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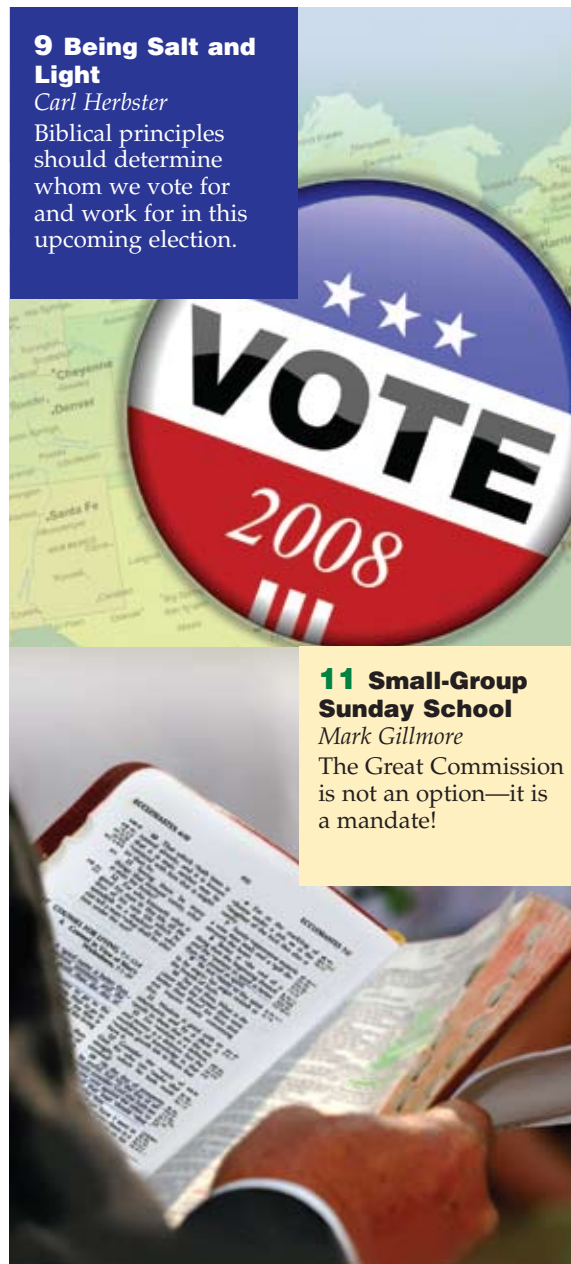
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We are grateful to Dr. Kevin Schaal for his editorial assistance with this edition of *FrontLine*.

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We read with great interest the article by David Utter on "Reaching the Pearls of the Pacific for Christ" in the May/June 2007 issue of *FrontLine*. His comments sounded exactly like the people in the country where we labor. They will agree with you and even pray a sinner's prayer. But there is no inward conviction, no outward change of behavior, no interest in church attendance, and no commitment to Christ. In other words, no salvation!

At times, summer teams and short-term mission groups come to the field and go home reporting great numbers of souls saved. Sometimes in two or three months the number of souls reported saved are more than a missionary can account for in his lifetime of living among the people. However, many times these souls do not have any continuance, no life-changing behavior, do not seek out a church, and do not go

on with the profession that they have made. The obvious answer is a need for true Holy Ghost conviction and repentance in the heart of the listener, and then follow-up by a Christian laborer who lives and works among the people. May God send more laborers into His harvest fields.

*Kirk and Kathy Hickok
Brazil*

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship is meeting a need, encouraging pastors and congregations outside the Bible belt. As a pastor in a community that is lacking for fellowship around the Fundamental Baptist perspective, it was a great encouragement to our congregation to have Dr. Vaughn minister here just to be an encouragement to the work.

The dear members of this flock were encouraged. One member said to me, "When you hear preaching like

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Mission Statement: The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International exists to provide a rallying point for Fundamental Baptists seeking personal revival and the opportunity to work with committed Bible-believers in glorifying God through the uncompromising fulfillment of the Great Commission.

As the journal of the FBFI, *FrontLine Magazine* provides a forum for God's people to reverently express a conservative Christian perspective on pertinent issues. In an effort to keep readers informed, quotes and references to many different individuals and organizations will appear. This does not imply the endorsement of the magazine or its board. Unsolicited manuscripts and artwork accepted for review.

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Fundamentalism: A Movement or a Message?

John C. Vaughn

Members and leaders of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International are often asked, sometimes with suspicion, about the purpose of our Fellowship. It is not unusual to hear criticisms of FBFI based on information that is very much out of date, from circumstances that have changed completely. Although some would say that FBFI is dedicated to the perpetuation of a movement that is no longer relevant, we say, “No, the core values we stand for will always be relevant because they are Biblical, not just historical.” Admittedly, our vision is “to perpetuate the heritage of Baptist Fundamentalism complete, intact, pure, and undiluted to succeeding generations of Fundamentalists,” but that vision has a context. Our Vision and Core Values are the essence of our Statement of Purpose. All are published in our directory and on our website.

This issue of *FrontLine* was planned around our Core Values. Some articles actually explain a core value, while others make an application of a core value. The annual FBFI resolutions accompany the articles on the five (of six) Core Values addressed. One year from now, Lord willing, we plan to produce an issue of *FrontLine* on the Core Value “Separatist Baptist Fundamentalism.” Our goal is to clearly articulate what we mean by each of those terms. Definitions and discussions appear in many resources today, and it is not our purpose to “settle it once and for all” but simply to make clear what **we** mean by the term, since we are often tagged with inaccurate definitions of our own terms.

For now, there are articles here

about the other Core Values. Dr. Kevin Schaal addresses the question, “What Is Loyalty to God and His Word?” Brethren continue to separate over whether loyalty to the Word means “loyalty to a text or translation.” Our position has been repeatedly explained, but we intend to say here, “The position of historic, Baptist Fundamentalism is, for us, a Core Value.” As Bible believers, we have been falsely accused of bibliolatry and described as failing to focus on the preeminence of Christ in our militancy for the Bible. That is wrong on both counts. The introductory sentence to our Statement of Purpose begins, “In order that we, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International might—**for the glory of God and the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ**—hold fast, with tenacity and zeal, the heritage of historic, Baptist Fundamentalism. . . .”

Since this is an election year—probably the most critical one ever in the lives of young Fundamentalists—the need for “Balanced Biblical Discernment,” a Core Value for us, is applied by Dr. Carl Herbster in “Being Salt and Light.” We believe that the position of “take no position” is irresponsible. Another of our Core Values is “Great Commission Leadership.” We believe that the hope of the world is the gospel. In a previous year the FBFI warned about groups that try to pit family values against Biblically principled ministries such as the Sunday school. Bro. Mark Gillmore applies this Core Value in “Small Group Sunday School: Getting Practical about the Great Commission.” Perhaps one of the more self-evident Core Values of the FBFI is “Uncompromising Fellowship” itself.

We believe that a Fellowship like this is essential because we believe that uncompromising fellowship is essential. Dr. John Mincy and his son Mark develop “The Fellowship Principle” to explain the Biblical balance of obedience to both separatism and fellowship—of standing together without compromise. Chaplain Wayne Bley courageously calls us to “Vigilance for Religious Liberty” in another urgent appeal to curb the expanding “Muslim favoritism” in America. Indeed, religious liberty should not be a core value just for Baptist Fundamentalists but for every living person.

We want to be an encouragement to those who already understand the importance of Baptist Fundamentalism. Our “mission” is “to provide a rallying point” for those who are “seeking personal revival and the opportunity to work with committed Bible believers (Baptist or not) in glorifying God through the uncompromising fulfillment of the Great Commission.” We welcome the interest of some within broader Evangelicalism who are curious about what makes us tick, and we pray for those within Fundamentalism who are offering godly, Biblical explanations.

Fundamentalism must be about the fundamentals. Perpetuating an undefined movement called “Fundamentalism” is not fundamental. When we call for “perpetuating the heritage of Baptist Fundamentalism,” we are calling for continued building on the right foundation: “The glory of God and the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The FBFI is not clinging to a movement, but proclaiming a message.

What Is Loyalty to the Word?

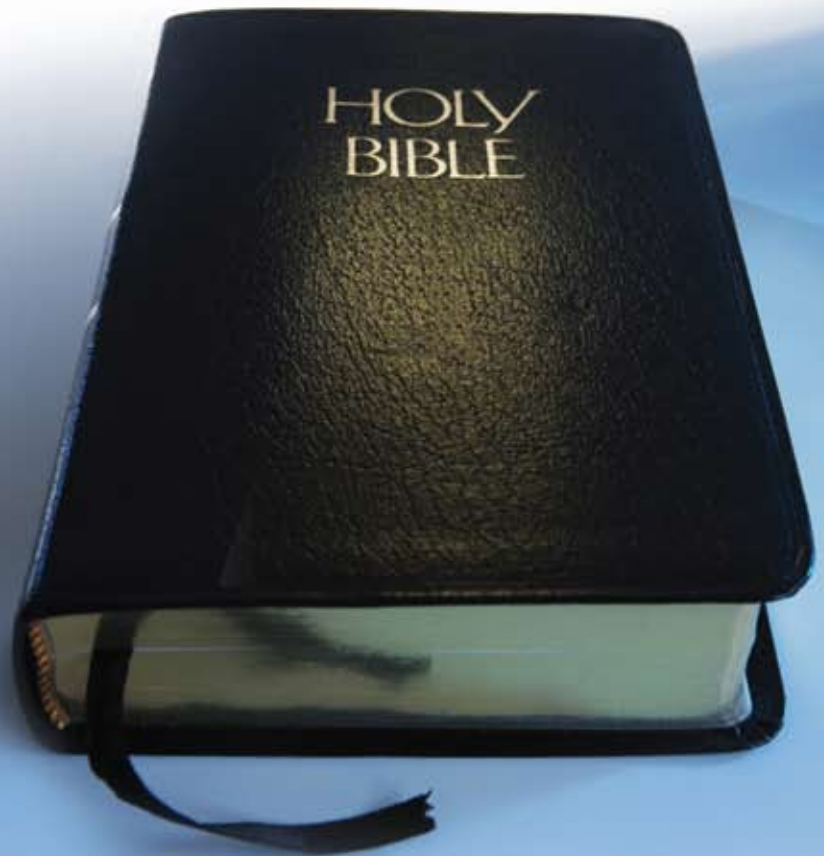
Loyalty to God and His Word:

Resolution Affirming the Biblical View of Inspiration, Texts, and Translation

Whereas,

- The Bible claims that it is plenarily and verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit in its original writings;
- The Bible claims that it will be preserved by God throughout the ages;
- The Bible claims that its Spirit-indwelt readers will be illumined by the Holy Spirit as they read;
- The practice of translating the Scriptures into common languages was affirmed by the practice of Jesus Christ and the practice of the New Testament Church;
- The Bible makes no claim to the specific manner by which it would be preserved, or to further inspiration or perfection through any translators in any language;

The FBFI affirms the orthodox, historic, and, most importantly, Biblical doctrine of inspiration, affirming everything the Bible claims for itself, and rejecting, as a violation of Revelation 22:18,19, any so-called doctrine, teaching, or position concerning inspiration, preservation, or translation that goes beyond the specific claims of Scripture.



One of the core values of the FBFI is stated as “Loyalty to God and His Word.” But what does loyalty to the Bible really mean? In our day, misunderstandings abound concerning the nature of Scripture itself and the nature of true loyalty to it. We believe it is appropriate for us to clarify what we mean by “loyalty to God and His Word.”

Loyalty to the Word means that we must believe everything that the Bible claims about itself. What does it claim?

The Bible claims that it is God’s own God-breathed book (2 Tim. 3:16). It is inspired—the very breath of God. It is verbally inspired—not just in thought or ideas, but the very words are given by God, even to the forms of the words, such as the distinctions of singulars and plurals (Gal. 3:16). It is plenarily inspired in that the whole of the Bible is God’s Book.

Everything clearly recognized as part of the canon of Scripture is God’s Book. It is inspired in its original writings. Prophets spoke the Word, but they also wrote it. The New Testament term “Scriptures” or “writings” clearly identifies the Word of God with the writings of the prophets.

Because it is inspired, it is also inerrant. We cannot separate the source of the Book from the nature of the Book. If the source of the Book is God, and He is perfect, then the book must also be perfect. God is not a man who gets concepts right but fudges on the details. God is not a man who would consider any detail unimportant. He knows all things, remembers all things, communicates perfectly, and speaks only truth (John 17:17).

The Word of God is authoritative, rebuking, ruling, and guiding believers in all matters of faith and practice. The Word of God is profitable. By

that we mean its truths are timely and are not only useful, but authoritative in all generations, regardless of time, space or culture.

Loyalty to the Word means we must not claim more for the Bible than it claims for itself. If believers in Heaven can be grieved over what happens on earth, Mary—the earthly mother of our Lord—might be the most grieved of all. She would be grieved at worship offered her that should rightly belong to her beloved Son. She would be grieved at the prominence given her that should rightly belong to Another. We do no person or document any favors by ascribing to it more than it claims for itself. Therefore, we must not claim a position for the Bible that it does not claim for itself. To do so would show a disloyalty to God and the wonderful Book He has given us.

While the Bible is everything mentioned above, it is not and never was intended to be an object of worship. The Bible is from God, it takes us to God, but it is not God. We wholeheartedly agree with the words of the hymn writer who said,

*Beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord,
My Spirit pants for Thee, O living Word.*

*Show me the truth concealed within the Word,
And in thy book revealed, I see Thee, Lord.**

The Bible testifies to the fact of its own preservation but makes no particular statement about the method of its preservation. The Bible claims that its contents will not be lost but makes no claim concerning the transcription of Scripture itself. It gives no guidelines for transcription. There are no Scriptural promises concerning any future method of approval that would eliminate all questions concerning variations between copies. Opinions will vary on how God chooses to preserve His Word. In our zeal to defend or promote a particular text or translation, we must remember that we do not have a right to raise our opinion to the level of Bible doctrine.

