2007 February 8. http://www.forbes.com/2007/02/07/worlds-fattest-countries-forbeslife-cx_ls_0208worldfat.html; accessed October 7, 2007.

³ Overweight, Fast Stats, National Center of Health Statistics, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/overwt.htm>; accessed October 6, 2007.

⁴ NHANES data on the Prevalence of Overweight among Children and Adolescents: United States, 2003–2004. CDC National Center for Health Statistics, Health E-Stat.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. Health Consequences, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/consequences.htm>; accessed October 6, 2007.

⁷ Flegal, K. M., Graubard, B. I., Williamson D. F., Gail, M. H. *Excess Deaths Associated with Underweight, Overweight, and Obesity.* *JAMA.* 2005 Apr 20; 293(15):1861–7.

⁸ *Healthy People 2010.* Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human

Services, January 2000. www.health.gov/healthypeople/.

⁹ Whitaker, R. C., Wright, J. A., Pepe, M. S., Seidel, K. D., Dietz, W. H. *Predicting Obesity in Young Adulthood from Childhood and Parental Obesity.* *N Engl J Med* 1997; 37(13):869–73.

¹⁰ US Obesity Trends 1985–2006, CDCP, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/maps/index.htm>; accessed October 6, 2007.



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Speaking America's Language

Mike Washer

We have over 300 million people in America, and over 22 million of those are teenagers ages fifteen through nineteen.¹ At first glance it may seem that reaching our country for Christ is an insurmountable task, especially when we consider that it is a country in love with pleasure, unashamed of its opposition to the Word of God. "While most people (55%) attend a religious service a few times a year or more often, only a minority of the public (36%) attends a religious service once a month or more often, with about a quarter (26%) attending every week."² And of those who do attend, how many do so as a part of an effort to produce righteousness good enough to gain forgiveness of sins? Clearly, we are living among sheep having no shepherd, a people lost in darkness, blinded by the Prince of Darkness.

Yet we must rejoice in the promises of Christ. Jesus said that the harvest truly is plenteous! We know that the gospel has power and that the Word of God will not return void! As we seek to fulfill the Great Commission, we have a wonderful hope as we depend on the Spirit of God for power and rest on the promises of God! Our teenagers are ready for the satisfaction that Jesus brings, but until they hear the truth of the gospel, they only know to keep looking for satisfaction in their sin or religion.

Knowing and depending on the fact that it is the gospel that changes and the Spirit of God that convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment, is there anything we can do as Fundamentalists to improve our opportunities in reaching American youth? We should be concerned about the compromise that is rampant in evangelical churches, which use worldly music and programs under the misinterpretation of "becoming all things to all people." But are we ignoring some tools that God could use to open up an opportunity for the power of the gospel?

When a missionary goes to a strange country, his first job is to learn the language because it unites him with the native population. He is finding common ground in its most basic form.

Jesus talked of fishing to fishermen, of money to tax collectors, and of water to the woman at the well. He was speaking each person's language for the sake of the gospel. Paul did not compromise as he reached out to the Jew and to the Gentile. God has given us all backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and interests that need to be tools for finding common ground with the lost, opening the opportunity for the gospel to go forth. A coworker may resist the idea of coming to a revival service, but he may jump at the chance for some fishing or a good meal or golf. You just spoke his language!

What language do teenagers speak? Well several could be argued for, yet the statistics seem to point clearly to a dominating common ground. According to Joseph Carroll, Gallup Poll Assistant Editor, "teens in the US are overwhelmingly 'sports nuts' both in terms of participation and attendance at sporting events. A study conducted in 2002 shows that nine in ten American teens (90%) like sports,

four in five US teenagers (80%) participate in some form of sports or exercise on a regular basis and half (51%) have played on a school athletic team in the past year."³ Parents want their kids involved and are willing to fund the expense of team sports and pour time and energy into a season or tournament. America's language is Sports!

The goal of National Hoops Ministries is to pick up the "basketball tool" and find common ground with teenagers, parents, coaches, referees, and fans in order to provide an opportunity for the gospel to go forth with power. Our focus is to help the local church reach its community for Christ. Our burden includes helping churches that may not be blessed with the facilities for a normal tournament and helping those that may be uncomfortable organizing such a huge community event—National Hoops provides all of the necessary equipment to conduct the tournament in an empty parking lot or at a rented facility. God has blessed the ministry with heavy-duty basketball goals, a sound system, an electric scoreboard, bracket boards, software, and other materials to organize and conduct tournaments in a variety of places. The min-



istry provides materials for promotion and offers and a great prize for the winners. The ministry team works hard to recruit players at public schools, recreation centers, and neighborhoods for the one-day event.

It is amazing how God uses the game of basketball to open doors. Many principals and coaches are willing to allow promotion in their schools or with their teams because of the common ground of basketball. There are those who attend the tournament and sit and listen to a clear gospel message who would not normally stop by and visit on a Sunday. We have had Muslims, Hindus, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, and others attend the tournament! Since we are clear in our promotion material, on our website, and in our orientation meeting about there being a gospel message at the tournament, it is obvious that basketball was chosen over faithfulness to a religion or church. The greatest part comes when those religious ones transfer their dependence from works to Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

There is great value in sports outreaches such as National Hoops Ministries because of the easiness of building relationships in the community. There is great respect among parents and community leaders for programs that reach out to their kids, many of whom are troubled. We had the privilege of meeting an official at a tournament in California, and for three years we built a relationship with him and gave him the gospel. At the man's third tournament, the pastor of the local church had the opportunity to lead him to the Lord. His "language" was basketball and

kids in the community. We did not have to ask him to work at the tournament. He asked us!

There is also great value in using sports outreaches to get the church involved in the community. We try to focus on the community surrounding the local church as we promote for the tournament, taking the pastor's suggestions on which area or school that he might have a burden for. At the tournament on Saturday, the pastor is introduced and the church becomes visible to the community. Contact information sheets and decision cards are left for follow-up. It is exciting when relationships can be transferred to the local church.

Basketball is not the only tool that can be used to gain opportunities to present the gospel, but it is definitely a very valuable tool and a language that is clearly heard. What a joy it is to have the opportunity to preach Christ to all whom the Lord gives us, simply because of a common language—the language of sports.

Mike Washer served at Westgate Baptist Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, for five years as youth pastor before the Lord began to burden his heart for evangelism. In September of 2004 National Hoops Ministries (www.nationalhoops.com) was launched in an effort to reach lost teens—and Christian teens in need of revival. Mike has served as the evangelist and director for this ministry since its inception.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau 2007.

² Humphrey Taylor, Harris Interactive Poll, 2003.

³ Joseph Carroll, Gallup Poll, 2002.

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Faith Baptist Church
833 15th Avenue
Longmont, CO 80501
303.776.5655
church@fbaptist.org

March 3-4, 2008

Arizona Regional Fellowship
Tri-City Baptist Church
2150 E Southern Avenue
Tempe, AZ 85282
480.838.5430

March 10-11, 2008

Mid-Atlantic Regional Fellowship
Bible Baptist Church
412 Old Washington Pike
Pittsburgh, PA 15106
412.276.7717

March 17-19, 2008

Northwest Regional Fellowship
First Baptist Church
1105 N Road 36
Pasco, WA 99301
509.547.5814

April 7-8, 2008

South Regional Fellowship
Morningside Baptist Church
1115 Pelham Road
Greenville, SC 29615
864.297.7890

April 25-26, 2008

Mid-America Regional Fellowship
Pillsbury Baptist Bible College
315 S Grove Avenue
Owatonna, MN 55060
507.451.2710

June 10-12, 2008

88th Annual Fellowship
Bethel Baptist Church
754 E Rockhill Road
Sellersville, PA 18960
215.536.9200

July 28-30, 2008

Alaska Regional Fellowship
Pioneer Baptist Church
3391 Old Richardson Highway
North Pole, AK 99705
907.488.4829
akfbf@earthlink.net

September 13, 2008

Mid-Atlantic Leadership Conference
Calvary Baptist Church
2000 Broad Ave
Findlay, OH 45840
419.422.6842

October 11, 2008

Mid-America Leadership Conference
Bethel Baptist Church
200 N Roselle Road
Schaumburg, IL 60194
847.885.3230

October 20-21, 2008

New Mexico Regional Fellowship
Northwest Baptist Church
402 San Clemente NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
505.344.5544

October 20-21, 2008

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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

Books for a New Year

Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old (Matt. 13:52).

The new year is upon us. Resolutions have been made and maybe already broken. But one of them we've got to keep resurrecting is the resolve to keep reading. Last January I typed up a list of some fifty-to-sixty titles under about ten categories that I wished I could get read in 2007. I'm behind schedule, but I've still accomplished much more than I would have done if I hadn't set those goals.

Here are some recommendations for this year's reading in the hope that just talking about titles will help to strengthen someone's resolve.

A Wide-Margin Bible

I want to begin with the announcement of a wide-margin NASB published by the world's premier Bible publisher, Cambridge Press. No other printer rivals Cambridge for the classic beauty and enduring quality of its Bibles. For that reason, lovers of the NASB have long wished Cambridge would return to it, particularly in a wide-margin edition similar to its widely used two-column KJV format. This last year Cambridge responded with a handsome edition that is available in hardback, French Morocco leather, and an incredibly supple goatskin leather. Its dimensions are 7¼ by 9 inches. Cambridge has a way of stitching that enables these Bibles to lie flat from the first time they're opened, a decided advantage when one is making notes.

The margins are a generous ¾" at the top, 1¼" at the bottom, 1½" at the side, and 1" in the gutter. In addition

there are thirteen indexed blank pages for making notes topically (two pages per letter of the alphabet), followed by an additional thirty-two blank lined pages. It's a dream Bible in that respect.

When I first received a copy of this from the publisher for review purposes, I submitted it to a roundtable inspection by ten seminary students. Once they'd passed it around, I asked for first impressions. The first comment was that the font is too small. Nearly everyone nodded. That's one of my two disappointments in the Bible, and unfortunately for my post-fifty-year-old eyes it's a big one. The copyright page says it is "typeset in 7.9pt on 8.2pt Lexicon No. 1." It's just too tiny. Even my nineteen-year-old daughter, looking for a new Bible this last year and keenly interested in getting a Cambridge, tried it out for a few days and then regretfully turned it down in favor of the cumbersome and unhand-some Foundation Publications wide-margin, side column NASB, which at least has a reasonably sized font.

Unfortunately, the problem isn't just the tiny font. Cambridge has also justified the lines of text at both ends, resulting in blocks of text that sometimes in narrative books run on unbrokenly for more than half a page. The consequence is that it is difficult to pick out the beginning of a verse (the actual numbers used for the verses are microscopic!) within a solid block of type. In addition, all the little blank spaces at the ends of lines that we note takers have taken for granted in the KJV wide margin are gone. It's now impossible to squeeze anything between lines or even between verses, unless they happen to fall at the beginning or conclusion of those monotonous, densely packed paragraphs.