The practice of translation is clearly intended in Scripture. The idea that the Word of God should be in the generally spoken language of the people is affirmed by Christ's quoting from a Greek translation of the Old Testament. The inspiration and inscription of the New Testament in *koine* (common) Greek rather than classical Greek, Hebrew, or another language clearly indicates God's intent to put the Scriptures within the reach and understanding of the most possible people. We believe and commend the practice of the translation of Scripture into as many world languages as possible as a noble and Biblical part of the Great Commission.

However, the Bible itself makes no claim and gives no specific instructions concerning the method of translation

or the nature of future translations. The Bible makes no claim concerning the transfer of the gift of inspiration to future translators. If it had done so, we should believe it. But it did not make such a claim. For us to claim inspiration for translators would be error and could be categorized as a violation of Revelation 22:18, 19, changing the words of the Book as given under divine inspiration and bringing with it the accompanying Scriptural condemnations.

Loyalty to the Word means that we must honestly examine the Word to find the exact message God intended to communicate within its pages. Proper interpretation of Scripture must be consistent with its original context. It cannot mean what it never meant. We must understand and follow reasonable, Bible-based rules for interpretation. This will help us to be as impartial in our reading and application of Scripture as possible. Our selfish human nature tempts us to wrest the Scripture and make it say what we want it to say. We must guard against this. We are not the masters of the text; it must master us.

The reading of the text of Scripture is not just an intellectual exercise. The Holy Spirit enlightens individual believers so that they might understand the truth of the Word and make appropriate applications in life and practice. But that understanding is not contrary to the plain teaching of the Word. Original language study is tremendously helpful in understanding the original intent of the writers of Scripture, and information about the original languages of Scripture is available today in a way that is unprecedented. Believers today have more access to the Word of God than any believer has ever had at any time in human history. But understanding does not come without effort. Laboring in the Word, especially for the preacher and teacher, is essential. In fact, it is a divine expectation (1 Tim. 5:17, 18).

Loyalty to God and His Word means that we must handle the Bible honestly. We cannot use the Word for our own purposes. Using the Word as a tool to justify our selfish behavior or to manipulate others is a grievous sin against God. New Testament church leaders must not do

OUR SELFISH HUMAN NATURE TEMPTS US TO WREST THE SCRIPTURE AND MAKE IT SAY WHAT WE WANT IT TO SAY. WE MUST GUARD AGAINST THIS. WE ARE NOT THE MASTERS OF THE TEXT; IT MUST MASTER US.

it and have an obligation to point out and condemn those who do.

Loyalty to God and His Word means that we must communicate it clearly. We cannot afford, through laziness or expediency, to produce an uncertain sound in the proclamation of His Word. We must preach the Word. We preach the whole counsel of God, and we must preach it in an understandable way.

Loyalty to God and His Word means that we must defend it from attack. The Bible has come under attack

LOYALTY TO GOD AND HIS WORD MEANS THAT WE MUST HANDLE THE BIBLE HONESTLY. WE CANNOT USE THE WORD FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES.

through so-called science, liberal theology, mocking unbelief, and the pressures of a society given to deviance. We have an obligation to proclaim it and defend it in the public arena. We cannot stand silent while the message of God is maligned. Contending for the faith necessitates contending for the Word.

As Baptists, we also believe that loyalty to the Word means loyalty to it as our sole authority. While doctrinal statements, confessions, and creeds are helpful in clarifying and defining what we believe, our only authority for faith and practice is the Bible itself. All churches as institutions, confessions, creeds, traditions, and practices must be subject to it.

Loyalty to the Word means that we

obey it as our rule of life. We believe that we must live out the principles of Scripture every day. It is hypocrisy of the highest order to claim loyalty to the Word with our mouths while denying it in our daily actions. We understand that Fundamentalists will disagree on some applications of Biblical principles concerning personal holiness, but we are united in our commitment to submit ourselves to the commands of the Word of God in every sphere of life.

Dr. Kevin Schaal is an FBFI Executive Board Member. He pastors Northwest Valley Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona.

* "Break Thou the Bread of Life" by William F. Sherwin.

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Being Salt and Light

Balanced Biblical Discernment:

Resolution on Being Salt and Light

Whereas,

- The United States is in an election year;
- Believers, and specifically Biblical Fundamentalists, not only have the right to vote but have a stewardship entrusted to them because of that right;
- Evangelical leaders are sending mixed signals concerning the role Christians should have in the political process;
- Prominent leaders are calling on Christians to withhold their vote under certain circumstances;

The FBFi urges Biblical Fundamentalists to be good stewards of the votes entrusted to them by God through our Constitution and support candidates who will

- Honor Scripture concerning moral issues. Among these are the sanctity of life, the definition of marriage as between a man and woman, and the importance of the family;
- Honor the Baptist principle of religious liberty, protecting the freedom to worship, to preach the Word of God without censure, and to fulfill the Great Commission as commanded by Scripture;
- Appoint and approve judges who uphold these values.



This is an election year in the United States of America. In November we the people will decide who will lead this nation for the next four years. Some say that Christians should not get actively involved in the political process. Others act as if politics could be our salvation. Both are wrong. Christians must be involved in society if we want to preserve our society as salt and direct our society with light (Matt. 5:13–16). At the same time, our highest calling as Christians is to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ so that men and women can be saved (Mark 16:15) and then to teach them all the things the Lord has commanded us in His Word (Matt. 28:19, 20). One of the things we must teach Christians is how to be salt and light in our country as we also try to reach this world for Jesus Christ.

There are many issues that concern Christians in our society and in this election year. There are five that I think are the most important for Christians to understand and fight for. All of these issues are clearly communicated in the Word of God. Every Christian should know where the candidates stand on these topics and should vote accordingly. It is not personality that should determine our vote; it is not political party that should determine our vote; Biblical principles should determine whom we vote for and work for in this upcoming election.

The first and most important issue in our society is life. God and God alone should be the giver and taker of life. The killing of the unborn or the unwanted is a violation of the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exod. 20:13). I do not understand how any born-again Christian could vote for a candidate who supports abortion or euthanasia. When man takes life into his own hands, he is usurping the authority of Creator God and is acting like a god himself (Rom. 1:25). As Christians, we must

be pro-life, and we must reject candidates who are not.

Christians also should be pro-family. This starts with the understanding of what constitutes a family. God created woman for man, not man for man (Gen. 2:22, 23). He told man and woman to come together as one in order to populate the earth (Gen. 1:28). It is impossible for a homosexual marriage or union to accomplish God's purposes for marriage. Homosexual relationships are contrary to God's Word (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:27). Christians must stand against homosexual relationships of any kind and must stand for the traditional family.

The candidates we vote for should also stand with families on many other issues. This includes defending parents who want to put their children in a Christian school or who

do not need activist judges; we need accurate judges. All Christians should be pro-justice, voting for candidates who will promote law and order in our society.

Of course, as Christian believers we understand the importance of religious freedom. The First Amendment of the Constitution makes it plain that Congress should not pass any law that would establish a state religion or prohibit the free exercise of any religion. We must fight to protect our religious freedoms, or soon Christianity will be banished from our society. The attacks on Christmas, on the pledge to the American flag, and on the national motto "In God We Trust" are current areas of battle. The hate crimes legislation that is introduced in Congress each year seeks to silence preachers and churches by making it illegal to preach against certain sins clearly condemned in the Bible. As a preacher, I must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). I do not want to break the law, but I do have a higher authority than man's law. We must fight to protect not only the freedom of speech, but also the freedom of religious speech in the pulpits across our land. We must find out where

PRO-LIFE, PRO-FAMILY, PRO-MORALITY, PRO-JUSTICE, AND PRO-RELIGIOUS FREEDOM... THESE ARE THE MAJOR ISSUES THAT WILL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT GOD CONTINUES TO BLESS AMERICA (PS. 33:12).

want to educate at home. This includes allowing parents to discipline their children according to Biblical standards. This includes supporting tax policies that strengthen the family rather than handicapping it. We as Christians must stand with candidates who stand with the family.

Moral issues must matter to us. Sin is often tolerated in our society. We must humble ourselves and pray, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways if we want God to hear from Heaven, forgive our sin, and heal our land (2 Chron. 7:14). That is why Christians must stand against pornography, drug abuse, and other activities that violate Biblical morality. Some people say that government cannot legislate morality. However, government legislates morality all the time, even in simple things such as speed limits. The question is not whether government will or will not legislate morality—the question is which morality will be legislated? Remember what the Bible says: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Christians must stand for righteousness in their communities and in their nation. We must maintain a pro-Biblical morality in our attitude, in our actions, and in our votes.

One of the most important issues in a presidential election is the appointment of judges. God tells us that the government officials are supposed to bring good upon those who do good and evil upon those who do evil (Rom. 13:3). In our society judges determine how to interpret and enforce the law. The president of the United States appoints Supreme Court justices, who are the final authority in determining whether or not a law is constitutional. God is a just God, and we should be a just nation. We must elect officials who will appoint judges that understand and interpret the law, not judges who would change the law. We do not need judges who legislate from the bench. We

candidates stand on religious freedom and make sure that they will protect the rights of God-fearing Americans.

Pro-life, pro-family, pro-morality, pro-justice, and pro-religious freedom—these are the qualities that should motivate Christians to vote for specific candidates. These are the major issues that will make the difference in determining whether or not God continues to bless America (Ps. 33:12). When I started AdvanceUSA, these five issues were the causes for which the organization was founded. That is why we compare candidates on these issues on our website (www.advanceusa.org). Every Christian should know where the candidates in this presidential election stand and should vote on principle, not on personality or politics.

In these desperate days, we need prophets who will stand up and speak out as did the prophets of old. We need preachers all across the nation who will go to their city council meetings, to their state legislatures, to their US senators and representatives, to their governors, and even to the president of the United States, speaking the truth in love about these issues (Eph. 4:15). We need Christians all over America to vote according to these principles and to support candidates who stand firmly on these Biblical issues. We need believers to be salt and light, as the Lord Jesus Christ commanded. After all, if the salt loses its effectiveness, it becomes good for nothing in the battle for righteousness (Matt. 5:13). I pray that this will not happen this year or any year in our country's future. I know it will not happen with me. I pray it will not happen with you.

Dr. Carl Herbster is the senior pastor of Tri-City Ministries in Independence, Missouri. For ten years he was the president of the American Association of Christian Schools. He is the founder and president of AdvanceUSA, a conservative advocacy group in Washington, DC.

Small-Group Sunday School

Getting Practical about the Great Commission

Great Commission Leadership:

Resolution Affirming the Legitimacy
of the Sunday School

Whereas,

- The legitimacy of the Sunday school as a means of fulfilling the church's mission in this age has come under attack;
- The Sunday school has suffered from neglect and decline both in and outside of Fundamentalism;

The FBFI affirms the legitimacy of a Biblically principled, well-run Sunday school in the local church for the evangelism of the lost, the edification of believers and families, and the fulfillment of the church's mission throughout the world. While the Sunday school as an institution is not a New Testament requirement, the legitimate goals of the Sunday school are indeed New Testament mandates. We encourage churches within Baptist Fundamentalism to recommit themselves to evaluate and rebuild Sunday school ministries and to aid one another in planning, developing, and implementing effective Sunday school ministries for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Editor's Note: *Great Commission leadership is one of the core values of the FBFI. It is something that we must do, not just talk about doing. One of the ways in which the Great Commission is being accomplished effectively is through local church small-group Sunday school ministry. The following article is meant to be a help for someone who is considering revamping a Sunday school ministry to be more effective. It is not necessarily the only way to do it, but it might be the most effective way of doing it today.*

One of the greatest challenges a spiritual leader faces is the challenge of making a vision practical. The Great Commission is the overriding purpose of the local church. Church exits are often marked with the reminder, "You are now entering the mission field." Keynote addresses by pastors and evangelists hold before the people the absolute necessity of reaching out with the gospel and discipling converts into mature followers of Christ. This is familiar territory we would all embrace . . . in theory. But do the daily life and weekly schedule of our church and its members reflect our ideal? Are we succeeding in the administration of our divinely supplied resources (such as people, time, rooms, money) so that the Great Commission is being fulfilled in our local church *for real*? It's time for church leaders to "get real" about the Great Commission by

seriously considering the use of small-group Sunday school to implement God's will for a local congregation.

Biblical Convictions of Sunday School

The local church has been given a Biblical mandate, the Great Commission. When Christ first spoke His command in Matthew 28:18–20, He did not expect future generations to doubt and dismiss His last command. He promised His overcoming power and all-pervading presence to enable the accomplishment until the very end of this age. The Great Commission is not the Great Suggestion; its accomplishment is not an option—it is a mandate! Sunday school is not merely another church organization; it is the entire church organized to practically fulfill its greatest purpose. When you take the largest church organization and focus it on the greatest church task, you have a recipe for revival, because our priorities now match God's power and His promises. Do you really expect the Great Commission to be literally fulfilled during your lifetime through your local church? This expectation is the passion and power of Sunday school, an organizational plan that truly matches a Great Commission expectation.

Sunday school rests upon the conviction that every believer is supernaturally gifted by the Holy Spirit for ministry and must therefore be employed in the local church. Most ministry structures expect a few to serve while the vast majority sit and soak *and sour*. Ephesians 4:16 states, “the whole body [is] fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.” A

and nonchurch settings, Sunday school equips the people to do the ministry under the close supervision of pastors.

Critical Tasks of Sunday School

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt. 9:35). As Christ lived out the Great Commission, He taught people the Word of God, reaching people with the gospel (the word “preaching” is literally “evangelizing”) and ministering to people's needs. Allan Taylor, in his video series *Sunday School Done Right*,¹ points out that these are the three critical tasks of Sunday school:

Reaching people—The gospel saves souls!

Teaching people—The Word changes lives!

Ministering to people's needs—Acts of love demonstrate God's glory!

If we reach people, teach people, and minister to people's needs in the name of Christ and in the power of the Spirit, the gospel will advance in our community, and nothing can stop it. Success in these three tasks is not optional.

The small-group Sunday school organization assigns people as leaders to “own” one of these three tasks. In the children and youth divisions outreach and care leaders are department-wide or division-wide assignments, but the ideal adult class has three leaders. The *Outreach Leader* accomplishes the Great Commission by making sure that reaching efforts are organized and activated successfully. He leads by example, by identifying new prospects, by organizing visitation teams and assigning visits, by assisting the pastor in evangelism training, by exhortation and testimony. His goal is to see folks enrolled in Sunday school and brought to a saving knowledge of Christ.

The *Bible Study Leader* accomplishes the Great Commission by overseeing all reaching and ministering efforts and by making sure that teaching efforts are prepared and presented successfully. He or she leads by prayer and faithful Bible study, by focusing on nonattending class members, by personal discipleship, by weekly phone calls and visits, by coordinating all class ministry, and by identifying and developing new leaders.

The *Shepherding Care Leader* accomplishes the Great Commission by making sure that ministering efforts are organized and activated successfully. He or she leads by frequent contact with all class participants through phone calls and visitation, by identifying needs and getting the class involved in prayer and generous, sacrificial hospitality and care, and by personal spiritual growth.²

Time is another vital resource that must also be assigned to enable reaching, teaching, and ministering. The Sunday morning schedule provides specific time for each task.³ Time should be prioritized on an individual basis through-

IF WE REACH PEOPLE, TEACH PEOPLE, AND MINISTER TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST AND IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, THE GOSPEL WILL ADVANCE IN OUR COMMUNITY, AND NOTHING CAN STOP IT.

believer who is not serving is quenching the Spirit and is inhibiting his own spiritual growth and that of his entire church. Sunday school provides for every-member ministry, from the youngest believer to the most mature leader.

Pastors and evangelists have been called and enabled by God to equip and oversee the members as the members do the work of the ministry. The Great Commission is not a one-believer activity. The entire body of believers must work together as each member in that body fulfills his or her Spirit-empowered role. Pastors and evangelists do not do the entire ministry but rather have God-given insight and abilities that they pass on to others so that all can profit and serve (Eph. 4:11, 12). Sunday school is a commitment from pastors to fulfill their role to train and equip the people. Unlike small-group ministries that operate largely out from under pastoral oversight in various homes

out the week as leaders pray, make visits and phone calls, plan ministry, meet needs, and study Bible lessons.

To accomplish these three tasks in an ongoing and coordinated way demands *training and planning meetings*. An annual series of training events and a weekly workers' meeting provide for effective communication and personal advancement in specific leadership roles. Division Leaders should work closely with new leaders and guide their entire division to stay "on task" and "on target" for the Great Commission.

Functional Dynamics of Sunday School

There are three functional dynamics that stand behind the genius of the small-group Sunday school. They are (1) open enrollment, (2) age-graded small groups, and (3) levels of leadership.

Enrollment is a tool that enables a church to reach, teach, and minister to its members and to the lost and unchurched in a community. Sunday school enrollment is the core of a comprehensive Great Commission strategy. When enrollment is increasing, ministry opportunities are increasing and growth is sure to follow. However, when enrollment is decreasing (such as when names are dropped because some are not attending), ministry is decreasing. Great Commission ministry stands in jeopardy.

Open enrollment. "Enroll anyone, anywhere, anytime, so long as they agree." One Sunday school expert noted in a study of growing churches that when open enrollment is practiced, one-half of the total number enrolled will be unsaved. Of that number of unsaved persons, one-half will be saved and baptized into the church within twelve months.⁴ Another Sunday school leader pointed out from historical study that fifty percent of those enrolled in Sunday school will attend and grow.⁵

There are key differences between open enrollment and closed enrollment both in philosophy and in effect. In closed enrollment, enrollment is the commitment of the enrollee to attend, so the focus of the leaders becomes attendance, and ministry "grows" only if the person is attending. In open enrollment, enrollment is the commitment of the leader to minister to someone who has given him permission, so the focus of the leaders is on ministry, and ministry "grows" whether or not the enrollee is presently attending. In closed enrollment the leader is passive about his role, often wanting to drop from the roles anyone not attending. In open enrollment the leader is active about increasing his enrollment, realizing that each new name is a ministry opportunity that will bear fruit by the Spirit's power through class involvement in that person's life. A successful class focused on ministry will have about fifty percent of its enrollment attending with new names being added regularly (minimally once a month).

Age-graded small groups at all age levels. Jesus Christ was the greatest small-group leader ever as He demonstrated the potential in the life of a select group of twelve disciples. Mark 3:14 tells that "he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth." The key dynamic is that they were "with him." As Jesus lived with them, involved them, taught them, responded

to them, confronted them, restored them, and filled them, He transformed them into humble, Spirit-filled, sold-out servants of God. Do you realize that Christ impacted the world through these twelve in the very best way it could have ever been done? Also, consider that the family is another ingenious small group design by God. You cannot improve upon it—small groups work when you work small groups!

There are so many benefits to age-graded small groups: they involve more people (providing a multitude of leadership opportunities for both men and women); they develop new leaders; they are educationally sound through greater student-involved learning; they direct immediate assignment of prospects; they pray specifically; they encourage team spirit; and they simply minister to more people.⁶

Following the small-group dynamic, Sunday school multiplies by dividing. A single small group accomplishes the Great Commission and grows over the space of twelve to twenty-four months. It is divided into two small groups with several new leaders employed. This birth of a new class is a mighty victory in the Lord's work! It is vital that enrollment and attendance ceilings are followed so that no small group outgrows its range of most effectiveness. These figures are available upon request.⁷

Levels of leadership. When Moses faced a crisis of leadership in Exodus 18, God gave the answer through his father-in-law: identify faithful men and organize levels of leadership, or else you will wear out yourself and the people (Exod. 18:18–21). If Moses did not work in concert with other leaders, his own human limitations would jeopardize the spiritual unity and accomplishments of the Israelite nation.⁸ Leadership levels apply divine wisdom.

A well-organized Sunday school will have at least four divisions, each with a Division Leader and Secretary: preschool, elementary, youth, and adult. Each Division is divided into departments, which will have within them three to six classes.⁹ A Department Director oversees department activities and sees that each class is on task in its leadership and output. The class is the real unit of ministry, led by the Bible Study Leader (teacher) who works with a Shepherding Care Leader and Outreach Leader. Charts of specific numerical breakdowns are available.¹⁰

There are churches that will never be able to cross the attendance thresholds of 125 or 300 people as long as their pastor continues the same leadership style. Effective leadership is not merely about a particular leader's style or capability. For the pastor, effective leadership multiplies ministry so that the Great Commission is accomplished and the rate at which people are reached for Christ increases. The Great Commission demands the employment of levels of leadership.

Make a target of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18–20. What would be the bull's eye? You find four rings on the target: going, discipling, baptizing, and teaching to observe to do all things. While winning a soul to Christ is vital, we must recognize that completing the Great Commission involves teaching and training believers so that they are now observing all things and functioning as spiritual leaders in the cause of Christ. That is the goal; that is the bull's eye. The power of Sunday school is that in a single organizational structure of the local church, a per-

son progresses from preconversion and initial enrollment all the way to service as a fully equipped believer in Christ, prepared to replicate this process in another life. By the power of the Spirit of God flowing through the people of God, Sunday school is the strategy that successfully implements Great Commission ministry in the local church.

Mark Gillmore is associate pastor at Falls Baptist Church, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

¹ *Sunday School Done Right* by Allan Taylor. Sampson Resources, Dallas, TX, 2007.

² This position is a perfect “entry-level” ministry opportunity for the new and growing believer.

³ In our Sunday school ministry seventy-five minutes is dedicated to these three tasks with the following breakdown: Fellowship Time—fifteen minutes (informal “meet and greet” time with refreshments); Announcements—five minutes (led by Department Director); Outreach Time—ten minutes (focus on reaching people with the gospel); Care Group Time—fifteen minutes (focus on ministering to one another’s needs); Bible Study Time—thirty minutes (focus on teaching the Word of God).

⁴ *Sunday School for a New Century* by Bill L. Taylor and Louis B. Hanks. Lifeway Press, Nashville, TN, 1999.

⁵ *Building on Basics* by Leon Kilbreth, video series; out of print.

⁶ Although under attack in recent years, age grading can be quite effective with quality teachers and curriculum, good communication with the family, and the clear understanding that the chief disciplers in any child’s life are the parents. It is a time-honored practice that finds its roots in OT synagogues and even in the OT temple (Samuel’s childhood is an example). Grading by age is the perfect solution to an otherwise complex problem of forming, supporting, dividing, and ending small groups. Grouping by age is quick, is clear and effective, applies to everyone, is known by everyone, is ongoing, draws people of common interests and needs together, and keeps ministry fresh.

⁷ Contact the author at mark.gillmore@fallsbaptist.org.

⁸ It is noteworthy that the numerical breakdowns of Sunday school divisions, departments, and classes is identical to the levels established by Moses: thousands = local churches, hundreds = divisions, fifties = departments, and tens = classes. I believe that these levels of leadership are common across all of human experience because they reflect the limitations of human influence woven into our makeup from creation. These levels apply divine wisdom.

⁹ A larger Sunday school may also have a bus division and possibly two or more youth or adult divisions.

¹⁰ Contact the author at mark.gillmore@fallsbaptist.org.



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The Fellowship Principle

Uncompromising Fellowship:

Resolution on the Importance of Fellowship

Whereas we believe

- That this Fellowship of individuals is vital for the encouragement of godly Christians worldwide;
- That one of our goals is to cultivate an atmosphere of Biblical fellowship in order to build one another up in the faith, even though we may differ in some of our convictions;
- That Scripture imposes upon us a theological imperative to promote Biblical unity as well as Biblical separation;

We resolve

- To promote fellowship among uncompromising believers;
- To minister to all like-minded believers, whether or not they are members of the FBFI;
- To strengthen the hands and hearts of God's faithful servants, while holding a thoroughly Biblical position with a thoroughly Biblical attitude, free from condescension and pride;
- To encourage pastors with more resources to attend fellowships for the encouragement of others, and to also seek out and help others to participate in our local, state, regional, national, and international fellowships.

The intention of this article is to explain one of the purposes of the FBFI as briefly described in a 2003 resolution, which reads:

The FBFI reaffirms its identity as a fellowship of individuals who hold to the Statement of Purpose and Statement of Faith in the FBFI constitution. We believe that this Fellowship is vital for the encouragement of godly men worldwide. As we move forward and face new battles, it is essential for us to be guided by the Spirit and Scripture in correctly identifying both friend and foe. We urge the leadership of the FBFI, both now and in the future, to carefully seek God's face in knowing what issues are essential to our movement and what issues are those on which godly men can agree to disagree. We must hold the concepts of unity and purity in dynamic tension. The spirit of our meetings must be gracious in areas where we legitimately disagree yet bold in the defense of those foundational doctrines that bind us together. Through the ministries of the FBFI we will always seek to encourage and strengthen the hands of God's faithful servants, holding a thoroughly Biblical position with a thoroughly Biblical disposition.

The FBFI is a fellowship, and true fellowship among believers is always a two-way street. The word implies that there is a giving and receiving in such a relationship. Each needs to believe that God can use him in the life of another, and each needs to believe that he can learn something from everyone. True fellowship has no room for pride or arrogance.

The FBFI is a fellowship of individuals: pastors, missionaries, musicians, educators, and “laymen” of many varieties. Often we are mistakenly viewed as a fellowship of churches and other organizations. In fact, realizing that we are made up of individuals makes the resolution above much more important. We should remain focused on serving and building up fellow Christians, not building up an organization.

According to our constitution, to become a member of the FBFI, “all applicants for membership must give testimony of their agreement with and obedience to the Statement of Faith of the Fellowship by signature on the membership application form.” Everyone is encouraged to attend fellowship times whether they be local, regional, or national, but membership is restricted to those who share the convictions of the FBFI. It should be the desire of each member, however, to minister to everyone, whether or not he is a member.

The FBFI also realizes that its members, as they are led by the Holy Spirit through the Word, will have differing convictions in areas not delineated in the constitution. This issue has been addressed several times in Fellowship resolutions, such as the one in 2004:

Historic Fundamentalism exercised great latitude among the brethren regarding convictions over which good men disagree. Therefore, we must not so restrict this latitude in our day by narrowing our fellowship exclusively to those brethren with whom we agree on all points and thereby hinder the greater cause of Christ. We must continue to study, know, and defend the essentials and to agree to disagree, if necessary, on those which are not (such as philosophy of youth work, pastoral authority, political involvement, versions, certain aspects of Calvinism, dating, divorce, evangelism/discipleship methodology, etc.). As Baptists we certainly wish to practice the doctrine of individual soul liberty and allow others to do so, but we need to pursue unity in every Biblical way that we can, especially in a day when there is much division over things not essential. Within the Fundamental Baptist movement we must prioritize an active love for our brethren, so that we demonstrate a Biblically based tolerance toward those with whom we disagree.

Our goal is to cultivate an atmosphere of Biblical fellowship in order to build one another up in the faith, even though we may differ in some of our convictions, or, as

our constitution says, “we purpose to foster a genuine spirit of love and Biblical unity among those who are truly Fundamentalists.”

The desire of the FBFI is to maintain both unity and purity—to have uncompromising fellowship. True separatist fellowship is often seen as an oxymoron, but we wish to emphasize both while avoiding either extreme—in other words, to have obedient fellowship. The emphasis in this article is on unity and fellowship, an emphasis that was declared in a 1995 resolution regarding Scriptural unity:

The FBF endeavors to practice Biblical separation but at the same time recognizes that Scripture equally emphasizes the need for true unity among believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Created by God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is the responsibility of each believer to jealously guard and maintain this unity (Ephesians 4:3). We believe that visible unity should not be disturbed by personal ambition (1 Corinthians 12:18), personalities (1 Corinthians 1–4), or disputes over doubtful things (Romans 14:1–13). As our Lord prayed for unity (John 17) among His followers, so should we pray for a true Biblical unity. We believe that the Scriptural teaching concerning the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ should be the center of our unity.

We must come to grips with the fact that Scripture imposes a theological imperative on us to promote Biblical unity as well as Biblical separation. We must have the spirit of Barnabas to reach out to the Sauls and Marks, those who need our encouragement to continue serving God. We must have the spirit of Timothy, who served as a son with the apostle Paul. We must have the spirit of Epaphroditus,

WE MUST COME TO GRIPS WITH THE FACT THAT SCRIPTURE IMPOSES A THEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE ON US TO PROMOTE BIBLICAL UNITY AS WELL AS BIBLICAL SEPARATION.

a brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier who ministered to Paul in a time of great trial, even to the point of death. We must have the spirit of Paul’s “yokefellow” and reach out to men and women who labor in the gospel (Phil. 4:3). We must have the spirit of the great apostle to the Gentiles, who himself was a mentor to many—especially to his two younger brethren, Timothy and Titus.