I was so disappointed over these defects in an otherwise beautiful Bible that I called Cambridge and spoke to inquire as to the reasoning for them. The answer was cost.

Cambridge's projections were that they simply couldn't have published the Bible in any other way and

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

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still been able to sell it affordably. Perhaps they're right. As it is, the edition they've produced is pricey, although I'm sure that much of that is due to the present devaluation of the dollar against the pound.

At any rate, for those who've been waiting for a Cambridge wide-margin and can tolerate the font and format, this is a truly gorgeous Bible. It can be viewed online at the Cambridge's website, www.CambridgeBibles.com.

Not the Bible

It's not a Bible, it's the Qur'an. Mine is the Penguin edition translated by N. J. Dawood. You can get a huge, hardback study Qur'an with hundreds of notes free for the price of postage from www.explorethequran.org.

The Whetstone Fellowship, a small reading group for pastors, read the Qur'an together this last year and agreed afterwards that, distasteful as it was, it turned out

Richard Baxter, the English Puritan, remarked, Good books are a very great mercy to the world. Having access to so many more than he did, our new year can be filled with fresh and varied mercies every day.

to be a good idea. Most of us didn't finish. I think there are two of us still doggedly trying to. But I can truthfully say that after carefully reading three hundred pages of it now and indexing over one hundred significant passages, I'm a convinced Qur'anic unbeliever. Jesus is the son of Mary (2:87; 2:253; 4:171). He was a true prophet (2:136), strengthened with the Holy Spirit (2:87), and authenticated with indisputable signs (2:253). He is the Messiah (3:45; 4:171). But with his own lips He denies that He is God (5:116). He is a created being, like Adam, formed from dust (3:59). *God forbid that he [God] should have a son* (4:171). *Unbelievers are those who declare: "God is the Messiah, the son of Mary"* (5:17).

However, unbeliever that I am, *There shall be no coercion in matters of faith* (2:256). There it is, straight from the horse's mouth.

Commentaries

There are a couple of commentaries that I'd like to mention. The first is by Layton Talbert, entitled *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Bob Jones University Press, 2007). For those familiar with his previous insightful work on God's providence, *Not by Chance: Learning to Trust a Sovereign God*, this is a fitting companion piece. The emphasis is on the book's message. Through nearly three hundred pages, Dr. Talbert works out the book's ministering theme carefully and expositively. He includes excellent illustrative and

applicational material. If you've begun the new year tested by a fresh trial, *Beyond Suffering* would make for exceptionally reassuring daily reading, not to speak of modeling how to minister the book of Job to your people in a most effective way.

Bruce K. Waltke on Proverbs is just superb. His two volumes, issued by Eerdmans in 2004 and 2005 respectively, are in the words of one reviewer, *meticulous, insightful, illuminating, erudite, devotional, rich, thoughtful and wise*. I had the opportunity of sitting for the better part of a day in a Proverbs class taught by Waltke sometime in the early 1980s. He mentioned that he was working on this commentary then, so it's the fruit of at least twenty-five years of study, teaching, and meditation. Charles Bridges' nineteenth-century work may always be the classic on practical applications of Proverbs, but Waltke will probably become the first book its owners turn to for in-depth understanding of the text.

While I'm mentioning the Poetic Books, I'd like to call attention to C. Hassell Bullock's *Encountering the Book of Psalms* (Baker, 2001). Just 266 pages, it's nevertheless an excellent introduction, including sidebars, tables, and illustrative material.

Another author I like is John N. Oswalt (the *o* is pronounced long, *oh-swalt*). He's the author of what is probably the defining work on Isaiah, published in two volumes by Eerdmans (1986 and 1998). He followed up on these with the more practical contribution on Isaiah in the *NIV Application Commentary* (Zondervan, 2003). These are excellent works. Oswalt is a premillennialist eschatologically, a Methodist denominationally, and a revival speaker at numerous camps and conferences. His commentaries, therefore, are fairly trustworthy eschatologically and exceptionally convicting applicationally. I'm presently working through his Biblical theology on sanctification, *Called to Be Holy* (Francis & Taylor, 1999) and have profited from quite a number of his analyses.

I encountered Oswalt through beginning a series this last fall on the Book of Isaiah. At the same time, I've been reacquainting myself with John Broadus on Matthew because of our church's Lord's-Day-morning series on that Gospel. I won't take time to explain this, but to my pleasant surprise, out of my nearly thirty commentaries on Matthew, I've come to find Broadus to be the most consistently helpful for my preaching purposes.

Commentaries on the Pauline epistles are coming out (it seems) about one a week. Twice now I've given one of my seminary classes a commentary analysis project in which they evaluate the helpfulness of about twenty commentators on five different Pauline epistles. I ask them to rank the authors on each book and then to choose the best one out of them all—which author serves as the best model of what they'd like to have on every epistle. Both times we've gone through the exercise, Harold Hoehner on Ephesians (Baker, 2002) wins hands down. This year fifteen out of sixteen students ranked him number one.

One more commentary recommendation. Years ago, John Ashbrook, pastor of Bible Community Church in Mentor, Ohio, told me that during a series he preached on John, he found old J. C. Ryle to be the single most valuable work in his library. Pastor Ashbrook is not only a real book hound, but a discerning theologian, so I tucked that away as a pretty good tip. Not surprisingly, throughout the course of an over three-year series through John, I came to agree.

Scripture Studies

An excellent but evidently relatively unknown author is Terry L. Johnson. His two books on the Beatitudes (*When Grace Transforms*, Christian Focus, 2002) and the Lord's Prayer (*When Grace Comes Alive*, Christian Focus, 2003) are solidly grounded in the text, well illustrated, and replete with fresh applications.

Jerry Bridges needs little introduction. His newest book, *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* (Navpress, 2007), is a good pump primer for a challenging sermon series to Christians.

I was walking out of Starbucks a few months ago when I heard my name called. A man introduced himself as an old acquaintance and asked whether I'd ever heard of Robert Chapman, a nineteenth-century English preacher. I hadn't. Turns out Spurgeon called him *the saintliest man I ever knew*. A few weeks after that fellowship in the parking lot, I received in the mail the gift of a small volume of Chapman's comments on various subjects entitled *Choice Sayings* (Gospel Tract Publications, 1988). It's an excellent and inexpensive gift. Here's the first saying, on the subject of "The Gospel": *The very first sigh on account of sin which is begotten in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of an eternal communion with God*. Here's one of the last, on the subject of "Gratitude": *Ingratitude towards God for benefits received makes us distrustful of Him as to the future*.

Biography

Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, compiled by Andrew Bonar, has been treasured since its publication in 1844. But not everyone enjoys journals. The new biography by L. J. Van Valen, *Constrained by His Love* (Christian Focus Publications, 2002) may be more palatable. At nearly five hundred pages, it's substantial, but there's plenty of white on the pages, and Van Valen reads easily. He writes to stir a revival spirit. The result is heartwarming.

I don't know how familiar we tend to be with the leaders of the eighteenth-century English evangelical revival, but there's a tremendous amount of instruction and inspiration to their ministries. John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, Henry Venn, and William Grimshaw were the greater lights, with a host of others almost unknown now beaming warmly around them. One of these was William Romaine, minister at Blackfriars in London from 1766 to his homegoing in 1795.

Tim Shenton has authored *"Iron Pillar": The Life and Times of William Romaine* (Evangelical Press, 2004). It's valuable for recovering the ministry of a true successor to the Puritans, a powerful evangelistic preacher, a friend and correspondent with the other leaders of the movement, and an earnest follower of Christ. I like one of his habits. To quiet his fears and direct his prayers, he read the entirety of Psalm 121 every day. *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. . . .*

A real treasure is *The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon* (Wakeman Trust, 2007), which Dr. Bruce McAllister, Director of Ministerial Training at Bob Jones University, brought back as a gift to me from his visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London last summer. Hannah Wyncoll has compiled and annotated over sixty of his letters written to family, friends, and his church during his frequent illnesses. Not only are they instructive and inspirational, but what Wakeman Trust has done with the formatting of the book is particularly attractive. After a helpful introduction to Spurgeon's illnesses, Wyncoll begins the book with a portion of an article written by Spurgeon in 1876 and entitled "Laid Aside—Why?" The more than sixty letters are then arranged in three sections (1876–83; 1884–90; 1891–92). Most are a single page. Wyncoll's very helpful annotations are boxed and inset to the side or at the bottom of the page. They include such things as the circumstances in which he wrote, the state of his church at the time, or explanations of things referred to in the letter. Sprinkled throughout are interesting photos and a bonus of sixteen pages of color pictures of some of the original letters in Spurgeon's own hand. The book concludes with six articles and short sermons pertinent to the subject.

Several years ago John Tipton, the staff member at our church responsible for pastoral care, started taking books like this to the hospital as gifts to minister to our folks during extended illnesses or while recovering from surgery. This new book is a welcome addition to what's available for a ministry like that.

Mentioning Spurgeon reminds me to recommend highly a selection of twenty of his sermons on prayer just recently published by Kerry Allen (Fox River Press, 2007). Thankfully they're unedited, printed beautifully in a large, legible font, and attractively bound in an affordable volume. Allen is the only person I know who has read all 3561 of Spurgeon's sermons published in the *The New Park Street Pulpit* and *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*.

Miscellaneous

Now for a potpourri. For a totally different kind of read than anything you may have ever encountered, try David Klinghoffer's *Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point in Western History* (Doubleday, 2005). Klinghoffer is a liberal Jew who has done a lot of reading, and, though he understands evangelical Christians pretty well, he certainly doesn't understand Christianity or the New Testament. However, his misunderstandings

are extremely enlightening to those of us who wonder how Jews view Jesus, Paul, and the New Testament. Get ready for an eye opener, as well as riveting quotations you can immediately use for preaching. For instance, did you know that traditional Jews say a prayer three times a day that includes the petition that Christians will be *erased from the book of life*?

Then there's *The Mammoth Book of How It Happened Ancient Rome* (Constable & Robinson Ltd., 2003). That title is correct. No *in between Happened and Ancient*.

Here's the history of Rome in the words of people who were there. It's easy reading, fascinating, and opens wide windows on the culture in which the New Testament was written and the early church expanded. Here's a glimpse of what early Christians encountered when brought before the emperor and accused of dishonoring him. It's the experience of a Jew arraigned before Caligula in A.D. 40, but is no doubt precisely what believers encountered as well.

In a sarcastic, sneering way, he said, "You are the god-haters, who do not consider me to be a god but refuse to accept me as one, although all others have agreed that I am one." Then, stretching his hands to heaven, he gave vent to an appeal which it was sin even to listen to, let alone repeat verbatim.