We are to love one another (John 13:34), to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10), to “be of the same mind one toward another” (Rom. 12:16), to edify one another (Rom. 14:19), to admonish one another (Rom. 15:14), to serve one another through love (Gal. 5:13), to be kind and forgive one another (Eph. 4:32), to comfort one another (1 Thess. 4:18), to exhort one another (Heb. 3:13), to confess our sins against each other and pray for one another (James 5:16), and to have fel-

lowship with one another (1 John 1:7). We would especially encourage FBFI pastors of larger churches and those in bigger metropolitan areas to remember how lonely it is for pastors of smaller churches (and those in more remote areas). We would encourage pastors with more resources not only to attend fellowships for the encouragement of others but also to seek out and help other pastors to participate in our state, regional, and national meetings. Perhaps, in some cases, we should start a regular local time of fellowship, if none exists.

We must promote purposeful effort to encourage and strengthen God's faithful servants. As our constitution says, "We purpose to strengthen the Fundamentalist movement and to furnish a rallying point in defense of the faith . . . to which pastors, Christian workers, and lay-people everywhere who share our convictions can come to find refuge, strength, encouragement and fellowship."

And finally, we must do this while maintaining a Biblical position and a Biblical attitude: "We purpose to foster a genuine spirit of love and Biblical unity among those who are truly Fundamentalists" (FBFI Constitution).

True Biblical unity will be without compromise, and it will be without a spirit of condescension, jealousy, envy, suspicion, or strife. Such unity will lead

us to the place of the Lord's blessing.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore (Psalm 133).

John Mincy is the pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Antioch, California. Mark Mincy is a church planter in Manhattan, New York.

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Vigilance for Religious Liberty

Vigilance for Religious Liberty:

Resolution Concerning Muslim Favoritism

Whereas Baptists have tenaciously embraced the principle of separation of church and state, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International

- Calls upon all federal and state agencies to promote religious freedom in America by not restricting the free exercise of religious beliefs and practices;
- Calls upon the government to cease providing favored status to the Muslim community and to exercise impartiality to all religious groups;
- Calls upon the Christian community to awaken to the aggressive advancement of the Muslim faith in America and to proclaim clearly the teachings of God's Word and expose the errors of the Muslim faith and to resist politically the religious partiality extended by governmental agencies to the Muslim community.

"Tolerance of the intolerant is cowardice."
Aayan Hirsi Ali

Daniel was a very young man, perhaps a teenager, when he stood firm in his faith against the demands of his pagan master, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Would the faith of the strongest among us today produce that kind of response? Will postmodern youth stand firm in "their truth," when the truth of a future master is truly intolerant? Do Bible believers really understand that Christian Fundamentalism is seen as the moral equivalent of Islamic fanaticism by those who were conceived in so-called Christian liberalism?

There is a growing fear in the United States of litigation by Muslims against non-Muslims. Well-known examples include the "Flying Imams,"¹ paid prayer times for Muslim employees at a Swift & Co. meat packing plant,² taxi drivers refusing to accept passengers who are carrying alcohol,³ and threats to advertisers funding the Michael Savage show.⁴ This phenomenon is not unique to the US. Aayan Ali is an example of the informed spirit of resistance that is needed.⁵ Although her life is in constant danger because she has chosen to reject Islam and challenge its teachings, she believes and acts. Her kind of courage is needed, not the cowardice we see in response to this worldwide problem.

The malaise of American Christians is dangerous. President Bush has repeatedly expressed the conviction that Islam is a religion of peace.⁶

The facts of history and current events prove otherwise. Americans must be awakened to what is happening around the world and here at home. Since 9/11 there have been over 9000 terrorist events orchestrated by Muslims.⁷ The problem is not new.⁸ Thomas Jefferson⁹ fully understood the threat even before he became president, and his concern explains why he had a Qur'an in his library. The history of those days is lost to our postmodern culture.

Few Christians know what the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is or that it is an enemy within. In 1998 the former chairman, Omar Ahmad, made the following statement: "Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to be dominant. The Koran, the Muslim book of Scripture, should be the highest authority in America, and Islam the only accepted religion on earth."¹⁰ A cursory review of the documents and the efforts of CAIR recorded on their own website (www.cair.com) would awaken even the most complacent Christian.

Christians need to ponder the question, "Why do Muslims fight for their right to pray at a Richardson, Texas, public school?"¹¹ Muslims are required to pray five times a day, and schools are being required to permit it. Muslims do not pray silently most of the time. The docile response is more than a double standard. Christians seem to have surrendered on even the matter of a "moment of silence," even though they are told to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). Is the command of God of less authority than the assumed command of Allah?

We are surrendering on the vocabulary of the discussion of this threat. President Bush has said initially, "This is the beginning of a long struggle against an ideology that is real and profound. It's Islamo-fascism."¹² Then he backed off. We must have the courage to state in plain language that real Islam and real Christianity are not morally equivalent. They are not alike at all in character. While we have polite discussions about whether Hispanic immigrants, legal or otherwise, should learn to speak English, we are too cowardly to ask if we want our own grandchildren to have to learn to speak Arabic. We are alarmed when the grandkids answer their cell phones during the occasional family dinner; what will we do when they must answer the call to prayer from a minaret?

Why is it that Congress did not issue a resolution regarding Christmas¹³ until after many US citizens recoiled when the House voted to commend Islam and Ramadan?¹⁴ This is an evidence of political pressure that has as its goal enforced dhimmitude (submission to Islam) in America, as elsewhere. For 1400 years everywhere that Islam has become the dominant religion Christians have been relegated to a second-class status. It is then too late to appeal for equality. In fact, equality is only the illusion as Islam passes by from minority to majority.

Consider the following illustrations where taxes paid by Americans are being used to accommodate the need of Muslims to wash their feet as a part of their prayer rituals: Minneapolis Community Technical College,¹⁵ Kansas City International Airport,¹⁶ and New York University.¹⁷ Are

you aware that we now have requirements to change school lunch programs to accommodate Muslims by removing ham sandwiches from the menu?¹⁸ Would offering a ham sandwich on the lunch line be a *hate crime* in your opinion? Some think so in Lewiston, Maine, where to bring a ham sandwich to school and open it in front of a Muslim is just too offensive to be acceptable.

CAIR¹⁹ actually provides instructions to schools, businesses, and prisons on how to accommodate the needs of Muslims who desire to pray. The technical precision and lengthy ritual required in "Wudu" (ablutions) for Muslims preparing for prayer should be read with a busy international airport washroom in mind. Seriously, you should read them.²⁰ Then imagine yourself standing there with your toothbrush after a long and tiresome flight.

Americans should respect the religious rites and rituals of all, but we must remember the First Amendment of our Constitution. Christians and Jews do not insist that their religious rituals be funded and that the general public provide space in public buildings for them. If you have read the ritual from the site referenced above you now know that if a Muslim comes into contact with an infidel—you—while performing his ablutions, he is ceremonially unclean, so take your turn at the back of the line, way back.

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship values vigilance for religious liberty. It was Baptist pastor John Leland who influenced James Madison to give us the First Amendment that protects this liberty. Islamic states know no such liberty. Ronald Reagan said it well: "To sit back hoping that someday, some way, someone will make things right is to go on feeding the crocodile, hoping he will eat you last—but eat you he will." Preferential treatment of a system that tolerates in its midst the terror that would destroy religious liberty is madness. Can this be anything other than the fruit of a century of liberalism and all its mutations?

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS DO NOT INSIST THAT THEIR RELIGIOUS RITUALS BE FUNDED AND THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC PROVIDE SPACE IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS FOR THEM.

Vigilance for religious liberty is the duty of Christian Fundamentalism. We would do well to remember the observation of the liberal Kirsopp Lake in 1925:

It is a mistake, often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind: it is the . . . survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. . . . The Fundamentalist

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2008 Meetings

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

South Central Regional Fellowship
Stony Point Baptist Church
7938 Barnett Ave
Kansas City, KS 66112
913.299.4774

October 27-31, 2008

Caribbean Regional Fellowship
Calvary Baptist Tabernacle
PO Box 3390
Carolina, Puerto Rico 00984
787.750.2227

November 10-11, 2008

Southern California Regional Fellowship
Camp Ironwood
49191 Cherokee Rd.
Newberry Springs, CA 92365
760.257.3503

November 13-14, 2008

Northern California Regional Fellowship
Castlepoint Ministries
3700 Country Club Dr.
PO Box 487, Lucerne, CA 95458
707.274.1164

2009 Meetings

April 6-7, 2009

South Regional Fellowship
The Wilds
1000 Wilds Ridge Road
Brevard, NC 28712-7273
828.884.7811

April 20-22, 2009

Northwest Regional Fellowship
Monroe Baptist Church
1405 West Main Street
Monroe, WA 98272
360.805.6200

June 16-18, 2009

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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

Taking Time to Be Holy

Allowing the Scriptural Counsel of Wise Men to Condition My Ministry Priorities

(Note: This column continues a theme from a column in the November-December 2007 issue of FrontLine.)

Personal holiness is vital. Taking time with the Lord to nurture personal growth in godliness and intimate communion with God is a pastor's Biblical priority. Our privilege of eavesdropping on the apostle Paul's pastoral counsel to Timothy is priceless: "Exercise thyself . . . unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Nothing can substitute for godliness. The private, disciplined devotion to God in the soul of a pastor energizes and stabilizes him in the pursuit of His calling, and it vivifies him to be a source of spiritual inspiration to his people, preparing himself and them for eternity.

Paul's apostolic counsel has reverberated in Scripture, and some through the church's history have been burdened to blend their voices with his. Thankfully, some of these men have produced invaluable volumes of brotherly ministerial counsel reiterating and further expounding the importance of the pastor's walk with God.

Another great resource to encourage our personal growth in grace as preachers is to nurture friendships with our wise brethren through their biographies. Is there abiding value for us in learning from the lives of

past preachers and gleanings of Scriptural ministerial counsel? I believe there is. Of course, a danger exists also. Observing spiritual realities at work in the lives of others can unwittingly elevate those saints to artificial superhero status; however, their lives can illustrate that the commands and spiritual blessings in Scripture are truly able to be obeyed and enjoyed—though not without agonizing, disciplined, and watchful effort.

We ought carefully to study the records left [to] us of the temptations, conflicts, faith, patience, and victories of other believers; we should mark well, what wounds they received, and by what misconduct they were occasioned, that we may watch and pray lest we fall in like manner. We ought carefully to observe how they successfully repelled the various assaults of the tempter, that we may learn to resist him, steadfast in the faith; and in general, their triumphs should animate us, to "put on" and keep on, "the whole armor of God, that we may be enabled to withstand in the evil day." On the other hand, such as have been rendered victorious should readily speak of their experiences *among those that fear God*, that they may be cautioned, instructed, and encouraged by their example (*The Pilgrim's Progress*, Reiner edition, editor's note, 448).

May we allow the lessons of our ministry brethren who have run the race before us to encourage us and to renew in us a determined resolution by the grace of God to be faithful stewards of Paul's command to "take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4:16).

Taking Time though Ministry Distractions Persist

In the pursuit of godliness, pastors encounter interruptions and distractions—both personally and ministerially. We are so easily distracted, aren't we? Are we honest with ourselves about what distracts us from

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

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personally pursuing the Lord? Why is balance so difficult for us to achieve, let alone to maintain? God's men have always faced alluring distractions and have had to battle naturally slothful wills. James Fraser (1886–1938), a Scottish missionary greatly used of God in western China, observed,

It is one of the most subtle wiles of the foe to get us occupied with superficial and surface concerns (e.g., book-selling, language study, running mission-stations, report-writing, correspondence, account-keeping, building, repairs, buying things, reading, etc., etc.). The enemy is delighted to have us occupied so incessantly with secondary and trivial concerns as to keep us from attacking and resisting in the true spirit of the conflict. **WEIGH THESE WORDS.** (Eileen Crossman, *Mountain Rain*, 111–12, original emphasis).

Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), the English Baptist pastor who served as the first secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society that sent John Thomas and William Carey to India in 1794, wrote: “If we pursue things as primary which ought to occupy only a secondary or subordinate place in the system, we subvert the whole, and employ ourselves in doing what is worse than nothing” (*Works of Andrew Fuller*, “The Necessity of Seeking Those Things First Which Are of the First Importance,” 3:795).

The eminently-quotable Vance Havner of the twentieth century pithily remarked, “It is one of the ironies of the ministry that the very man who works in God's name is often hardest put to find time for God. The parents of Jesus lost Him at church, and they were not the last ones to lose Him there.”

Distractions have been and always will be present. While it is accurate to say that we are subject to a great variety and immediacy of ministry allurements to distraction, our ministry brethren would counsel us not to blame our weakness of will on our context or culture.

Taking Time While Overcoming Weariness and Attrition

Weariness will persist, but it must not prevail. The Puritan pastor John Flavel (1628–91) survived one of the most notable periods in English church history—a nearly thirty-year span in which godly pastors by the hundreds were turned out of their pulpits and increasingly restricted from public and even much private pastoral ministry. When he and others were finally allowed legally to return to pastoral ministry, he charged the pastors as follows:

The labors of the ministry will exhaust the very marrow from your bones, hasten old age and death. They are fitly compared to the toil of men in harvest, to the labors of a woman in travail, and to the agonies of soldiers in the extremity of a battle. We must watch when others sleep. And indeed it

is not so much the expense of our labors, as the loss of them, that kills us. It is not with us, as with other laborers: They find their work as they leave it, so do not we. Sin and Satan unravel almost all we do, the impressions we make on our people's souls in one sermon, vanish before the next. How many truths have we to study! How many wiles of Satan, and mysteries of corruption, to detect! How many cases of conscience to resolve! Yea, we must fight in the defense of the truths we preach, as well as study them to paleness, and preach them unto faintness: but well-spent head, heart, lungs, and all; welcome pained breasts, aching backs, and trembling legs; if we can all but approve ourselves Christ's faithful servants, and hear that joyful voice from his mouth, “Well done, good and faithful servants” (John Flavel, “The Character of a Complete Evangelical Pastor Drawn by Christ,” *Works of John Flavel*, 6:568–69).