It's in that context that Paul urged Timothy, *Be not thou . . . ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner* (2 Tim. 1:8).

Two other titles having to do with cultural context are Leen Ritmeyer's *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Carta, 2006) and *Judaism for Dummies* (Wiley Publishing, 2001). The latter, part of the *For Dummies* series, is a painless way to get acquainted with the beliefs, practices, and celebrations of Jews. Ritmeyer's work is the definitive source on the Temple Mount. He and his wife are archaeologists who have spent the better part of their adult lives researching the subject from every angle. His theory as to exactly where the Temple sat is highly regarded by fellow archaeologists and students of the subject. The book is lavishly illustrated with hundreds of photographs, drawings, and reconstructions. If you've never read anything about archaeology, this book may turn you into an enthusiast.

In connection with a series last year on the church, I read *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* (Crossway Books, 2004) and *The Deliberate Church* (Crossway Books, 2005) by Mark Dever. Both are excellent. Dever pastors Capital Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and has shown the courage to depart from much that has been merely traditional in church ministry for the sake of attempting to forge a theology of Biblical ministry. He's a Southern Baptist with almost no exposure to Fundamentalism but

with many Fundamentalist instincts. If you're not familiar with his website, www.9marks.org, you might want to take a look at it, especially the interviews section, which consists of downloadable informal discussions with many current Evangelical leaders about a wide range of contemporary issues.

Another impacting book on the church is Josh Harris's *Stop Dating the Church* (Multnomah, 2004). It's the book you'd like to give to every attender who won't join, but may not dare to. Still, maybe if you just left it lying around. . . .

Finally, let me mention a book that is in some ways the most remarkable systematic theology we may ever see. *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* by Robert Duncan Culver is one of the most massive, comprehensive systematics ever authored. It's 1200 pages of densely packed material that is probably the author's magnum opus. Walter Kaiser prizes it as *one of the strongest examples of the exegetical use of the Bible in forming a systematic theology for our day*. He continues that we *would have been left with some major gaps in our understanding [without it]*. That's high praise.


Though I've only dipped into it here and there, I'm amazed at the breadth of learning Culver brings to his subject, not merely scripturally, but historically, biographically, and philosophically as well. In addition, he often applies what he writes and doesn't shy away from using the personal pronouns, *we* and *us* and even *I*. Sometimes he shares personal experiences with the reader. Let me close with a sample.

Ending his section on the duties of church membership, Culver relates,

William Warren Sweet, a Methodist scholar . . . researched the minutes of business meetings of very early Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists . . . and published the results in four volumes. . . . I read several of these volumes when my daughter, Lorraine, brought them home for assignments in church history at Bethel College. Sweet demonstrates by actual quotation of hundreds of pages from those eighteenth- and nineteenth-century congregational minutes that the most common topic of business was maintenance of standards of behavior through discipline of members. . . . Present preoccupation with church growth and pandering (I fear) to tell people what they want to hear, makes this sort of theologizing hardly popular. Perhaps soon God will raise up a popular and forceful exponent of this dreadfully needed theology.

Since when have we read anything like this in a systematic theology?

Final Thought

Richard Baxter, the English Puritan, remarked, *Good books are a very great mercy to the world*. Having access to so many more than he did, our new year can be filled with fresh and varied mercies every day. 

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

Bring . . . the Books

From Disgrace to Amazing Grace— The Story of John Newton

Though John Newton is no stranger to any reader of Christian biography, a fresh telling of his unique story has come on the scene. Jonathan Aitken, author of the latest biography of Newton's life, writes as one who has experienced along with Newton the power of God's amazing grace. Aitken served with distinction in the British Parliament for twenty-three years. During this time he occupied the office of Minister of State for Defense and later became Chief Secretary to the Treasury under John Major. His meteoric rise to prominence in British politics was matched only by his sudden fall; his conviction of perjury resulted in the loss of his career, his marriage, and his freedom. While serving his prison sentence, Aitken came to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. Upon his release he pursued theological studies and eventually became the executive director of the Trinity Forum in Europe. His having come to Christ and experienced the riches of God's grace makes it appropriate that he should write the biography of the man who wrote the words to "Amazing Grace."

Newton was born in London on July 24, 1725, to Christian parents. His mother died when he was six, and his father, a respected sea captain, was frequently absent at sea. As he grew into adolescence, Newton rebelled against his Christian upbringing and became hedonistic. Aitken describes this period of Newton's life.

He was a wild and angry young man who rebelled against authority at every opportunity, starting with foolish acts of disobedience against his father. Press-ganged at the age of eighteen into the Royal Navy, he broke its rules so recklessly that he earned himself a public flogging for desertion. Filled with "bitter rage and black despair," he was torn between committing suicide and murdering his captain. Only his unrequited love for a thirteen-year-old girl he had met in Chatham, Polly Catlett, restrained his destructive instincts.

Newton's abandonment to sin continued to mark his life as a seaman on both naval and slave ships until his conversion on March 21, 1748. He later testified, "I was exceedingly vile. I not only sinned with a high hand myself but made it my study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion." He became such an aggressive atheist and blasphemer that even his pagan shipmates were shocked at his oaths!

Newton was employed by a slave trader on the African coast of Sierra Leone. In an amazing twist of providence, he himself was enslaved by his employer in conditions so vile that the other slaves took pity on his horrific state. Instead of repenting, Newton hardened his heart against God. God drew him through continued acts of providential kindness and protection. After being rescued from his enslavement, Newton

began his return to London. During a fierce storm, the ship began to sink. In desperation Newton remembered God and called upon Him for mercy. This marked the turn in his life away from serving sin to serving God.

Newton eventually abandoned the slave trade at age twenty-nine, and by age thirty-three he answered God's call to the ministry. He was ordained as a minister in the Church of England and was appointed to his first pastorate in Olney, England, where he served for sixteen years. During his ministry at Olney, the church tripled in size, eventually becoming a congregation of over six hundred members.

In 1780 Newton moved from Olney to London to become the pastor of St. Mary Woolnoth. The first sermon he preached to his congregation there on Sunday, December 19, 1779, is an apt description of his lifelong passion to preach.

The Bible is the grand repository of the truths that it will be the business and the pleasure of my life to set before you. It is the complete system of divine truth to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken with impunity. Every attempt to disguise or soften any branch of this truth in order to accommodate it to the prevailing taste around us either to avoid the displeasure or court the favor of our fellow mortals must be an affront to the majesty of God and an act of treachery to men. My conscience bears me witness that I mean to speak the truth among you.

Newton maintained a powerful and faithful preaching ministry until he was well into his seventies. He preached at St Mary Woolnoth for the last time in October 1806, one year before his death. One of his final statements was made to a guest, and these words became among his most famous: "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior." Seven days later, on December 21, 1807, he was received into the presence of the Lord. He was 82.

From Disgrace to Amazing Grace is a biography worth reading for the sheer delight of peering into the life of one of England's best-loved churchmen. Aitken has made it possible for his readers to grow intimately acquainted with Newton and to catch his passion for God's amazing grace! ☞

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

Dr. Sam Horn is Vice President of Ministerial Training and Dean of Graduate Studies at Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin. He also serves as senior pastor of Brookside Baptist Church in Brookfield.

As a young child I was taught to close my prayers with the words “in Jesus’ name, Amen.” Most Christians wouldn’t think of ending a prayer, public or private, without affixing some reference to Jesus’ name. Why do we do that? Why, when we hear someone pray in public, do we often listen to see whether he will close his prayer “in Jesus’ name”? Why has this become such an issue from high school baccalaureates to the prayers of military chaplains?

The primary source of instruction about praying in Jesus’ name comes from the Lord’s final discourse with His disciples as recorded in John’s Gospel. He repeatedly exhorts His disciples to pray in His name (John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26). In John 16:24 He tells the disciples that He is extending to the disciples a new privilege: “Hitherto have ye asked nothing [emphatic double negative] in my name.” The disciples have always been able to go to Jesus or the Father directly. Now the Lord is explaining to them that though He must leave them (John 13:33; 14:3), they have the privilege of using His name in their prayers.

A person’s name is the word or expression that represents that person. To hear and recognize a person’s name brings to mind his appearance, personality, character, actions, attitudes, and even your feelings toward that person. The name of Jesus Christ is the verbal expression of who He is. It is difficult to separate our feelings for the Person and our feelings for His name. This is why we react when we hear His name used in profanity.

To pray in Jesus’ name means to use the person of Jesus Christ as the basis of our request. For example, when a person tells you “use my name,” he is giving you the opportunity to use what he is—his reputation, character, connections, position—to your advantage. In the case of praying to God, using Jesus’ name is not only advantageous, it is your only chance of being heard. Jesus Christ is the only one positioned in the universe to get a hearing from the Father. To use His name is not just a privilege but an absolute necessity. To pray in Jesus’ name is to pray with Him in mind. The thought of Jesus Christ should permeate our entire prayer, not be reserved just for the close.


Jesus gives to all believers not only the unlimited use of His name but amazing assurances of answer to prayer: “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do” (John 14:13); “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14); “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it

you” (John 16:23). It is as if the Lord has to repeat this promise because we have trouble accepting it. It seems too good to be true. Jesus is encouraging us to ask for anything in His name. We are using the “name which is above every other name” (Phil 2:9). His name has all authority in Heaven and in earth. There is no realm in the universe where the name of Jesus Christ doesn’t have jurisdiction. However, the same name that emancipates our requests also governs the content of our prayers.

When we pray in Jesus’ name, we are claiming union with Him. In other words, to ask for anything that contradicts that name means we disregard that name. We will not get anywhere making requests that contradict His name.

For example, as a pastor I have on occasion given people permission to bring up my name. If they were to use my name to try to attain something immoral or evil, they would not get anywhere. If someone in search of part-time employment says, “I need this job for extra money to buy beer,” he probably won’t get very far using my name. Anyone who knows me knows that request would contradict my name, because I totally oppose that. The interviewer would probably wonder whether the person knew me at all.

The requests we make that are out of sync with the Lord’s name will not be received. Asking “in Jesus’ name” for a pile of money isn’t what Jesus is about. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3). To ask “amiss” is to ask for something that is incongruent with His name. Some specific prayer requests mentioned in these passages that harmonize with Jesus’ name are prayers “that the Father may be glorified” (John 14:13); that we “bring forth fruit” (John 15:16); and “that [our] joy may be full” (John 16:24). But remember, the Lord uses words such as “whatsoever” and “anything” to show the breadth of our requests. And the promise that it will be done is repeated as well (cf. John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24).

The thought of praying in Jesus’ name shouldn’t come just at the end of our prayers; it should permeate them from beginning to end. And when you finish praying, there is no better way than to tell God the only reason you can ask Him anything is because His Son said, “Use my Name.” It is in Jesus’ name that we pray. Amen! 

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

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” (Ps. 119:9a). Concerning this verse, C. H. Spurgeon wrote, “How shall he become and remain practically holy? He is but a young man, full of hot passions, and poor in knowledge and experience; how shall he get right, and keep right?” (*The Treasury of David* [Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson Publishers], Vol. 3, p. 157). I was recently counseling a young man who was asking that same question. How could he be cleansed from the consequences of following the wrong way? It is apparent that the ways of this world have been the way to corruption and destruction for multitudes of young people, unbelievers and believers alike.

At the Helping America’s Youth regional conference hosted by the University of Denver on August 3–4, 2006 (www.helpingamericayouth.gov), the White House revealed the following statistics:

- The percentage of babies born out of wedlock has increased more than sixfold since 1960.
- Children living in households headed by unmarried women were more likely to be poor—42% compared to 9% of children living with two married parents.
- In 2000 there were an estimated 19 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among Americans. Approximately half of all new STD infections occur in teens and young adults (ages 15–24) each year.
- Rates of suicide for adolescent males (12 per 100,000 youth) are more than five times the rate for adolescent females (2 per 100,000 youth).
- In 2003 71% of all juveniles arrested at age 17 and under (2.2 million) were boys, and boys represent 85% of juvenile offenders in residential placement.
- Boys are also more likely to use alcohol frequently. For example, daily alcohol use is reported by 4.1% of 12th-grade males versus 1.4% of 12th-grade females. However, in the last two years, 8th-grade girls actually had a higher binge drinking rate than 8th-grade boys—11.8% vs. 10.8%.

In a *New York Times* article entitled “Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers” (October 6, 2006), Laurie Goodstein wrote, “Despite their packed megachurches, their political clout and their increasing visibility on the national stage, evangelical Christian leaders are warning one another that their teenagers are abandoning the faith in droves.” She wrote, “Genuine alarm can be heard from Christian teenagers and youth pastors, who say they cannot compete against a pervasive culture of cynicism about religion, and the casual ‘hooking up’ approach to sex so pervasive on MTV, on Web sites for teenagers and in hip-hop, rap and rock

music. Divorced parents and dysfunctional families also lead some teenagers to avoid church entirely or to drift away.”

What would cause Christian young people to “abandon the faith in droves”? Dan Burrell wrote an article called “Causes and Cures” for the Sharper Iron website (www.sharperiron.org). In his September 24, 2007, article, he noted that one of the problems that leads to this condition among young people is the fact that today’s youth ministry has been “dumbed-down.” He lists several reasons:

1. *We do not believe teens listen to or have a thirst for strong scriptural teaching.* By listening to our culture, we have bought into the fallacy that kids can’t or won’t tolerate “deep” stuff and that we must “keep it real” by offering them intellectual and spiritual junk food. We fear challenging our students with meaty subjects that might bore them or turn them off to spiritual interest.
2. *We have bought into an entertainment mentality that sees keeping teens occupied as an adult’s obligation.* The mantra of today’s teens is often “I’m bored.” Angst-ridden parents with an inflated sense of guilt seem all too willing to rush to provide more activities and distractions for their precious progeny.
3. *We fail to recognize the raw potential most adolescents possess.* When we study the culture when Jesus walked the Holy Land, we discover that most of His twelve disciples were probably in their late teens to mid-twenties. Children were expected to put away much of their childhood once they reached maturity, which is age thirteen in Jewish culture. From that landmark age, apprenticeships and jobs soon followed, and many got married in their mid-to-late teenage years. Today’s teens are no less capable of acting maturely and of making an impact even in their youth.
4. *We have low expectations and even lower accountability for teenagers.* Many parents have surrendered their kids to an extended period of foolish behavior marked by rebellion, antisocial behavior (toward adults), irresponsible conduct, and a lack of accountability. During this time, parents “expect” them to experiment, to sow their “wild oats,” and to push the limits. Today’s parents expect too little from their teens and seem more than willing to shrug their shoulders and to roll their eyes at behavior that could threaten their health and heart for many years to come.

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

Charles Spurgeon

We must understand that the path to “cleansing” is long and daunting. Spurgeon wrote, “It is by no means an easy task which the prudent man sets before him. He wishes to choose a clean way, to be himself clean in it, to cleanse it of any foulness which may arise in the future, and to end by showing a clear course from the first step to the last; but, alas, his way is already unclean by actual sin which he has already committed, and he himself has within his nature a tendency towards that which defileth” (ibid.).

So, what is to be done? The answer to that question, of course, is found in the second part of Psalm 119:9 where the Psalmist writes, “by taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Matthew Hoskinson’s March 12, 2007, article for *Sharper Iron*, called “The Centrality of God in Youth Discipleship,” hits the nail on the head:

Therefore, the greatest need our teenagers have is not a new program, a new enticement, or a new competition. Neither they nor we need a better activity than the last one or another list of dos and don’ts to govern our lives. Their greatest need—and ours—is to see God in all His glory. If our children and teenagers would see, know, and love this great God, everything else would fall into place. . . . Exposing children and teenagers to the glory of God sounds good and right, but it requires much more than merely implementing a new program. The glory of God is not something we can simply add to our task lists; it is a wholly different paradigm through which we view everything. And if we ourselves are not seeing His glory in all things, can we reasonably expect the coming generations to do anything but follow our lead? . . . In short, we must become people who are consumed not with ministry and events but with God and His glory. Whatever else we do in youth discipleship—or anywhere else in the church—must flow from that.

Dan Burrell, in his previously mentioned article, gives two suggestions to “bring sanity back to our strategy.” First we must *encourage our teens for service and ministry*. He writes, “By this author’s definition, *service* means using our skills and talents to be a blessing to others; and *ministry* means directly bringing the souls of men and women into contact with the Word of God.” Second, we must *include the pastor in the ministry*: “The lead or senior pastor needs to be plugged in to the teens of his church flock. He needs to spend time with them, to preach to them, and to get to know them. . . . Any pastor who spends time with his teens is using his time wisely.”

The fact is, for young men to cleanse their way they must put forth the effort to become men of the Word. Matthew Henry wrote,

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Young men may effectually cleanse their way by taking heed thereto according to the word of God; and it is the honour of the word of God that it has such power and is of such use both to particular persons and to communities, whose happiness lies much in the virtue of their youth. (1) Young men must make the word of God their rule, must acquaint themselves with it and resolve to conform themselves to it; that will do more towards the cleansing of young men than the laws of princes or the morals of philosophers. (2) They must carefully apply that rule and make use of it; they must take heed to their way, must examine it by the word of God, as a touchstone and standard, must rectify what is amiss in it by that regulator and steer by that chart and compass (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary* [McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing], Vol. 3, p. 687).

Spurgeon’s exhortation rings true today:

Young man, the Bible must be your chart, and you must exercise great watchfulness that your way may be according to its directions. You must take heed to your daily life, as well as study your Bible, and you must study your Bible that you may take heed to your daily life. With the greatest care a man will go astray if his map misleads him; but with the most accurate map he will lose his road if he does not take heed to it. The narrow way was never hit upon by chance, neither did any heedless man ever lead a holy life. We can sin without thought, we have only to neglect the great salvation and ruin our souls; but to obey the Lord and walk uprightly will need all our heart and soul and mind (*Treasury of David*).

Is there some way to measure whether “cleansing” and “heeding” are taking place? Dr. Walter Fremont (*Forming a New Generation* [Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 1990]) said that you can check the success of a youth group by asking the following questions.

1. Are youth being converted, disciplined, and directed toward full-time service (Eph. 4:12)?
2. Are they taking the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8)?
3. Are they learning Bible doctrines and Bible standards and putting truth into action as they teach it to others (2 Tim. 2:2)?
4. Are their lives reflecting the image and mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5–8)?
5. How many of them eventually become missionaries, teachers, and preachers in full-time service?

It is quite apparent that the Word of God is the means by which today’s youth can cleanse his way. There is no additional wisdom or instruction that the world can provide for our young men and women to lead holy lives than what is plainly taught in that short verse. That was the best counsel I could give to that young man in my office. The key is “taking heed.” ☞

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"In four weeks we have a drama team here at our church for the Sunday evening service. There are two men, two ladies, and a couple who will need housing. You do not have to feed them the evening meal, but we would ask you to take care of breakfast and then pack a light lunch for them the next day. If you are willing to help us with this need, please sign up in the foyer after the service."

You would probably not be surprised to hear this announcement from the pulpit in any of the services, but would you immediately think, "I had better get to the foyer quickly after the service to sign up or someone else might get to keep them instead of me"? How nice it would be if there were a little jockeying for position after the service to try to get to the sign-up sheet first. Unfortunately, that is rarely the case.

Romans 12:13 speaks of "distributing to the necessity of the saints" and being "given to hospitality"; Hebrews

13:2 reminds us to "entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"; and 1 Peter 4:9 exhorts us to "use hospitality one to another without grudging." The opportunity to have God's servants in your home is one of the most missed blessings that our church families face. You will occasionally come across an individual or family that is a little burdensome to entertain, but don't let that spoil the blessing from the majority of the opportunities. Whether it is the drama team, evangelist, or missionary who needs a meal or lodging, this will have a great impact on you and your family.

The next time the pastor mentions needing help with housing for the young missionary couple going to the mission field, jump at the chance! It is worth giving up a child's bedroom or even your bedroom to extend hospitality and enjoy fellowshiping with God's people. Put yourself out! You will be glad you did.

Laymen in Action!

Biblical Examples of Laymen Serving the Lord
Aquila and Priscilla: The Rest of the Story

The apostle Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-3). Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, were tentmakers by trade and soon associated with Paul both in their business and ministry. Aquila and Priscilla spent eighteen months with Paul in Corinth and then laid the groundwork for Paul's return to Ephesus. The resounding success of the church-planting work in Ephesus may be a reflection of their efforts prior to Paul's arrival. God used these two to "explain the way of God more accurately" to the eloquent orator Apollos, and then Apollos returned to Corinth where he "helped greatly" the believers and "powerfully refuted" the Jews. Thus Aquila and Priscilla have already had a significant impact on the church at Corinth and the church in Ephesus.

If the story of Aquila and Priscilla ended there we could easily hold this couple up as lay people who were exemplary in using their talents for the Lord. However, there are three other passages that comment on their ministry efforts. First Corinthians 16:19 says, "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." Aquila and Priscilla had opened their home for church services. Two years later Paul writes a letter to the Roman believers. Paul extended his greetings to numerous co-laborers in chapter 16. Guess who is on the list! In verses 3 through 5 Paul says, "greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house." We do not know when they had "risked their necks," but this beloved couple has now moved to Rome and another church planting work was in progress—at least one group was meeting in their house.