Taking Time to Be Holy with Simplicity

In the face of persistent distractions and battles with ministry weariness, how have God's men distinguished themselves in their devotional lives? Have you ever felt the subtle, unspoken pressure to be a devotional giant—the kind who reads the equivalent of the book of Isaiah in Hebrew every morning, spends four hours in prayer, translates a chapter from his Greek New Testament, reads a heartwarming sermon, and pens an original hymn or two for good measure . . . all before breakfast? Driven by desire to do and be more than I am, I have often caught myself entertaining unrealistic, unsustainable devotional goals. Reality always eventually sets in. Sure, the pastoral biography world is dotted by unusual examples in nearly every Christian discipline; but what the biographies reveal about the daily reality for most men is truly encouraging for us. Most of the inspiring devotional lives actually prove to be very “normal”—normal in that they were uncomplicated and simple rather than elaborate and intricate. Their devotional lives were marked by humility, a Word-centeredness, a Person-centeredness, and by dependent prayer.

Honesty and Humility

Holy men did not tend to see themselves as great spiritual giants, but they approached the Lord with candor, honesty, and humility. None suggest that that walking with God is easy. They all acknowledge inadequacies, struggles, and the tendency to live life independently of God. They, like us, genuinely struggled to do something for which they did not have a natural aptitude—to be godly. Tom Walker (1859–1912), a missionary leader in southern India, testified,

These are times of great activity and privilege. Perhaps the danger lies now not so much on the side of lethargy as on that of neglecting the cultivation of personal religion. It is easy enough (at least so I find it) to go from one meeting to another, and to fill up

the day busily with multifarious occupations, but it is not easy to live in the spirit of prayer and in continual drawing from one's Bible. And, after all, it is not the great rush which accomplishes results, but the steady flow of spiritual power from on high (Tom Walker, quoted in Amy Carmichael, *This One Thing*, 24).

Walking with God is not naturally easy, even when life seems to be going smoothly; however, men of God continued their pursuit even in times of suffering and affliction and saw these uninvited guests as goads to greater godliness. They saw the wisdom of preparing for extraordinary sufferings through daily faithfulness, and they also learned to extract spiritual benefits from sufferings. Listen once more to Flavel rally his beleaguered ministerial brethren:

We were then young, and (comparatively) unexperienced ministers to what we are now [twenty-six years later]. Though we have too many defects and weaknesses still to lament, yet I am persuaded we have not spent so many years among trials, fears, and sufferings in vain. These things, I am persuaded, have greatly improved our acquaintance with God, and our own hearts. It will be as sad as strange, if they have not. God hath been training us up in faith, humility, patience, and self-denial in the school of affliction. When we could not preach the doctrine of faith, we were reduced, by a blessed necessity, to live the life of faith. The rules of patience, humility, and satisfaction in the will of God, we were wont to prescribe from our pulpits to the people, we were necessitated to practice and apply to ourselves in our sad solitudes, and various distresses, through which the Lord hath led us. So that we now come better furnished to the work, than ever before (John Flavel, "The Character of a Complete Evangelical Pastor Drawn by Christ," *Works of John Flavel*, 6:584-85).

Even spiritual temptation can prod us to a more fervent pursuit of godliness. Martin Luther, the German reformer, once testified,

I did not learn my divinity at once, but was constrained by my temptations to search deeper and deeper; for no man, without trials and temptations, can attain a true understanding of the Holy Scriptures. St. Paul had a devil beat him with fists, and with temptations drove him diligently to study the Holy Scripture. I had hanging on my neck the pope, the universities, all the deep-learned, and the devil; these hunted me into the Bible, wherein I sedulously read, and thereby, God be praised, at length attained a true understanding of it. Without such a devil, we are but only spectators of divinity (*Table Talk*, entry 62).

Word-Centeredness

Men of God have diligently pursued the discipline of stillness and quietness for devotional Bible reading

(Ps. 46:10; Isa. 30:15). Though a multitude of devotional aids have been available to them and though many of the men themselves produced devotional aids, nothing could replace the Scripture.

Study God's Word diligently for your own edification; and then, when it has become more to you than your necessary food and sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, it will be impossible for you to speak of it to others without a glow passing into your words which will betray the delight with which it has inspired yourself (James Stalker, *The Preacher and His Models*, 54).

You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try and understand it, and still more to feel it. . . . Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the First Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel, and pray, "O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man"; "let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly." This is the best way to know the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray (Andrew Bonar, *Memoir & Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, xix-xx).

Read the Scripture, not as an attorney may read a will, merely to know the sense of it, but as the heir reads it, as a description and proof of his interest (John Newton, *Letters of John Newton*, Letter 28, "The Blessedness of the Believer" [Banner of Truth], 150).

Person-Centeredness

Touchingly, our wise ministry brethren demonstrate the "Person-al" nature of their walk with Christ. With refreshing transparency, they recognize and often lament their deficiency of intimate, personal knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), and they were wary of their propensity to leave their first love (Rev. 2:4). However, they found refuge and strength in the gospel.

My [fifty-third] birthday. Still I am far, far behind. My leanness; my leanness; but my soul is more than ever fixed upon Christ, and my conscience satisfied with His obedience, from Bethlehem to Calvary, and His drinking the cup of trembling from the manger till He drank out its dregs at the Cross (Andrew Bonar, *Diary and Life*, 219).

February 25[, 1913]—The thought of the Lord's nearness has been very precious to me of late, but how it reveals one's own failures and shortcomings! May we know the blessed Lord's presence in every time and circumstance! May He be to us the altogether lovely one! I think sometimes, if we only knew him as He is to be known, in that intimate way that John knew Him, and other of the saints have known Him, we should never want to leave Him nor take our eyes from Him. We should never want to do anything that would

hurt Him at all. May He be all this and more, for I cannot speak of Him in suitable language (Cecil Robertson in F. B. Meyer, *Cecil Robertson of Sianfu*, 143).

They comprehended the surpassing value of knowing Christ (Phil. 3:8).

God is the highest good . . . and the enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. . . . Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain (Jonathan Edwards, "The Christian Pilgrim," in *Works of Jonathan Edwards* [Banner of Truth], 2:244).

They understood the need for a disciplined pursuit of a deepening personal relationship with Christ (John 14:21).

They should earnestly seek after much of the spiritual knowledge of Christ, and that they may live in the clear views of his glory. For by this means they will be changed into the image of the same glory and brightness, and will come to their people, as Moses came down to the congregation of Israel after he had seen God's back parts in the mount, with his face shining. If the light of Christ's glory shines upon them, it will be the way for them to shine with the same kind of light on their hearers, and to reflect the same beams, which have heat, as well as brightness. . . . Ministers should be much in seeking God, and conversing with him by prayer, who is the fountain of light and love (Jonathan Edwards, "The True Excellency of a Gospel Minister" based on John 5:35 in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:959–60).

The adorable and awful perfections of Deity are softened, if I may so speak, and rendered more familiar and engaging to our apprehensions, when we consider them as resident in Him, who is very bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and who, having by Himself purged our sins, is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. . . . Thus He who knows our frame, by becoming man like ourselves, is the supreme and ultimate object of that . . . human affection, which he originally planted in us. He has made us susceptible of the endearments of friendship and relative life; and he admits us to communion with Himself under the most engaging characters and relations, as our friend, our brother, and our husband (John Newton, *Letters of John Newton*, Letter 4, "Communion with God," 31).

They knew their powerlessness for ministry apart from Christ (Exod. 33:15; John 15:3, 5).

Our holiness does not consist in great attainments, but in spiritual desires, in hungerings, thirstings, and mournings; in humiliation of heart, poverty of spirit, submission, meekness; in cordial admiring thoughts of Jesus, and dependence on Him alone for all we want. Indeed these may be said to be great attainments; but they who have most of them are most sensible that they, in and of themselves, are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, and see daily cause for abhorring themselves, and repenting in dust and ashes (John Newton, *Letters of John Newton*, Letter 34, "Contrary Principles in the Believer," 176).

Prayer-Centeredness

Not surprisingly, wise men have grown in their assessment of the indispensability of prayer—a subject worth much more space than I have left. They regularly acknowledged the difficulty of persisting in prayer, but they realized that unless prayer permeated their ministries, their preaching and pastoral ministry would be barren. Their lives exhibit sustained efforts to learn to practice prayer. Though several forms of prayer are available to the man of God (e.g., oral or silent; individual or collective; intercessory, supplicational, praise, thanksgiving, etc.), perhaps the constancy of their prayers of confession are the most remarkable to us. We are reminded by them that unmarred fellowship with God is truly nonnegotiable and that humble confession is an essential ingredient in maintaining a right perspective of one's self in relation to his God.

Conclusion

When exposed to the intimate blessed spiritual lives of these wise men, I am smitten. Truly I see them disciplining themselves toward godliness, and I am reminded that in Christ I am exhorted to the same objective and the same diligence. Though these men knew failure, their recourse was in getting back up and progressing in grace through the abundant promises and spiritual resources made available to them through Christ. They returned often to the gracious fountain of the gospel for cleansing.

Who dare write anything but failure over a single day of life? But, surely, instead of useless complaints, we should seek to remedy, in God's strength, what is wrong. Is it neglected prayer? Well, let a definite time be set apart and jealously kept for prayer. Is it a neglected Bible? Well, it is in our own hands. Let us seek time to read it. Above all, there must be more looking Christward. He is our righteousness and salvation. . . . There is the Word, there is the Throne of Grace, there is the Fountain and the Wardrobe. Vain self-accusation (though who does not need to accuse self?) does no good. We must seek new grace for each new day (Tom Walker, quoted in Amy Carmichael, *This One Thing*, 53–54). ☞

Bring . . . the Books

Matthew Henry, *The Quest for Meekness and Quietness of Spirit*

Born in Salop, England, in 1662, Matthew Henry was the second son of a Nonconformist preacher named Phillip Henry. Most preachers are familiar with his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Not so familiar are his other literary contributions, which include *The Pleasantness of a Religious Life* and, the subject of this review, *The Quest for Meekness and Quietness of Spirit*, both reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria. A fuller version of his works has been reprinted by Baker in two volumes as *The Works of Matthew Henry*. If a man is to be an apt minister and laborer for God, then he himself must be teachable and sensitive to the Lord. This “teachableness” or “submissive pliability” is at the heart of what Henry describes as a quest for “meekness and quietness of spirit.” God crafts this meekness and quietness in His yielded servant and uses for the greater good of His people.

Meekness or quietness is an internal virtue beyond mere outward action. It must be cultivated and grown in the soil of a man’s soul. This will never be accomplished by mere external discipline or determination but comes about as the gracious work of the Holy Spirit of God.

Henry defines meekness as the right submission or accommodation of our soul toward God and others; quietness is the atmosphere of the soul in which the submission or accommodation is carried out. We are to be meek and quiet toward God—specifically to His whole will as He chooses to reveal it through His Word or by His providential actions in our lives. Henry observes that this kind of meekness demonstrates itself in “silent submission of the soul to the word of God” without murmuring or disputing. It repeats the word of young Samuel, “Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth” (1 Sam. 3:9).


Henry reminds the reader that meekness must be demonstrated not only in our relationship to God but also in our relationship with others. Meekness will direct and curb our anger when others injure or disappoint us. You can imagine the applications to anyone in a position of spiritual authority over others. Henry develops the benefits or “excellencies” of meekness and quietness of Spirit. They lend credibility to one’s life and ministry, as well as comfort and true enjoyment of life. In addition, a life so lived is one that God can further entrust with greater spiritual ministry and responsibility as one “well-fitted for service.”

The book includes timeless practical applications of how a believer should employ a meek and quiet spirit in everyday life. For instance, he observes that it is the nature of superiors/

supervisors to chide their employees, the nature of servants/employees to complain against their superiors, and the tendency of equals or peers to clash and contend with one another—a picture of the “competition”

that so often goes on in the name of advancing God’s cause. He concludes with some powerful Scriptural admonitions as to how we are to apply what we have been reading. How do you personally give others reproof? How do you receive correction or rebuke? How do you state your positions or opinions to others? How do you handle or treat the gainsayer or critic? These penetrating questions demand honest answers and soul scrutiny.

I found myself unable to read this book rapidly. Many books are designed to stir the heart and to motivate or encourage the reader to draw closer to God. This book is different in that Henry is trying to force the reader to realize that God is demanding something of him. It is not enough merely to acknowledge the truths or to rejoice in their beauty; they demand deep change, and on this account the book is incredibly discomforting and disquieting! I found myself constantly putting the book down because I had “read enough for now.” For days on end it would lie on the bed stand until I had the courage to pick it up and renew the quest. I suspect it will be the same with you. It is far easier to talk about our love for God and even to demonstrate it in our lives. However, as Henry concludes,

Love is commended by all, and yet the love of many waxeth cold; but let all that would not be self-condemned practise what they praise. And as there is nothing in which it will easier appear whether I have prevailed or no; this tree will soon be known by its fruits; so many are the circumstances of almost every day which call for the exercise of this grace that our profiting therein will quickly appear to ourselves, and to all with whom we converse. Our meekness and quietness is more obvious, and falls more directly under a trial and observation, than our love to God and our faith in Christ, and other graces, the exercise whereof lies more immediately between God and our own souls. 

“... 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.

Perhaps you, as I, have had a Christian friend who became convinced that he or she was under condemnation, an apostate denied any opportunity to repent. My friend and I had shared fellowship and ministry for years, but a variety of trials left him utterly defeated, despite the encouragement of a godly wife and a vibrant church family. He desired restoration but was convinced that his had never been a saving faith and that he had sinned his way into such disfavor with God that God had irrevocably decreed him lost.