The final passage is six to eight years later. Aquila and Priscilla are back in Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19). God had once again moved them back to a place where they could continue their ministry.

They were encouragers with a hospitable mindset. You may not be called to preach, but you are called to serve!

Parenting Tips

Pastor John Mincy
Heritage Baptist Church, Antioch, California

Actions and attitudes that express disrespect should not be permitted in our children. Sometimes children may not know what their actions or tone of voice is communicating. Parents should describe what kind of behavior is unacceptable, such as: rolling of the eyes, raising the voice, shrugging of shoulders, refusal to look at you, arguing, sloppy speech, etc. Correcting little things will pay big dividends in this area.

Churchhouse Manners

Distractions, Distractions, Distractions!

A long time ago a junior church leader had a simple rule for the young people in his services: no distractions! A distraction is something that would cause other people to pay attention to you rather than the one speaking in the front of the room. Distractions can be overt (talking, passing notes, elbowing someone, giggling, etc.) or they can be covert—unintentional (flipping through your Bible, tapping the pew, etc.)—but either way they may cause someone to miss something very important. Good manners require that you do nothing that distracts others from listening!

Doug Wright is an FBFI board member and pastors Keystone Baptist Church in Berryville, Virginia.

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Visual Tools for Communicating God's Word

Cogitations on God and Sin

Dr. Van, after getting off on a rabbit trail discussing the omnipresence of God last night at prayer meeting, Katie, my youngest, asked this question: "If God is everywhere present, then is God in Hell?" And as we were discussing in church the omnipresence of God, we were also discussing whether or not God can allow sin into His presence and how sin affects our prayers. Several questions were raised. From a senior saint: "Is it true that God cannot allow sin into His presence? Satan is certainly an unconfessing sinner, and he goes before God as the accuser of the brethren, and Lucifer was in Heaven for all eternity past."

After this question, this senior saint went on to say that indeed God has allowed sin in Heaven and in His presence because He allowed the Angel of Light, Lucifer, and all his pride to be in His presence before Lucifer actually proclaimed he would be like the Most High. Furthermore, if indeed God is everywhere present, and thus with us, He is always in the presence of sin because we are indeed sinners. And finally, could this be why God will create a New Heaven, because the current Heaven has indeed been corrupted by the presence of sin? This has caused me to ponder to give a correct answer rather than shoot from the hip, but I need more help. How might you go about answering these questions from the young and the old?

This pastor raises multiple questions, which demand multiple answers.

1. The God who tells us of Himself in the Bible is a living God and far greater than His creation. He is different from mankind. He is alive, and all false gods are but imaginations. One of the unique qualities of God is His ability to be everywhere present at the same time. Our personal experiences in life teach us that everything has limits (for example, we can see only so far or be in only one place at a time). However, God has no limits. He knows everything, He can see everything, and He is everywhere present because He is over all things that He created. All things in existence function within the limits that He set.

We do not recognize or understand everything God is or does. God does not have flesh and thus is not limited to being in one place at a time. God is a spirit-being and is everywhere present at all times. Being present where sin is found does not affect God any more than it does us. Being present where sinners are does not reflect in a negative way against God. Jesus was around sinners and sin during His earthly life, and it did not make Him a sinner. Since God is holy, He cannot sin. The presence of sinners (Satan) or sin cannot cause Him to sin.

Revelation chapters 20 through 22 record the removal of sin and sinners from the presence of God permanently.

God is everywhere. He is necessarily everywhere. He does not ever change. He cannot choose not to be present in every form of reality. Nothing can exist outside of Him. He created everything, and there is no other way for anything to come into existence (John 1:3). God is as fully in Hell as He is with us here in this world. But God chooses to act differently in different parts of His creation. We here on earth experience only His love and patience. He loved all mankind enough to send His Only Son to pay the full penalty for sin. He puts up with people who reject His Son. He fully controls all things for the spiritual benefit of His people. In Hell, however, His wrath against sin will be eternally expressed, but not His love. He will be there, but Satan and all others in Hell will be as in solitary confinement, with no light and no contact with anyone else, only weeping and wailing, endless suffering because of sin.

2. Sin affects our prayers most in that it interferes with our approach to God. Our evil hearts do not want to admit our sin and confess to receive forgiveness. God wants to hear that before He hears of our desire for daily bread and water. Sin affects us in hindering our prayer contact; God is willing and anxious that we come to Him in the right way. If we are born again and have life in Him, He hears our requests, and, if they are according to His will, He is certain to answer them, though at times not as quickly as we might like Him to do so.

3. Satan and sinners in God's presence? We right now are sinners in God's presence. Since He is omnipresent, that He allows creatures to sin is really astonishing to us. Yes, because He is omniscient, He knew of Satan's sin before creating him and of our sin before our birth. Just as we can talk with God in prayer, so Satan can directly accuse the saints before Him. We tend to think of God as somehow limited to a throne and a heavenly sphere, but He's not spatial. Satan, though a spirit-being, is restrained, and his access to God is restricted. He must need some different type of approach than we use; he doesn't have the special privilege to talk with God that believers enjoy. We can converse with Him any moment of any day, every day of the year.

4. The possibility that Satan remained in Heaven after sinning or that he was a prideful being for a time before proclaiming himself equal to God seems to be suggested in the wording of the question. So far as we can know from the revelation God has given us, angelic beings were created either on day two or three (Job 38:4-7). Satan's rebellion was clearly after Genesis 1:31 but before Genesis 3:1. As soon as Lucifer exalted himself in his own pride,

Continued on page 27

Satan, like a fisher, baits his hook according to the appetite of the fish.
—Thomas Adams

The mantra of the postmodern age is that there are no absolutes. . . . So before we can even begin teaching truth, we need to convince our youth that there is such a thing.
—Dan Olinger

After the basketball star Kobe Bryant was accused of sexual assault, he attended the 2003 Teen Choice Awards where he was picked as the favorite male athlete.
—*The Times*, August 4, 2003

The way to avoid temptation is not always to apply a salve directly pertinent to the temptation; but turn off your mind and your thoughts to some other good object, and by the time your mind is settled upon other objects, you will be able to meet with the temptation.
—William Bridge

Satan can never undo a man without himself; but a man may easily undo himself without Satan.
—Thomas Brooks

Seventy-six percent of high schoolers and college students admit that they have sometimes cheated in school. . . . Many educators say the new academic dishonesty all comes from an overreliance on standardized tests. . . . But the basic problem is not that tests are standardized; it's that we have no standards.
—Gene Edward Veith, *World Magazine*, September 9, 2000

Satan gives Adam [a piece of fruit], and takes away Paradise. Therefore in all temptations let us consider not what Satan offers, but what we shall lose.
—Richard Sibbes

They give free reign to concupiscence and check scruples, whereas they ought to do the opposite.
—Blaise Pascal

What you do in the hour of temptation will depend upon what you were the day before.
—Bob Jones Sr.
To a greater or lesser degree, if you are alive you are tempted.
—Bruce Wideman

Learn to say no; it will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin.
—Charles H. Spurgeon

Temptations and occasions put nothing into a man, but only draw out what was in him before.
—John Owen

Temptation is the appeal of the emotions to control the will in opposition to the truth.
—J. W. Jepson

Not since the world began has any man been dragged over into the domain of evil, who had not strayed carelessly or gazed curiously or lingered guiltily beside its verge.
—Marshall Hayden

To some temptations are stumbling blocks; to others they are stepping stones. . . . It is not our temptations but the way we respond to them that counts.
—H. O. Fanning

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



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Habakkuk and the Dryer

Sandra K. Hartman

Some years ago when all three of my children were still home, we had to struggle financially to make ends meet. My children were enrolled in a Christian school, and it took a lot of sacrifice on our part. Many times we did not have the financial means with which to purchase something, even when it was something we badly needed. Sometimes this made me bitter. At other times I felt depressed as I looked around at others of our church family who had plenty. But little by little I was learning a valuable lesson that I never could have learned had we not been in need so much of the time. I was learning to lean on God just as He wanted me to do and to trust Him to meet my needs—"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

This particular time our need was for a clothes dryer. Our dryer had stopped working in late spring, which was fine for the summer. I hung the clothes on the line, which I enjoyed doing. But I knew that summer would not last forever, and the time would come when the need for a dryer would be critical. So each day as I hung the clothes on the line I sent God a simple reminder: "I need a dryer. Please send one when the time is right." Then I did my best to leave it in His capable hands. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35).

Autumn arrived, and still no dryer. I continued to pray and trust. It finally became too cold to hang the clothes on the line, and it was harder and harder to dry them on chairs and other miscellaneous items around the house. I reminded God that the time was arriving when I really needed the dryer, and I reminded myself that God knows our need even before we ask (Matt. 6:8). Trips to the laundromat were looming ominously on the horizon. I had two reasons for dreading this: the obvious strain on our finances and the time it would require to go. I was already exhausted from a more-than-busy lifestyle.

One Saturday my husband went to install a ceiling fan for a family in church. I spent the day cleaning house. I had been reading the Book of Habakkuk, and the last three verses especially spoke to my heart:

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive

shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places (3:17-19).

I decided to memorize and pray this Scripture back to God. It pleases God when we pray using His Word. I cemented in my heart that even if I did not get a dryer, I would still be joyful in God and He would bless that, if not with material blessing, then with spiritual blessing that I might "walk upon mine high places."

The afternoon was bright and sunny, so I carried out our oriental rug for some much-needed down-on-my-knees scrubbing. As I knelt I recited these verses over and over again. It lifted my spirits and made what could have been a miserable day a good one. It was a blessing in itself to practice this concept of praise and prayer and reciting God's Word. But it did not end there.

My husband returned that evening from installing the fan with a surprise—a dryer. The family had offered, in exchange for his services, an extra dryer that they owned!

I marveled at the way God had answered my prayer! He was listening! And He did hear and see my need just as He promised in His Word: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). And He made me to walk upon mine high places.

He can do the same for you if you put your trust in Him. Spend time in His Word and prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Actively practice faith and make it a part of your daily life. Lean on Him and wait for Him to pour out His blessing. When it comes, it will be sweet beyond all measure. "Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. 64:4).

Sandra Hartman and her husband attend Berean Baptist Church in Rockford, Illinois, and are active in the ministry there.

he was a sinner and condemned. That other angels chose to follow him should not be taken to suggest that God for a time put up with him and allowed him to continue to reside in Heaven as a sinful being. The choice of each created angel seems to have been immediately either for Satan or for God, and the one choice permanently set the moral nature of every angel, whether holy or damned. We do not know why, when they fell, some demons were judged more severely than others, but we know God is a just judge. Hell was created for the Devil and his followers. It has been enlarged for additional followers through the centuries.

5. That there is or will be "need" for a new Heaven can hardly be connected with the fall of spirit beings or the sin of humans. Since the earth suffered judgment with the sin of Adam, all the changes introduced at that time into this perfect world will be omitted in the new earth, and we will live in eternal sinless bliss. Whether God will "remodel" Heaven is beyond conjecture, but that He might more greatly manifest His glories throughout endless eternity is surely a possibility.

You wrote: "God does not have flesh, and thus is not limited to being in one place at a time." That certainly cannot be an absolute statement. Christ is in the heavenlies and is in the flesh, if the angels of Acts 1 have spoken correctly. And John 3:13 is a very interesting verse in relation to a "fleshly" being, Christ, present in the heavenlies while physically present in the flesh on the earth. This whole concept of omnipresence may be a bit beyond our ability to comprehend. And by the way, if God

were not present in Hell, as the Psalmist says He is, then who would keep them confined to their place of torment rather than going to and fro upon the earth? He must be God of Hell as well. As you say, for punishment.

Some verses that address your questions:

"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10, 11).

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven*" (John 3:13, emphasis added).

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Ps. 139:7, 8).

I realize the language is crude, but the "God-ness" of Jesus remained unchanged while He walked on earth in the flesh (though His deity was not independently employed), and, since His ascension, His "flesh-ness" remains real while His full God-ness is manifest. God is Spirit, and that spirit nature will never be seen by a human eye. Jesus is also flesh, and "every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7). Those who do not come to Him in faith now will stand before Him in flesh and will see Him, the God-man, at the time of final judgment. Worthy distinctions!

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Prayer: Our Power

Jerry Sivnksty

James 5:16 says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The Lord shows His power through the prayers of His people. James 5:17 says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." Now that is power!

We as God's people must be stirred by the fact that the Lord's power has not diminished; what has diminished, however, is our effort to seek His power through prayer. In Luke 18:1 we read of Christ, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Praying must be prevalent in our lives. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing." Why the admonition from these two verses, "always to pray" and "pray without ceasing"? The answer is because either victory or defeat lies in the balance.

Such was the case with Moses in the Old Testament when the Israelites were in battle with the Amalekites. Exodus 17:10, 11 says, "So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." The world prevails in our lives when we "let down" in the area of prayer, but we have victory over the world when we "lift up" our hands in prayer. First Timothy 2:8 says, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

E. M. Bounds wrote a book entitled *Power through Prayer*. I highly recommend it because of the force of his presentation. There is a statement in this book that I would encourage you to contemplate: "The power of work, the mastery over self, the deliverance from fear; all spiritual graces and results are much advanced by prayer." No matter how great or small the need, we need to pray about it.

Several years ago I searched many stores trying to find a nutcracker, but I couldn't find one anywhere. One day, after another fruitless search through store after store, I told my wife that I was going to pray that the Lord would provide me a nutcracker. That same day I went for a five-mile run. I got to the halfway point, and when I turned around to go back, I looked down—and right in the

middle of the road was a nutcracker! I picked it up and sprinted back to my house as fast as I could. I knocked on our door, and when my wife opened it I held up the nutcracker and said, "The Lord answered my prayer!" Zechariah 4:10 says, "For who hath despised the day of small things?" I rejoiced over that definite answer to prayer, and I have kept that nutcracker as a reminder of the Lord's provision in even the smallest of matters.

I have consciously made it a habit to pray about everything. A good pastor friend of mine who is now in Heaven, Dr. Al Bradshaw, told me that he prayed about everything. He told me that when he had to make hospital visits he always prayed for the Lord to supply him a parking space, and the Lord always provided him one.

Another friend of mine who is also now in Heaven, Dr. Charlie Kittrell, related the following story to me. One day he came home and found his wife crying; when he asked her what was wrong, she said there was no food in the house. Dr. Kittrell told his wife to have all their children sit at the kitchen table. Then he prayed, "Dear Lord, You said You would always take care of us. Lord, we don't have any food and I am counting on You to provide food for our family." When he finished praying, there was a knock at the door. He opened the door and a nearby neighbor was standing there with a big pot of soup. He told Dr. Kittrell that his wife had made more soup than they needed, and he wanted to know if they could use it! What a wonderful heavenly Father we have who can meet every need, whether great or small.

In 1997 my wife and I were praying for a new truck. One day I got a phone message to call a certain friend of mine. I called him, and he told me his aunt had just passed away and left him her entire estate. He said, "The Lord has not given me all this money to hoard, so my wife and I just ordered you and Sharon a new truck for the ministry."

It is always thrilling to see the Lord answer prayer His way! It's always best to keep our hands off and let Him do the providing. I trust you are challenged to pray according to 1 John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."

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PAUL'S PASTORAL EPISTLES

Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus are known as the "Pastoral Epistles." That label for these three letters seems to have first surfaced in the early 1700s (D. N. Berdot in 1703, followed by the German Paul Anton in 1726). Ironically, the term "pastor" never appears in the Pastoral Epistles. In fact, Timothy and Titus did not function as "pastors" in the sense in which we think of that term and office today. Both were appointed by Paul as temporary apostolic representatives with oversight authority on their respective fields. Both anticipated replacement (2 Tim. 4:9, 21; Titus 3:12).

The label "Pastoral Epistles" is nevertheless appropriate, since these are the only NT letters written to individuals with pastoral oversight and training responsibility. At the same time, however, the "pastoral" label should not lead nonministerial readers to assume that these letters have little or nothing to do with them. If the church was constructed to be run congregationally (as the Biblical evidence indicates), then *every* believer needs to be aware of the qualifications, responsibilities, and behavior that God outlines in these letters for the leadership of their churches. If more laypeople understood their responsibilities in choosing and maintaining Biblical leadership, the church of Jesus Christ would be in far better condition. In addition, much attention is given in the Pastoral Epistles to the kind of behavior that leaders are to instill and enforce in God's people. So laypeople can as quickly find out from the Pastorals what God expects of *them* as what He expects of their leaders.

Paul writes to Timothy after his release from his first Roman imprisonment, about A.D. 65, and about ten years after the founding of the church at Ephesus. Timothy is the only individual to receive two apostolic letters that have been preserved in Scripture.

Overview

Design—To instruct Timothy in matters of right doctrine, church order, and ministerial practice.

Key Verse—3:14–16 (see treatment below)

Summary—Primarily professionally instructive, a letter from a minister to a minister about ministers and the ministry.

Keywords

Recurring words in the epistle underscore the major topics, concerns, and emphases under discussion.

■ Words Regarding *Instruction*

- Command(ment), Exhort(ation), Charge—14x
- Teach(ing)—12x
- Church—3x (0x in 2 Timothy and Titus)

■ Words Regarding *Conduct*

- Godliness—9x
- Good works—6x
- (Give) Honor—5x
- Conscience—4x
- (Eternal) Life—4x

■ Words Regarding *Creed*

"Truth" and "Faith" are synonyms for the Christian gospel and doctrinal message.

- Truth—6x
- Faith(ful)/Believe—34x (This frequency is outnumbered only by Romans. Proportionally, however, 1 Timothy has the highest concentration. References to *faith(ful)/believe* in Romans average once per 8 verses, but in 1 Timothy once every 3 verses. This is a massive emphasis for so short a letter.)

Content Outline

This is not a formal outline, but a natural outline that tracks the thought flow and topical development as they unfold in the course of Paul's writing. This is a personal letter, not a formal treatise. "An integrated outline of this epistle is difficult . . . because of its conversational style and intensely personal tone. Some sentences seem irrelevant to their context. These are just the sort of sayings one might expect in casual conversation where the speaker interjects them as he thinks of them without planning a formal essay" (Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 337).

1:1, 2—Opening

1:3–20— *Importance of Sound Doctrine in the Ministry*

"Charge" carries the connotation of passing along strict orders down a chain of command.

- 1:3, 4—Substance of Timothy's mission—Pass along to others the apostolic orders to :

- Avoid heterodox teachings (teaching tangents as truth)—Ministers of the Word must stick to the text and avoid advancing maverick interpretations and making peripheral issues central.
- Ignore unauthoritative/speculative teachings (teaching traditions as truth)—Ministers of the Word must

(1 TIMOTHY)—NOT FOR PASTORS ONLY

avoid relying on legendary stories or Jewish traditions as authoritative rather than teaching what the text says.

■ 1:5–7—Purpose of Timothy's mission—Love

■ Sound teaching produces/promotes/displays love to the hearers—Strict instruction on what and how to teach and preach is not designed to be restrictive or controlling; the goal of sound teaching (and insisting on sound teaching) is love for people, because what they need and what is of true value is *truth*, not tangents and speculations. Practicing and insisting on a truth-centered ministry is not being divisive or narrow or a control freak; it is being loving.

■ Maintaining a loving, truth-centered ministry signals a pure heart, a good conscience, and genuine faith.

■ Wandering from a truth-centered ministry results in idle talk, arrogant teaching, and ignorant arguing.

■ 1:8–11—Need for Timothy's mission—Misuse of the Law (OT)

■ The proper use of the law is to convict sinners, not to bind believers.

■ 1:12–17—Encouragement to Timothy's mission—Paul's Testimony

■ As an example of the powerful results of a right use of the law (in his own conversion) and an encouragement in dealing patiently with perverse sinners (like he used to be).

■ 1:18–20—Renewal of Timothy's mission—Pass along the apostolic order ("this charge," 1:3)

■ Encouragement of past providences

■ Warning of consequences at stake

2:1–7—Priority of Prayer in the Ministry

■ 2:1—Primacy of prayer—"first of all"

■ 2:1—Kinds of prayer

■ 2:1, 2—Objects of prayer—"all men, kings, authorities"

■ 2:2—Result of prayer—a serene and tranquil life in godliness and gravity

■ This does not describe what we are to pray for, but the natural outcome of a prayerful life regardless of our external circumstances.

■ 2:3—Reason for prayer—it pleases God

■ 2:4–7—Motive for prayer—broader success for the gospel

2:8–15—Place of Men and Women in the Ministry

■ 2:8—Priority for Men: Prayer

■ No shame (in every place)

■ No hypocrisy (holy hands)

■ No personal animosity (without wrath)

■ No doubt (without doubting)

■ 2:9–15—Priority for Women: Modesty

■ In appearance and decorum (2:9)

■ In character and behavior (2:10)

■ In position (2:11–15)

■ The command (2:11, 12)

■ Learn in quiet submission

■ May not teach (men)

■ May not usurp authority (over men)

■ The rationale (2:13–15)

■ Divine order of creation

■ Human order of the fall

3:1–13—Prerequisites for Leadership in the Ministry

The qualifications for ministry are not criteria for determining merit or worthiness for ministry but for insuring credibility with the people to whom one ministers.