Someone in such a state or even contemplating the possibility can easily be terrified at the words of Hebrews 12:17, where Esau “found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” At first reading, Esau seems sincerely intent upon repentance yet shut out from it. Perhaps John Bunyan had this passage in mind when he wrote the vignette of the man in the iron cage shown to Christian and Hopeful at the Interpreter’s House. Sorrowing, the man explains his condition: “God hath denied me repentance.”

Does the Bible teach that God denies repentance to some who desire it? Hebrews 6:4–8 teaches that some cannot repent, and in Isaiah 6:9, 10 God even expresses His own determination that some will not repent, but the subjects of these passages manifest no desire to repent. Does Hebrews 12:17, though, present Esau as a man trying to repent but finding repentance denied him? Careful interpretation demands that we consider the immediate context, attend to grammatical details, and consult the text’s background in Genesis.

Verse 16 refers to Esau’s carnality, manifested preeminently by selling his birthright for nothing more than a meal. Years later, when Isaac pronounced the patriarchal blessings, Esau reaped what he had sown, and the special blessing intended for him went to Jacob instead. Referring to this event, our passage says, “Afterward, when he would have inherited [the Greek text clearly means *desired to inherit*] the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

What is the antecedent of the pronoun “it”? What did Esau seek? The English text presents three possibilities: “place,” “repentance,” or “blessing.” The first two differ little in meaning, since seeking a *place* (i.e., opportunity or possibility) of repentance is to seek *repentance*. But seeking to repent differs greatly from seeking material blessing. The Greek text sheds only a bit of light: gender difference prevents the pronoun from referring to “place.” What was it, then, that Esau sought: repentance or blessing?

The Genesis account (27:30–38) is clear. When

Esau learned that Jacob had stolen the blessing, “he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.” When Isaac explains that Jacob has already gotten the blessing, Esau shows no inclination toward repentance. Instead, he misrepresents Jacob as taking away his birthright, conveniently forgetting that he had willingly sold it. And when Isaac explains that no blessing remains for Esau, he pleads, “Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.” But his tears lament his loss, not his sins.

Still, Hebrews does speak of an unavailable repentance; how does that idea fit the picture? Perhaps the writer intends it to explain the absence of any blessing for Esau, implying that, had he repented, God would have moved Isaac to bless him too. On this view, the verse states that Esau was unable to repent, but it does not explain why. That God denied Esau repentance is an inference from the text, not a statement of the text.

Most likely, though, the repentance referred to is not Esau’s at all. The Greek word *metanoia* signifies a change of mind. What Esau sought without finding was not a change in his own disposition toward his sins but rather a change in Isaac’s mind about the blessing. This view merges Isaac’s repentance and Esau’s blessing into a single idea as two sides of one coin. It also combines Esau’s seeking but not finding, which on the previous interpretation had two different objects (he sought the blessing but did not find repentance from sin). The pronoun “it” can now refer to “repentance” after all; just as in Genesis, Esau begs for a change in Isaac’s mind about the blessing while remaining oblivious to his own sins. So our verse simply says that, no matter how tearfully he begged, carnal Esau found no possibility that Isaac would change his mind about the blessing he had pronounced.

Among the other warnings in Hebrews, Esau’s example indeed teaches that submitting to fleshly urges rather than the Word of God brings irreversible tragedy. Esau is not, however, portrayed as a man who sees his sins and wishes to repent but finds God’s ear closed to his pleas. The Greek text of Hebrews 12:17, interpreted in light of the Genesis account, reveals no such desire.

My depressed friend, though, did manifest spiritual desire, and the day came when God restored his spiritual vitality. He was no Esau, nor is anyone who would gladly leave his sins for the Savior. As Jesus said in John 6:37, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” ☞

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

Windows

What Are You Thinking?

Almost 350 years ago, with the restoration of the English monarchy, King Charles II sought to control the churches. The Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662, requiring all churches to use the Book of Common Prayer and follow the direction of the Church of England. It also sought to control the ordination of ministers.

The “Great Ejection” followed as almost 2000 pastors resigned rather than submit to the state’s control. One of the pastors who was forced to leave his church was the minister in Dartmouth, John Flavel (1628–91). Cut off from his church, he was not allowed to go near his flock. But the separation did not diminish his concern for the souls in his flock. He took up residence as close to Dartmouth as the law allowed.

The difficulties of that period provided a fertile soil for a fruitful crop of Christian literature coming from men such as Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, and John Owen. One of the enduring books was a treatise written by the ejected John Flavel. After about a year of this separation from the church in Dartmouth, he wrote a book for them. He could think of nothing more important to impress on their minds than the verse in the fourth chapter of Proverbs—verse twenty-three: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” The book, entitled *Keeping the Heart*, communicated John Flavel’s proposition: “The keeping and right managing of the heart in every condition is the one great business of a Christian’s life.”¹

All of life is downstream from the heart. How a person thinks shapes who he is (Rom. 12:2), determines how he lives (Prov. 23:7), impacts his emotions (Isa. 26:3), and determines his destiny (Col. 2:8).

What You Think Shapes Who You Are

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). On a cold day early in the 17th century, French mathematician René Descartes wrapped his cloak tightly around him and sought warmth by a large stove. For some time he had been troubled, wrestling with questions of doubt and reason, and searching for some philosophical confidence. Warming himself that bitter day, he resolved to doubt everything that could possibly be doubted.

His skeptical meditation persisted for hours. Finally, after intense inner questioning, he arose having determined that there was only one thing he could not doubt, and that was his mental experience—the fact that he doubted. Descartes then drew the deduction, “*Cogito, ergo sum*”—“I think, therefore I am.”

Previously, medieval philosophers had argued from the existence of God to the reality of the world.

Descartes reversed that approach, and from then on philosophers argued from the certainty of self to the reality of God and the world.

That now-famous postulate culminated in an entire philosophical foundation of thought: “Man, rather than God, became the fixed point around which everything else revolved; human reason became the foundation upon which a structure of knowledge could be built; and doubt became the highest intellectual value.”²

What You Think Determines How You Live

“As he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). The *Asbury Park (NJ) Press*, December 31, 2007, told of the arrest of a number of individuals who were involved in a real estate scheme. The situation seemed reminiscent of the stories of people buying the Brooklyn Bridge. However, instead of selling a bridge the scoundrels sold a local restaurant, the Yellow Rose Diner. When state investigators moved in they froze seven bank accounts, seized five automobiles, two fishing boats, and a yacht that were all believed to be proceeds from the multimillion-dollar scheme.

Although the article detailed how the scheme worked, one particular situation illustrates how wrong thinking impacts one’s life.

In 2005 a woman was led to believe she would be the major partner in the restaurant business, and she invested \$300,000. In February 2006 the deal was closed, and she began doing renovations on the interior with the help of her family. Together they worked for three months. When the renovations were nearly complete, the real owner approached the woman and told her she was trespassing.

He intentionally waited until she was almost done to approach her. He then completed what little work remained and opened the diner under a new name. Imagine the devastation that woman experienced. Not only had she invested a substantial amount of money, she had also invested her “life.” Her family committed time and energy. She had invested emotionally with hopes and dreams. They looked to the future with excitement, and then it was all taken away. They had an improper perspective.

Humans can be deceived. From her perspective, this lady thought she owned the property, but in reality she actually put out all that energy for something that wouldn’t last because it wasn’t hers. She learned the truth after several months. But there are people who

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

Charles Spurgeon

live their lives investing in purposes—investing their time, energy, money, along with hopes and dreams only to learn too late that it wasn't theirs and it wouldn't last. Every day people are conned into investing their lives in things that will be taken away.

With the rise of Internet communications, Web-based scams proliferate. Barry C. Collin, chief executive of the cybersecurity consulting firm Threat & Risk Associates, commented, "You can't install a software patch for a person's mind."³

What You Think Impacts Your Emotions

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isa. 26:3). Imagine that a man owns 1000 shares of financial industries stock that was purchased at a hundred dollars a share. One morning he opens his paper and reads that the stock has dropped to ten dollars per share. His one-hundred-thousand-dollar investment is now worth ten thousand dollars. What emotions would he experience? He might be angry, frustrated, certainly disappointed or depressed, and maybe even suicidal. Once he grasps the loss of his fortune his emotions get involved.

Now suppose that man calls his stockbroker to find out what happened, and the broker tells him that the paper made a typographical error. Instead, his shares purchased for one hundred dollars are now worth one thousand dollars, not ten dollars. Instead of dropping ninety thousand dollars, his investment has increased nine hundred thousand dollars! The change in his emotional situation is determined by the information he receives and believes.⁴

What You Think Determines Your Destiny

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). Self-righteous religion has always been, and will continue to be, the greatest enemy to the gospel. Thomas Jefferson admired Jesus as a moral man but would have nothing to do with the supernatural elements found in the Scriptures. Using scissors and paste, Jefferson "edited" the Bible, removing anything he felt breached the laws of nature. Jefferson entitled his creation *The Life and Morals of Jesus*. Only eighty-two columns, or little more than one-tenth of the 700 columns in the King James Bible, remained. The other nine-tenths of the Gospel records were discarded. Jefferson's work reflected the Deist's view of Jesus as a moral guide but not divine. His book ended without hope with the words from John 19:42 and Matthew 28:60: "There laid they Jesus . . . and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed."

Ken Endean has served as pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Scarborough, Maine, since 1996.

The words of Puritan theologian John Owen challenge us:

We can test ourselves by asking whether our spiritual thoughts are like guests visiting a hotel or like children living at home. There is a temporary stir and bustle when guests arrive, yet within a little while they leave and are forgotten. The hotel is then prepared for other guests. So it is with religious thoughts that are only occasional. But children belong to their house. They are missed if they don't come home. Preparation is continually made for their food and comfort. Spiritual thoughts that arise from true spiritual mindedness are like the children of the house—always expected, and certainly enquired for if missing.⁵

Katie B. Wilkinson (1859–1928) penned the words to a hymn of prayer titled "May the Mind of Christ My Saviour."

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow'r controlling
All I do and say.

May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His pow'r.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.⁶

¹ Complete text is available online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/flavel/keeping.html>.

² Charles Colson, *Against the Night* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1989), 26–27. Quoted by Richard L. Mayhue at <http://www.ondocctrine.com/2may0002.htm>. Also in chapter 2 of John MacArthur, *Think Biblically* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 45.

³ Brian Grow, "The Mind Games Cybercrooks Play," *Business Week*, April 17, 2006, p. 54.

⁴ Adapted from an illustration in Tim LaHaye and David Noebel, *Mind Siege* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2000), 48.

⁵ Quoted in John MacArthur, *Think Biblically!* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 46.

⁶ *Hymns of Grace and Glory* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002), #476. ☞

The Trip of a Lifetime



"[Go] unto a land that I will shew thee" (Gen. 12:1).

"I wish someone had put a gun to my head and sent me to Israel twenty-five years ago!" This statement was made to me by a well-known pastor and national speaker. It shocked me that a man who had such a continual impact with preachers across the country and around the world had never been to the Land of the Bible. As a pastor myself, I had always desired to make the trip, but the cost and time were both prohibitive. Friends and fellow ministers would always return and tell me that I needed to go. Finally, this past February, my wife and I were able to participate in a "Pastor's Familiarization Tour." Often referred to as a "FAM Tour," this somewhat abbreviated and reduced-cost tour was promoted to members of the FBFI as an opportunity to become familiar with the Holy Land and to learn how to organize future trips for others.

As much as we would like to pride ourselves in our astute reading of books and earnest study of the Bible, most of us learn more quickly by the experience of seeing and doing. For anyone who wants to learn more about the Bible, a visit to Israel is certainly "the trip of a lifetime." So many things have become so much clearer in my mind. Let me give some examples.

■ The land of Israel is not flat. The only flat regions are the Jordan Valley, the Mediterranean coast, and the Jezreel Valley. Jesus and the people of the Bible got a good workout scrambling up and down hills.

■ The area of Galilee is made up black basalt rock. It is a volcanic region. The ruins from the time of Christ, such as Capernaum and Magdala, are all made up of black rock.

■ The Lily of the Valley is nothing like the lilies that are on display during Easter. It is a red anemone flower that looks similar to a tulip. The center of each flower is yellow. These flowers are only around for several weeks in February and March, and then they fade away in the heat (James 1:10, 11).

■ The City of David is being slowly uncovered through

meticulous excavations. It was thought provoking to walk by the ancient walls of the Jebusite city, to stick a toe into the flowing water of Hezekiah's tunnel, and to traverse through a Canaanite tunnel that may have been the route through which David accessed the Jebusite stronghold.

■ The ruins of Hazor in the far north attest to the majesty of Solomon and the wretchedness of the Canaanites. The ruins contain gates that were made by Solomon. The palace of Jabin has been reconstructed, but the pieced-together bricks show the great destruction wrought upon them by the hammer of Joshua's army and fire (Josh. 11:10, 11).

■ The overlook of the Jezreel Valley from Megiddo and Carmel in the south and Nazareth in the north helps piece numerous passages together. From those points you can see Mt. Tabor, which Deborah and Barak rushed down; Moriah, from which Gideon gazed down on the Midianites; Gilboa, upon which Saul died; and then all the cities of plain such as Jezreel, Nain, and Endor.

■ The ruins of Israel proclaim the great need for water. Conduits for water are on display everywhere, from the aqueducts of Masada and Caesarea (which was used for Herod's swimming pool by the sea), to the deep tunnels dug by Ahab at Megiddo and Hazor, to the pools of healing at Bethesda and Siloam in Jerusalem. Water is a prized commodity even today. The Sea of Galilee is continuing to go down, and the level of the Salt Sea is dropping an average of three feet a year. The government is looking to pipe water from the Mediterranean to raise the level of the Salt Sea.

The examples could go on and on. In the weeks following the trip, I have gone through the pictures and notes and still have not absorbed everything from the trip. I have told my wife that just one day of touring in Israel was enough to open my understanding of many things in the Bible.

Continued on page 39

BUSES, CRAYONS & KEYBOARDS

probably don't immediately imply "college," but for many Bob Jones University students, they are a real part of college life. Each week students, faculty and staff are involved in local churches in the Greenville area and beyond. In fact, more than 15 BJU grads pastor churches in the local area, and many more faculty, staff and grads serve in other positions in those churches. Because local church ministry is essential, BJU has more than 200 outreaches helping local churches (in four different states). These outreach ministries include children's church, youth group, visitation, music ministry and many others. To find out more about BJU's programs or our local church emphasis, please call **800-BJ-AND-ME.**



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Vigilance for Religious Liberty

Continued from page 19

may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a Fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the Church [are] on the Fundamentalist side.