■ 3:1–7—Qualifications for overseers/elders

■ 3:8–13—Qualifications for deacons

3:14–16—Parenthetical Purpose Statement

This passage opens the practical and theological heart of the letter itself.

■ 3:14, 15—Purpose for the Letter

■ Paul's Purpose for Writing: *that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave [conduct] thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God*—The verb *behave/conduct* does not exclude Timothy, but it is not aimed at him. It is an infinitive with no express object that refers to how [everyone is] to conduct or comport or behave [himself or herself] in the local body of believers, which is the dwelling place of God. This epistle outlines the "way of life" that is to guide and characterize the believers attached to a local assembly; in Greek, "house of God" has no article, suggesting Paul is referring not to the universal church but to a local assembly. The reference to the *living God* underscores that the assembly of believers is the house where God dwells, just as the tabernacle and the Temple functioned in the OT.

■ 3:15—Purpose of the Church

■ The nature and function of a local church: *the house of God . . . is the church of the living God, the pillar [a buttress]*

Continued on next page

and ground [bulwark] of the truth—In addition to the local assembly being the visible expression and dwelling place of God in the earth, it carries out a specific function in connection with the propagation of truth. This is why doctrine and decorum in the church are such crucial issues. There is far more at stake here than the reputation of a social club. The church is God's primary tool for propagating truth in the earth. A pillar or buttress upholds, supports, and displays. A bulwark fortifies and protects, like ramparts and battlements (cf. 6:20, 21). The function of the church is to (1) support the truth by proclamation, and (2) protect the truth from perversion. If the church does not do either of these and both of these, who will?

■ 3:16—Message of the Church

- The essence of the Christian message: concentrated creedal Christianity—Paul distills the Church's central message as

Christology, revolving around Jesus' incarnation, vindication by God, resurrection, ascension, and universal proclamation.

4:1–10—Preparation for Apostasy in the Ministry

4:11–6:19—Personal Instruction in the Ministry

- 4:11–16—Personal Ministry
- 5:1–6:2—Relational Ministry
- 6:3–10—Confrontational Ministry
 - 6:3–5—Nature of heterodoxy—Argumentative arrogance is the mark of a heretical (false) or heterodox (imbalanced) teacher.
 - 6:6–10—Dangers of discontentment—False doctrine is not the only threat; some have wandered away from "the faith" through discontentment and greed.
- 6:11–16—Priorities of the man/minister of God
- 6:17–19—Exhortation of the wealthy

6:20, 21—Personal Exhortation

The concluding words echo Paul's chief

burdens expressed throughout the epistle. It is the second time he exhorts Timothy regarding what has been "entrusted" to him (cf. 1:18). "Because this charge occurs in the conclusion of the epistle, [what has been entrusted to Timothy] refers at least to the epistle (and perhaps to the gospel and Timothy's ministry as a whole), which can be summed up, as it is in these two verses, as a call to guarding the truth of the gospel and avoiding the empty chatter of . . . heresy" (Mounce, 371).

Theme

How we *behave* and *minister* in the church are crucial because the church is a dwelling place of the living God, a visible expression of His presence, and the upholder and protector of Christian truth. Ministers and members alike must magnify their privileges, know their responsibilities, and be vigilant against influences (in doctrine, behavior, priority, leadership, ambition) that would threaten its well-being.



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Emory University Hires New Professor

The Dalai Lama was formally installed as a professor at Emory University in late October. The seventy-two-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk and also Nobel Peace Prize laureate was granted a faculty ID card, though his dress and well-known face hardly made the card necessary. In his first speech, the Dalai Lama encouraged those gathered to "look beyond money and fame for happiness and to use their education for the greater good." The Dalai Lama wants to use his influence to encourage the United States for peaceful resolutions of world conflicts apart from sending soldiers.

That same weekend he lectured on the basics of Buddhism, joined an ecumenical meeting of the world's major religions to discuss peaceful resolutions, and participated in a conference on depression. The Dalai Lama will spend most of his time in India helping students and faculty who want individual attention, but he will also travel frequently to the United States.

Find this article at <http://dalailama.emory.edu/>.

Thou Shalt Not Kill

In September 2007 Microsoft released the video game Halo 3. Within two weeks the game had already passed \$300 million in sales. The game is rated

M for "mature audiences," which means that someone must be seventeen years old to purchase the game.

In spite of the world's concern for the mature content, churches are flocking to Halo 3 as a tool for reaching boys and young men. For example, the Colorado Community Church in Denver sets up three televisions where the children can sit and compete. When two young boys were asked what made the game so alluring, they responded, "It's just fun blowing people up."

What is the rationale of using this game as a tool to reach the unchurched, especially in light of the fact that most teenagers cannot buy this game on their own? Kedrick Kennerly, founder of Christian Games Online, stated "It is no different than going on a camping trip. . . . It is a way of fellowship." Later, in seeking to override objections, he insisted that concerns "too strictly interpreted the commandment Thou shalt not kill. . . . I'm not walking up to someone with a pistol and shooting them. I'm shooting pixels on the screen." When John Robinson, an associate pastor of Albuquerque Church, answered concerned parents about the M rating, he explained, "We are using this tool to be relatable and relevant."

One youth pastor stated "We are called to be fishers of men. Teens are our fish,

so we become creative at baiting our hooks."

Find this article at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/07/us/07halo.html?_r=1&oref=slogin.

New California Precedent

On October 12, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law three bills that should be cause for great alarm to all peoples of the United States. The first bill, SB777, bans the use of any tools—textbooks, etc.—that would be interpreted as "discriminating against or critical of homosexuality, bi-sexuality, transsexuality or alternative life style choices." BB394 required the State Department of Education to monitor all public education institutions for anti-discrimination and anti-harrassment requirements as they relate to perceived gender identification and sexual orientation. AB14 prohibits state funding for any program or organization that does not support alternative sexual practices. This will include any funding for social programs run by churches, i.e., daycare, preschools, after-school programs, housing and food programs, senior services, anti-gang efforts, and job programs.

Each of these bills will force Californians who do not agree with the pro-homosexual agenda to either leave public education altogether or have

to endure the barrage of indoctrination that should not be a part of the educational agenda.

The Capitol Resource Institute in California is starting a referendum campaign to overturn SB777. To do this, they will need 433,971 valid voter signatures.

Find this article at http://www.town-hall.com/columnists/ulWeyrich/2007/10/25/a_dangerous_precedent_abuilding_in_california.

A Willow Creek Confession

After a multiyear study on the effectiveness of the church and programs at Willow Creek Community Church, Bill Hybels, church growth and seeker-sensitive guru, made a shocking confession: "We made a mistake." The results of the study are being published in the book *Reveal: Where Are You?* The findings, according to Hybels, were "earth shaking," "ground breaking" and "mind blowing."

"Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually; when the data came back it wasn't helping people that much," Hybels stated. "Other things that we did not put much money into and didn't put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for."

Elsewhere he stated,

"We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and became Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become 'self-feeders.' We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible [*sic*] between services, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own."

Find this article at <http://www.crosswalk.com/news/commentary/11558438/print/>.

Stem Cell Success in Cloned Monkey Embryos

A group of scientists claim to have successfully cloned monkey embryos by using stem cells from a nine-year-old adult male rhesus macaque. They created cloned embryos and then extracted the stem cells. Until now, mice have been the only other animals in which this has been successfully completed. Research has been published online in the scientific journal *Nature*.

Since they have been working with the technology, scientists are certain that it will work in humans as well. Once again the issue of the cloning of human embryos for the harvesting of organs, parts, or even the whole is an issue that Christians must face.

Find this article at: http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071115/30096_Stem_Cell_Advance_in_Cloned_Monkey_Embryos_Renews_Human_Cloning_Debate.htm.

A New Survey on Church Attendance

An Ellison research study released early in November found that sixty-six percent of Americans believe that attending church before the age of eighteen gives them a "good

NOTABLE QUOTES

One in five Americans over age twelve test positive for genital herpes.—*New England Journal of Medicine*, 1997

Death is never the last word in the life of a righteous man. When a man leaves this world, he may be righteous or unrighteous, he leaves something in the world. He may leave something that will grow and spread like cancer or a poison, or he may leave something like the fragrance of perfume or a blossom of beauty that permeates the atmosphere with blessing.—James Moffatt

Many groups feel that the end justifies the means. That is, the means of reaching the teens may not be biblical, but the end result is what counts. God never intended to use carnal means to obtain a spiritual result.—Les Ollila

What kind of revival do we need? We need a revival to Godly living. How sickening to hear so-called Christian kids sit around and discuss their favorite rock groups, filthy movies and anti-God philosophies. The home of the average Christian teenager is filled hundreds of dollars worth of [recorded materials] that promote rebellions, drugs, and immorality. . . . Yet Mom and Dad sit idly by and say: "They are just kids."—Glen Taylor

First Thessalonians 5:14 mentions three types of "problem" church members. These types are found in every youth group as well. They are the "unruly," the "feeble-minded," and the "weak." A study of the Greek words behind each of these English words gives a clear picture of most "problem" youth. . . . "Unruly" means rebellious. . . . "Feeble-minded" literally means "small-souled." It can be translated "faint-hearted." . . . "Weak" translates words that mean "without strength."—Frank Hamrick

The fool insists on directing his own life, demanding autonomy at all costs. Even though it means eventual destruction, the fool makes personal freedom the chief value in life. On the other hand, wisdom chooses to seek what is best in Yahweh's ordered creation. By reverencing Yahweh, the wise person finds skill in living within his world. It is the person who finds wisdom and gains understanding who is blessed.—Daniel Estes

moral foundation." Sixty-two percent say "they're glad they did." Even among those who no longer attend church regularly—once a month or less—the majority said childhood church attendance was good.

Fifty-six percent who no longer attend any worship service said their attendance as a child had a "positive influence in their life." Fifty-five percent said it "gave them a good moral foundation." Fifty-one percent stated they were "glad they attended as a child." Of others no longer attending church, thirty-one percent said that attending church "turned them off to religion," and twenty-four percent believed that "the past experience is not relevant to their life today."

The survey also found that only seven percent of American adults have not attended a worship service at any point in their life, and fifty-one percent of Americans attend some sort of religious service once a month or more. The report states that attendance among children is declining. Twenty-four percent of those under age thirty-five did not attend church as a child. Thirteen percent of people ages thirty-five to fifty-four did not attend church as a child, and nine percent of those who are fifty-five and older did not attend church as a child.

Find this article at http://www.christianpost.com/article/20071114/30085_New_Survey_Refutes_Claim_that_Taking_Kids_to_Church_is_Harmful.htm.