We have the truth that makes religious freedom possible. It is under siege by belief systems that will make it impossible. Our duty is to proclaim that truth without apology, to live it without apprehension, and to be vigilant for the freedom to do so. If professing Christians do not stand for truth while they have that freedom, will they have the courage to stand for Christ when that freedom is taken away? Who will dare to be a Daniel? Who will remember who he was?

Wayne A. Bley is a member of the Executive Board of FBFI and serves as the Chairman of the FBFI Commission on Chaplains. He is a retired Navy Chaplain and currently lives in northern Virginia.

¹¹ <http://www.becketfund.org/index.php/article/453.html>, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0712/p01s03-ussc.html>

¹² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/08/20060807.html>

¹³ <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c110:2:/temp/~c110RyHTRJ::>

¹⁴ <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c110:2:/temp/~c110hPYz5O::>

¹⁵ <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,265913,00.html>, <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2007/04/13/minneapolis>

¹⁶ http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=55488

¹⁷ <http://phibetacons.nationalreview.com/post/?q=ZTI2ZDcxNTJhMGNmMTJhNzkzOTIhM2NlYjgwMDRjNmQ=>

¹⁸ <http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/zieve/070424>

¹⁹ <http://www.cair.com/AboutIslam/PublicationDownloads.aspx>

²⁰ <http://members.aol.com/MuttaqunOL/wudu.html>

¹ <http://www.meforum.org/article/1809>

² http://www.lubbockonline.com/stories/111407/bus_111407004.shtml

³ http://www.usatoday.com/money/biztravel/2006-09-17-airport-check-in-usat_x.htm

⁴ <http://cbs5.com/local/michael.savage.council.2.601366.html>

⁵ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,521546,00.html>

⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/ramadan/islam.html>, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=52962

⁷ <http://www.globalincidentmap.com/home.php>

⁸ <http://www.jihadwatch.org/islam101/>, <http://antidhimmi321.blogspot.com/>, <http://www.dhimmi.com/>

⁹ <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID={55E5C6C2-B801-4FF3-B59E-F52F591A42AA}>

¹⁰ http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=32341

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On Efficacy

Every language contains physical representations that are to be recognized as figures of speech. For instance, “the sun is a great ball in the sky” suggests the likeness of roundness, a circular object, sailing across the heavens. It should not suggest a rubber or plastic sphere, or inflation, or any of the other things we associate with a ball in our culture. Such is just “common sense.” The sun “rises.” It sets in the west. It throws its warm rays around us and hugs us.

It is important for us to learn to separate the pictures from the realities. Divine things are beyond our ken. But the likenesses God gives us are too often taken to be real themselves rather than only representing the reality. Thus some have used, “This bread represents the body of Christ,” rather than “This bread is the body.” Not that the use of “is” is incorrect, for linguistically “it” often means “corresponds to” or “is like” or “represents.” Most Americans will understand the use of “represents” correctly, whereas a few, because of background, will take it to mean some supposed physical, supernatural change.

That distinction, however, needs to be applied consistently throughout Scripture. The clothing of skins was a genuine garment, but more important for Adam and Eve it represented God’s provision of a needed spiritual covering. The blood sacrifices of OT offerings were a picture of the special cleansing work of the coming Savior; in themselves they but represented the reality. The efficacy was not in the blood or the action of putting to death but only in that they represented the coming genuine work of the true Lamb of God.

God’s explanation of this is sufficiently clear:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins (Heb. 10:1–4).

This is certainly clear. The pictures of His redemptive work, which God gave beginning at the fall of Adam, had no power or efficacy in themselves. They were a teaching, predicting “shadow” of the reality ahead. They were not themselves the reality that they pictured. Not one person was made right with God by physically performing

required ritual. Thousands of “right” offerings were to no avail. Faith in a cleansing by the blood of animals was a vain, useless faith. It is not, never has been, and never will be possible that the blood of bulls and of goats can take away sins.

One proof was the repetition of the sacrifices. Even when a designated offering had been completed, the offerer had no assurance of cleansing—in fact, just the opposite. He knew that another offering would follow. So to speak, offerings could not be made rapidly enough to erase his sinfulness. The offered blood was ineffective. The act of offering still left another to be done. There was no attainment in portraying a picture; a picture is no more than a picture. The reality to come was far superior to that which the pictures presented.

In spite of this clear teaching, contradictory assertions have appeared. “Those in the Old Testament lived under a covenant of works; we in the New Testament era are under a covenant of grace.” “Sins were covered in the Old Testament by the blood of animals; in the new dispensation sins are atoned for by the blood of Jesus.” “Before Christ, God’s rule was a rule of law; after Christ it is a rule of grace.” “Old Testament sacrifices were a temporary covering of sin until the effective payment for sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.” Etc., etc. Such expressions are not exclusively from either reformed writers or dispensationalists; both have used them. My system shudders each time I read or hear such, for Scripture so clearly teaches otherwise.

God’s declarations are distinctly to the contrary. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). “A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (v. 28). In his assertion that God has today and always has had only one way of deliverance from sin, Paul proceeds to quote from the Law.

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:2–5).

God had said the same through David, who spoke of “the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” (4:6). David as an individu-

al was redeemed by faith, not because of his ancestors or by circumcision, not by animal sacrifice or ritualistic endeavor. It is especially important to recognize that Abraham was counted righteous by faith when he was yet uncircumcised (v. 10). And God counted him "the father of all them that believe," not of all physical descendants or of all who are circumcised (v. 11).

God did not have two ways of salvation, one by works or by sacrifice and another later by faith in the death of the Lord Jesus. Old Testament pictures of the coming work of the Savior were true pictures, but no more than pictures. True faith must be in the one reality, the gospel, which was repeatedly offered in the pictures, the future death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no spiritual benefit in ritual activity or worship objects, none in good works or religious works of any kind. It was by faith alone.

Paul stresses that this was recorded concerning David and Abraham so that we would recognize that it is the same to us. Hearing of God's offer of redemption, submit-

ting to Jesus, the Author and Completer of our salvation, obeying in a walk of faith, and not of supposed works achievement—human response to the divine provision has been the same since the fall. There has been but one provision for all of mankind. There has been but one gospel, variously presented. Any suggestion of a second gospel is surely "another" gospel, which must be opposed by true believers.

The gospel for them was a genuine offer of an effective provision yet to come. The gospel that we preach today is the sincere offer of the living God of His one and only way of salvation. It's the same gospel. There is only one gospel. Ritual activity today is of no more benefit than was OT ritual. No washing of water cleanses spiritually. No bread and no cup convey any acceptable "grace." They but represent the astonishing, unique provision that God made on our behalf in the fullness of time.

Warren Vanhetloo, A.B., B.D., Th.M., Th.D., D.D., is Adjunct Instructor in and Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Calvary Baptist Seminary in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. He now resides in Michigan.

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Out of the Heart

Hannah R. Anderson

I should have seen it coming.

After all, I *was* the one who had introduced my two-and-a-half-year-old to red fingernail polish. It had been one afternoon only a few days before. I was hurriedly attempting to get ready for a long-awaited evening out with my husband, and I gambled that including my young daughter in my manicure process would be a smart multitasking solution to the present busyness.

I lost my bet.

So I really shouldn't have been too surprised one morning a few days later when I walked in on her painting her nails, her arms and legs, our light frieze carpet, and the whole town red. Correction, "candy apple red." What I was completely unprepared for, however, was my own reaction.

"What in the world are you doing?! For goodness' sakes, what were you thinking? How am I ever going to clean this up? You are NOT supposed to play in mommy's makeup. You know that!"

How effortlessly, how naturally, how simply it all came spewing out. Gone were any pretensions of June Cleaver or Donna Reed. Here was a full-grown woman screaming and ranting at a two-year-old. Looking into her dark confused eyes, I continued, completely embracing my "righteous" anger.

"How am I ever going to get this out of the carpet? I can't believe you did this. Stop crying! Go to your room and stay there. Mommy needs some space. Just go away and let me clean this up!"

Her size-five feet fled down the hall toward her bedroom, and I couldn't help but hear her broken sobs. One thing a mother, even one whose carpet and walls are covered with red fingernail polish, cannot ignore is the crying of her child. Instantly, my tantrum subsided and was replaced by a flood of remorse. *What was I thinking? What in the world had I just done? I knew better; I couldn't believe I had said those things. How was I ever going to clean that up?*

I followed her to her bedroom and found her on her bed, her little body still shaking with surprise and sorrow. Sitting down on the edge of the bed, I lifted her onto my lap and pulled her close, my arms circling all of her barely twenty-six pounds. I held her securely until she calmed down. My lips, that only moments before had condemned her, now spoke words of forgiveness, acceptance, and reassurance. Within a few minutes, my daughter and I were reconciled. She forgot my tirade and remembered only a mommy who loved her.

My recovery was not quite so simple.

What haunted me even days later was not merely

that I had lost my temper—I had done that often enough—but the fact that with one wave of her chubby little hand, my toddler could undo years of spiritual maturing. How could such a little person push me so far and dismantle every bit of my self-control? After all this time, had I finally met my match only to discover that she was two years old?

Or was the reality worse than that? Maybe the anger that surfaced that morning revealed more about me than I wanted to remember. Maybe the truth was that I hadn't changed as much as I'd thought I had in all those years. Had I been hiding so long under a veneer of goodness and beauty, growing accustomed to the niceties of religion, that I had forgotten who I really was?

When the "real me" appeared that morning, I once again had to face the truth about my sinful heart. My two-year-old wasn't primarily responsible for my outburst; I was. I couldn't escape the words of Christ that told me so: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). So what was really bothering me was facing the truth about the "real me." The real me screams and yells, the real me lashes out, the real me knowingly hurts others and uses their guilt against them.

This is the real me, a woman whose words reveal a heart of anger and self-righteousness, a woman whose same heart needs to be constantly changed by mercy and forgiveness.

The One whose condemning words pierced my heart that day is the very One who offers hope for the wounded heart. He is the One who promises to be "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (Joel 2:13). He is the One who "take[s] away [my] stony heart" (Ezek. 36:26) and replaces it with a new one. And most importantly to me at the moment, He is the One who promises that He has "begun a good work in [me]" and He "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

Suddenly I was comforted in the hope of God's mercy. A mercy that is so wise it uses the foolishness of a child to teach His wayward daughter. A mercy that is so full of patience and peace that it deals with my childish rage. A mercy that is so encompassing that it reaches down to the real, ugly me and refuses to let me remain as I am. A mercy that is so powerful that it heals and transforms.

A mercy that is so unlike my own heart.

Hannah R. Anderson is a pastor's wife and the mother of two rambunctious toddlers. She lives in Pennsylvania.

The Word of the Lord is more powerful than any event in Providence.
—John Duncan

Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years.
—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.
—Theodore Roosevelt

The Bible contains more of my little philosophy than all the libraries I have seen; and such parts of it as I cannot reconcile to my little philosophy, I postpone for future investigation.
—John Adams

It is absurd to imagine that God should justify a people and not sanctify them, [that] He should justify a people whom He could not glorify.
—Thomas Watson

Clothes and company do oftentimes tell tales in a mute but significant language.
—Thomas Brooks

If you cannot hate evil, you cannot love good.
—Struthers Burt

Perhaps nothing is more nebulous than the New Evangelicalism's redefining love as a manner and way of life which contradicts the authority of the Word of God.
—Richard V. Clearwaters

Believe not any man on his own mere word. Sacredly reserve your faith for the Word of the living God.
—John Duncan

Unless we do have deep awe of the Word we shall never have high joy over it. Our rejoicing will be measured by our reverencing.
—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

God leads none to heaven but whom He sanctifies on the earth. This living Head will not admit of dead members.
—John Owen

A Christian is bound by virtue of his oath of allegiance to God in baptism, not to have intimate converse with such as are God's sworn enemies. . . . The bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad.
—Thomas Watson

One that confounds good and evil is an enemy to good.
—Edmund Burke

Not only the best things are in the Bible, but they are said in the best way.
—John Duncan

The sin of this age is impurity of doctrine. . . . A new age this, when falsehood and truth can kiss each other!
—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

The situation will never be cured by designation [of funds]. At one time I was foolish enough to believe that philosophy. [Designated money] goes into the other pocket of the budget without which the amount would be insufficient. It serves the same ends, is utilized for the same purposes. . . . If I were a pastor now I would not advise designation. . . . What shall we do then? Either correct the entire policy or divide!
—William B. Riley on the "cooperative program" of the Northern Baptist Convention

We have before us the wretched spectacle of professedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing their union with those who deny the faith. . . . We are unable to call these Christian Unions. They begin to look like Confederacies in Evil.
—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

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

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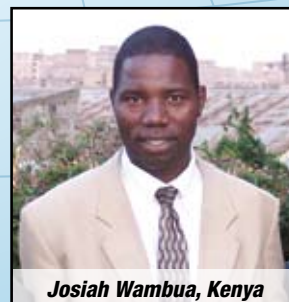
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"Only God Could Do That!"

Cary Grant

Pastor of Refuge Baptist Church in Cumming, Georgia

Editor's Note: *Refuge Baptist Church was planted on November 2, 2003. The church used rented storefront space until February 2008.*

Throughout the existence of our ministry we have prayed that whenever the Lord put us into a permanent facility that it would happen in such a way that those who hear the story would have to say that only God could do that. He started answering that in November of 2007. After church one Sunday a man pulled into the parking lot and wanted to talk. He attended a church two miles down the road that had been struggling. They had a faithful group of people but were in need of a pastor. After talking we both decided to pray and talk again.

There were some issues that had to be resolved. They were a part of the SBC, and there was a problem with the property deed. The first issue was easy. They voted to pull out of the convention and to merge with us. They started meeting with us in December and wanted us to meet at their church, but we



believed the issue of the deed had to be resolved first.