Compiled by Robert Conduct, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International Advisory Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

Newsworthy is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the FBFI.

An Outline for Missions' Prayer

Pearson L. Johnson

A common theme in missionary presentations is missionaries' need for prayer. Financial support is necessary, missions closets are a blessing, but the regular, fervent, sincere, and Biblically based prayers of God's people are what missionaries really covet. Why is this? Good missionaries know that their supporters' prayers provide the fuel that makes their efforts eternally effective.

We have made a resource available to our church that helps our people pray more effectively for our missionaries. It is a simple tool consisting of a list of our missionaries on one side divided by continent and an outline for scripturally praying for them on the other side. Pastors, this outline could also serve as the basis for a series of messages on prayer for missions. You can exposit each passage.¹ Please take it and use it for the good of the Church and the glory of God in missions. Hopefully you will find it helpful, agreeing with Isaac Watts that "prayer is so great and necessary a part of religion that every degree of assistance in it will be always acceptable to pious minds."²

Prayer That Promotes the Progress of the Mission

Use the points below to guide your prayer for the missionary outreach of our co-laborers. It is helpful to turn to the Scriptures as you pray.

I. Pray for the Proclamation of the Message

- A. For our missionaries to have opportunities to communicate the gospel; Col. 4:2, 3; 2 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 16:9
- B. For clarity in communicating the gospel; Col. 4:4-6; cf. 2 Tim. 2:22-26
- C. For boldness as they communicate the gospel; Eph. 6:19, 20; cf. Acts 4:23-31

II. Pray for the People Involved in the Mission

- A. That God would send out more workers to communicate the gospel; Matt. 9:36-38

- B. For success and safety for those who communicate the gospel; 2 Thess. 3:1, 2; Rom. 1:8; 15:30
- C. That they would remain pure and fit for service; Phil. 1:27; 1 Pet. 2:12; Heb. 13:18

III. Pray for the Places in Which They Minister

- A. For the political and societal structure to be conducive to communicating the gospel; 1 Tim. 2:1-7
- B. That they would encounter circumstances that facilitate gospel proclamation; Phil. 1:12
- C. For the gospel to spread into unreached areas; Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Thess. 3:1.

IV. Pray for the Progress of the Mission: Souls Saved and Churches Planted

- A. For the salvation of the lost as the gospel is proclaimed; Rom. 10:1; John 15:7, 8, 16
- B. For God to remove the hardness of hearts; Eph. 4:18; Acts 16:14
- C. For God to open people's eyes to understand the gospel so that they may turn from darkness to light; Acts 26:18; cf. 1 Cor. 2:14
- D. For God to draw people to Himself; John 6:44
- E. For the Holy Spirit to convict people of sin, righteousness, and judgment; John 16:8-11
- F. For God to grant people repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth; 2 Tim. 2:25, 26.

Pearson L. Johnson serves as Pastor of Missions and Evangelism at Inter-City Baptist Church in Allen Park, Michigan.

¹ This outline was drawn from messages preached by my pastor, David Doran.

² Isaac Watts, *A Guide to Prayer* (Banner of Truth), p. 1.

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Below is a list of all Chaplains endorsed by the FBFI Commission on Chaplains. All are in critical places of ministry and need the prayers of God's people. Several are deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Please include all of the FBFI Chaplains and their families as a regular part of your prayer ministry.

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Air National Guard

Thad Todd

sage that says one cannot confront an elder. If several leaders try to confront BG, he accuses these leaders of gossip. In short, ministries like these have Diotrephes on their hands (3 John 9–11). If assistant pastors were allowed to function as God designed them—namely, as co-pastors—and if those co-pastors held one another accountable, all the while submitting to one another based on giftedness and “function” (allowing the senior pastor to lead as God has placed him in the primary elder role [such as James in Jerusalem]), then the oft-heard abuse found within Fundamental leadership would be reduced in large number. . . .

I appreciated the emphasis on loyalty to the senior pastor. There are elements of truth to that emphasis. However, if that emphasis is not coupled with the emphasis of honoring the Lord and being primarily loyal to Him and His bride, then our Fundamental churches will be doomed to be led by those who will abuse their authority. . . .

Please know I’m grateful for the FBFI in general and what you are specifically attempting to do in *FrontLine*. . . . Always your friend.

Straight Ahead!

Phil. 3:12–14

Dr. Joel Tetreau,
Senior Pastor
Southeast Valley Baptist Church,
Gilbert, AZ

Under the heading “Parenting Tips,” it was stated in the November/December issue of *FrontLine* that “Attention Deficit Syndrome is primarily a result of poor training and parental expectation.” I recognize that Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is a very controversial topic and there are differing opinions held in Christian and secular communities in regard to its being a disorder, its diagnosis, and its treatment. However, to state that Attention Deficit Syndrome is primarily a result of poor training and parental expectation is an

unwarranted assumption. Doing so demonstrates a lack of understanding of the complex challenges faced by young people and the parents of young people who have been diagnosed with AD/HD.

I do agree that many of the behaviors associated with AD/HD may be the result of a lack of structure in the home and in parental expectations. These behaviors need to be dealt with and need to be dealt with appropriately. However, I do not agree that Attention Deficit Syndrome is *primarily* the result of the two factors mentioned.

I have worked with children diagnosed with AD/HD for the past twenty-three years. I have seen it misdiagnosed, over diagnosed, and have seen medications prescribed unnecessarily. I work with godly parents who love their children, who are consistent in the discipline of their children, who spend every waking moment attempting to teach their children study skills, organizational skills, and social skills all within a Biblical framework. I have seen firsthand the disappointment and total frustration on the part of these parents when they hear that all they really need to do is develop better parenting skills and raise the level of expectation they have for their child. In too many situations they were made to feel guilty and have followed such counsel to their own detriment and to the detriment of their children, children who, in reality, were not able to understand why consequences were being experienced more frequently and with greater severity.

The AD/HD issue, whether one believes it to be a real problem or a conjured-up problem, is much more complicated than parenting skills and higher level of expectations. Bringing it down to these two components, in my opinion, does a disservice to the young people and the parents of young people who are dealing with it on a day-to-day basis.

John J. McCormick, Ed.D.
Taylors, SC

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An Open Letter to Those Who Presume to Speak to Islam for Christianity

Wayne A. Bley

On October 13, 2007, *An Open Letter and Call from Muslim Religious Leaders*, signed by thirty-eight Muslim clerics, was sent to the leadership of the Christian world.¹ Titled *A Common Word between Us and You*, this letter would more accurately be described as an open invitation to the Christian world to join Islam—an invitation for Christians to become Muslims. Although it can be read by the uninformed as an appeal for peace between Muslims and Christians, it is a call for Christians to renounce Christianity or to live under the rule of Islam as willing, servile individuals—a condition known as dhimmitude.

On November 18, 2007, *A Christian Response* was posted as an ad in the *New York Times* and on the Yale University website.² Its three hundred signers identify themselves as “members of the worldwide Christian community” and offer their apology to Islam on behalf of all Christians. The listed names, churches, and seminaries are mostly classic liberals, but there are a few presumed spokesmen for Evangelicalism who gush with appreciation for this offer of common interest in world peace.³ Among the academics is John Esposito, scholar and professor at Georgetown University and known apologist for Islam. He and his colleagues at Harvard are each the recipients of \$20 million grants from the Saudi government for the purpose of being champions of Islam—Wahhabi Islam.

A Common Word between Us and You demonstrates the faithfulness of the Muslim clerics to the Qur’an and Allah. They are required to invite all infidels to convert to Islam. It is the responsibility of all Muslims to invite infidels to Allah; it is their mission, which they must “strive” to accomplish. *A Christian Response* betrays ignorance of the Islamic method of declaring war through a sincere offer of conversion. When the offer

is rejected, war begins, and the Muslim engages on the defensive because of the rejection. This consistent application of the Qur’an cannot be explained away by the redefinitions of naïve ecumenical dreams. History proves that Islamic wars are begun this way. The only unanswered question following the offer and its rejection is, “How long?”

It is beyond naïve to believe that Muslims interpret the words of the Qur’an with Evangelical definitions. For there to be a common word between us, the Muslim must abrogate every text of the Old and New Testaments that is not in agreement with the Qur’an. Not only does *A Common Word between Us and You* claim equivalence between the Triune God and Allah, it also claims equivalence between the Islamic and Christian response to one’s neighbor. Luke 10:27, 28 is referenced but not quoted. The context of Luke 10:29–37 is the Parable of the Good Samaritan. If Islam held a view common with Christianity, Muslims would be bound to care for infidels, not to subdue them.

Near the end of the letter, the clerics appeal to the common word of Matthew 16:26: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Don’t mistake common sense for common doctrine. Jesus explains in Matthew 16:13–28 how one loses his soul: by rejecting Jesus Christ as God incarnate; by rejecting the necessity of the crucifixion, which Islam does. There is no common ground on the very matter offered as “a common word.” This carefully worded, one-way invitation, requiring no adjustment by any Muslim, is clear: “Thus in obedience to the Holy Qur’an, we as Muslims invite Christians to come together with us on the basis of what is common to us.” The phrase, “with us” refers to Muslims—the ummah—and “what is common to us” refers to Allah and all Islamic thought.

For Christianity and Islam to share

“a common word” on loving God and neighbor, there cannot be such evident disparity between the meaning of “God” and “loving one’s neighbor.” Those who signed the original letter are deceptive. Those who signed the response are deceived, or deceivers themselves. If common ground exists, then the Qur’an and the Bible should lead us to similar conclusions about the fundamentals. The honest reader should be able to read English Common Law, the US Constitution and Bill of Rights, along side Sharia Law and the Constitutions based on it, and find harmony. How can there be common ground when the fundamentals and their applications are so divergent?

We cannot dismiss these differences as though the delusion of “peace at any price” were a serious option. The appeasement of a Chamberlain seems enlightened only until the definition of terms is provided by a Hitler. Neither *A Common Word* nor the *Response* should surprise anyone who knows history. Admissions of Christian guilt, past and present, can be poured out liberally in the dramatic flourish of dealing with one’s own beam before attempting to address another’s mote. But to apologize for the compassionate fulfillment of the Great Commission as somehow equivalent with beheadings, crucifixions, genital mutilations, and lashings is beyond ignorant; it is inexcusable.

Wayne A. Bley is a member of the Executive Board of FBFI, serves as the Chairman of the FBFI Commission on Chaplains, and is a researcher for the Riverside Research Institute in Washington, DC.

¹<http://www.yale.edu/faith/abou-common-word.htm>

² Ibid

³Among them, Rev. Leith Anderson, President of the National Association of Evangelicals (see his response at <http://www.nae.net/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=editor.e&pageID=500&idCategory=1>), and the well-known Revs. Bill Hybels and Rick Warren.



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