After much prayer and seeking legal advice we were prepared to make an offer to buy out of the reversionary clause. According to the original deed, the property would revert back to the original owner if it ever ceased to be used for a church. We were apprehensive about this. We still don't know how, but the donor got our contact information and made us an offer of \$60,000. We had planned on offering more. Needless to say, we accepted. We now have a building and 2.6 acres of property. Another great blessing is that during the process of crafting the new deed, our property was appraised at just over \$1 million.

We had our first service in our new building the end of January, and our building dedication on February 24th.



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The Lord's Path for His People

Jerry Sivnksty

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. used to preach a message in which he alluded to the fact that many times Christians get distracted by things other than the ministry. He used the illustration of a dog chasing a raccoon who then comes across the scent of a rabbit and starts chasing the rabbit instead of the raccoon. He said that many Christians start off on the right trail but get distracted and go down another trail—a trail they are not supposed to be on. Psalm 16:11 states that the Lord has a path for our lives. It begins by saying, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life." Psalm 37:23 says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD." In Genesis 24:27 Abraham's servant said, "I being in the way, the LORD led me." So the Lord will lead our lives if we are faithful and obedient to Him. Although the Lord has a path for our lives, many times we get off of God's path. In that great work *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, Christian got off the path to the Celestial City and went down a by-path that led him to the Dungeon of Despair. There are several dangerous by-paths we must be aware of.

First, there is the by-path of carelessness. In the Old Testament the Lord led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt and provided them with manna, or bread from Heaven. All they had to do was gather it off the ground. For forty years the Lord graciously provided manna for His people. However, after a while they began to complain about and despise the bread that the Lord had given to sustain them.

The same is true in the lives of many of God's children today. When a person is first saved, he is thrilled by the Word of God; he loves to hear it preached, and he is easily stirred and convicted by it. But as the years go by, he becomes so familiar with Scripture that he carelessly becomes numb to its teaching. He is no longer stirred, convicted, and moved to action. Why? He has not guarded his heart and therefore finds himself on this by-path of carelessness.

The second by-path is that of carnality. Romans 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded is death." There is a very foolish game called "Russian roulette." A person puts a single bullet in the cylinder of a revolver and then spins it. He pulls back the hammer on the pistol, places the

barrel to his head and pulls the trigger—hoping that he will hear a "click." However, many people have killed themselves playing this risky game. You may say, "How could someone take such a foolish chance with his life?" Yet it is no more foolish for a Christian to have a mind set on the flesh. Romans 8:7 goes on to say, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." This means that a carnally minded person begins to hate the things of God. Beware of the Christian who says he hates all of the standards imposed upon his life. Beware of the Christian who says things like, "Why can't I do this? What's so wrong with that? Why do I have to have all these rules?" This is dangerous thinking because Romans 8:7 ends by saying, "For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Not being subject means rebelling against the Lord in your heart. Rebellion against God is always disastrous.

Many years ago I had a meeting in which a young lady told me a story that she asked me to tell others in hopes that they wouldn't experience the shame, disgrace, and heartbreak she had. She said she began to think about certain worldly pleasures and sins; she thought about them so much that soon her mind was dominated by the flesh. Then she told me that she hated all the restrictions and standards her parents had placed upon her. She then ran away from home. She moved in with friends who encouraged her to try cigarettes, marijuana, beer, hard liquor, and many other sordid things. In the middle of her story she suddenly burst into uncontrollable crying; when she regained her composure, she said, "I now am no longer a virgin." She said to me, "Please warn people about the dangers of living for the flesh."

Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." We must take heed to this solemn warning or else we will fall into the same trap. In my next article, I will address another dangerous by-path that must be avoided.

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty may be contacted at PO Box 141, Starr, SC 29684 or via e-mail at evangjsivn@aol.com.

PAUL'S PASTORAL EPISTLES

Even though the term “pastor” never appears in them, Paul’s epistles to Timothy and Titus are known as the Pastoral Epistles. Indeed, as the previous column noted, Timothy and Titus did not function as pastors in the sense in which we think of that term and office today. Still, the label “Pastoral Epistles” is appropriate because 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. Because the church was constructed to be run congregationally, every believer needs to be aware of the qualifications, responsibilities, and behavior that God outlines in these letters for the leadership of their churches. The Pastoral Epistles also address the kind of behavior that leaders are to instill and enforce among God’s people. Laypeople can discover there what God expects of them and their leaders.

Introduction to Titus

Character of Titus

Titus is described as Paul’s convert (Titus 1:4), a Gentile whose conversion served as a “test case” at the Jerusalem Council (Gal. 2:1–3; cf. Acts 15:2). Titus seems to have been frequently commissioned by Paul as his representative for difficult or delicate tasks (the Corinthian collection, 2 Cor. 8:6, 16, 23), to settle disputes and calm rocky relations (between Paul and Corinthians, 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13–15; 12:18), to consolidate and temporarily supervise the ministry in difficult places (Crete, Titus 1:5; 3:12), to further the ministry in other fields (Dalmatia, 2 Tim. 4:10). This résumé speaks eloquently of his spiritual maturity, reliability, authority, courage, tact, winsomeness, and resourcefulness.

Role of Titus

Like Timothy, Titus was not the pastor of a local church in Crete, but “a temporary apostolic legate. . . . He must have had only a temporary appointment there, since Paul planned to send a replacement for Titus (3:12). Titus’s position might more nearly be compared to that of a modern missionary superintendent appointed to exercise supervision over a number of national churches. . . . One of his duties was to help complete and make effective that organization in each church (1:6–10)” (Hiebert, *In Paul’s Shadow*, 112).

Background of Epistle

Paul wrote to Titus about A.D. 65, prior to Paul’s final imprisonment. After Paul’s release from his first Roman imprisonment, Titus probably accompanied him through Crete where Paul left him temporarily (cf. 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:12) to consolidate and supervise the fledgling churches (1:5). The problems described in this epistle are twofold: (1) the character of native Cretan culture and personality (e.g., 1:12, 13), complicated by (2) false teaching especially by Judaizers (e.g., 1:10, 11).

The problems in Crete are familiar to missionaries in lands where certain vices are inbred via the culture and reinforced by the community. (John Paton, 19th-century missionary to the New Hebrides, described this experience in his autobiography.) Cretans had a reputation for theft, and Crete was famous for harboring thieves and pirates. According to Cicero: “the Cretans . . . consider piracy and brigandage [highway robbery] honorable” (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*). “This letter brings out something of what we might call the civilizing function of Christianity. Titus was clearly in charge of a very young church in a very unpromising situation. . . . The letter is clear evidence that the Christian church is not intended to function only in cozy, respectable, middle-class environments. The gospel is for the most unpromising of people.” The rather basic level of expectation and exhortation “shows both that the Cretans were unpromising material and that Paul expected them nevertheless to produce qualities of Christian character” (Carson, Moo, Morris, *Introduction to the NT*, 383).

Content of Titus

Overview

- *Design*—To instruct Titus on ministering to a difficult people.
- *Key Verses*—2:14; 3:8 (These verses comprise a microcosm of the whole book; each punctuates a motivation passage central to Paul’s argument.)
- *Summary*—Exhorting and exemplifying the Christian life to new converts in a difficult culture.

Key Words and Concepts

Doctrine is not unimportant in Titus (1:14; 2:1, 7), but Paul’s chief concern for the Cretan church is a personal testimony and lifestyle that does not bring that doctrine into disrepute (2:5, 8, 10) and that reflects the reality of the salvation they profess to have experienced (2:11–14; 3:3–8).

(TITUS)—NOT FOR PASTORS ONLY (PART 2)

■ *Good works* (7x)

- 1:16—The good works mentioned in 1:16b imply the absence of good works in 1:16a. This verse expresses succinctly what Paul wants the Cretan believers to avoid—a personal lifestyle that belies their profession of faith in God.
- 2:7, 14
- 3:1, 8, 14 (cf. 3:5)—“Not by works of righteousness” clarifies that works are not the *cause* of salvation, while the emphasis on “good works” throughout the rest of the epistle emphasizes that they are the natural and necessary *evidence* of salvation.

■ *(Dis)Obedience* (7x)—Obedience to proper authority is a concrete expression of good works and a genuine profession. A disobedient spirit is characteristic of unbelievers.

- 1:6—elders are not to be not unruly, insubordinate
- 1:10—false teachers are unruly, insubordinate
- 1:16—false teachers are disobedient
- 2:5—wives obedient to their husbands
- 2:9—servants obedient to their masters
- 3:1—be subject to authorities
- 3:3—we were once disobedient

■ *Speech* (7x)—Speech is another concrete expression of good works and a genuine profession.

- 1:10, 12
- 2:3, 8, 9
- 3:2, 9

■ *Soundness* (5x)

- 1:9; 2:1—Sound doctrine
- 1:13; 2:2—Sound in faith
- 2:8—Sound speech

On a theological note, Titus contains a significant and repeated affirmation of the deity of Christ. Every chapter parallels the phrase “God our Saviour” with “Christ our Saviour” (1:3, 4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6).

Content Outline

“The bulk of Titus has to do not with church leaders [as in much of 1 Timothy] but with basic catechetical instruction as would be expected in a new church. The basic thrust of this instruction is the necessity of salvation working itself out in obedience in a person’s life. Salvation not only purifies sinners but prepares a people who are zealous for good deeds” (Mounce).

1:1–4—*Greeting*

An unusually lengthy and theologically oriented opening.

1:5–9—*Titus’s Ecclesiastical Task: Appoint Qualified Leadership*

This paragraph concludes with the qualification of being able to defend and handle the Word against opponents. The next verse begins to explain why.

1:10–16—*Titus’ Disciplinary Task: Rebuke Sharply*

Chrysostom explained the reason for this seeming harshness: “Give them, he says, a stroke that cuts deep. . . . He does not here have recourse to exhortation. For as he who treats with harshness the meek . . . may destroy them, so he who flatters one that requires severity causes him to perish, and does not suffer him to be reclaimed” (Mounce, 400).

■ 1:10, 11—*Problem*: Preponderance of false teachers

■ 1:12–14—*Danger*: Susceptibility of Cretans to the influence of false teaching

■ 1:15, 16—*Warning*: Distinguishing mark of false teachers—not words but works

2:1–3:11—*Titus’s Pastoral Task: Provide Guidance*

■ *Speak* (2:1–5)

- 2:2—Behavior of older men
- 2:3, 4—Behavior and example of older women
- 2:4, 5—Behavior of younger women

■ *Exhort . . . Rebuke* (2:6–15)

- 2:6—Behavior of young men
- 2:7, 8—Behavior of Titus to be exemplary (in contrast to false teachers)
- 2:9, 10—Behavior of servants
- 2:11–14—Motivation expressed
 - This passage provides the “firm theological foundation for right practice” (Mounce).
 - The grace of God that saves has appeared, teaching us to live differently and distinctively (soberly, righteously, and godly) now, by
 1. Denying accommodation—ungodliness and worldly lusts
 2. Affirming anticipation—looking for our Savior who sacrificed Himself in order to
 - a. redeem us from lawless deeds

Continued on next page.

At a Glance Continued

b. purify for Himself a special people, zealous for good works

• 2:15—Task Restated

■ Remind (3:1–8)

- 3:1, 2—Remind them to be good citizens and good neighbors
- 3:3–8—Motivation restated
 - “The kindness and love of God that saves has appeared . . .”
 - Not by our merit
 - By His mercy (v. 5) and grace (v. 7)
 - So those who have believed should be careful to maintain good works

■ Avoid . . . Reject (3:9–11)

- 3:9—Avoid unprofitable issues and useless debates
- 3:10, 11—Reject those who persist in such divisive pursuits

3:12–15—Concluding Instructions

Theme of Titus

The burden that dominates Paul’s thinking as he wrote to Titus can be discerned by tracing his repeated references to “good works” right through the letter. Positively, he is concerned that believers maintain a life that is consistent with their profession (1:16), causes others to speak well of God’s Word (2:5), makes God’s teachings attractive to others (2:10), fulfills the purpose for which Christ sacrificed Himself for us (2:14), befits God’s gracious salvation and our high calling (3:8), and makes us profitable to others and to God (3:8, 14). Negatively, that means ignoring extra-Biblical speculations and legalistic rules devised by men (1:13); avoiding slander, self-indulgence, disrespect, and theft (2:3, 9, 10); saying no to ungodliness and worldly desires (2:12); and shunning silly specu-

lations and divisive controversies that have no substantive ground in Scripture, as well as those who perpetuate them (3:9–11).

How we live—our behavior, our speech, our spirit, our relation to others—either commends or belies our profession and the doctrine of the gospel itself. We are not saved *by* good works but we are saved *to* good works. Christian *practice* (our works) must mirror Christian *doctrine* (our words). William Mounce’s remark on Titus 2:12 admirably sums up the impact of the book as a whole: it “deals a death blow to any theology that separates salvation from the demands of obedience to the Lordship of Christ.”

Mailbag Continued

that, you don’t feel quite as alone. It helps me believe we are on the right track.” I wish that the many fine congregations that are removed from regular good fellowship will find future encouragement from the ministry of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship.

*Dr. Robert A. Condict
Baldwin, Maryland*

While we always welcome articles from God’s men of every generation, the purpose of this note is to share how God encouraged our hearts as we read the wise counsel offered by a new generation of pastors in your January/February 2008 issue, “Temptations Teenagers Face.”

We were humbled as we read the timely, insightful principles unfolded for us by these young leaders. However, the greatest

blessing came as we were reminded that our great God continues to raise up young men for His work. He has shepherded these young men through their own fierce battles of youth, and by His grace they have emerged standing strong in Christ and speaking the truth in love.

We want these young men and their families to know that their love for the Lord has encouraged our hearts. Their zeal in answering the call has strengthened our resolve to serve, and their boldness in serving compels us to pray for them in the new fierce battles they will surely face. May they hold fast to the Truth and serve only in His strength, and together we will trust God for the victory sure.

*Dan and Priscilla Marsceau
Greer, SC*

STANDING FAST
IN THE FAITH

PSALM 124
The Lord is my strength,
A Psalm of David.
T HE LORD is my strength,
I want
2 He maketh me to
pastures.
waters. He restoreth me
3 the paths of right-
sake. Yea, thou
of the shade
of the shadow
of the shadow

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American Religion

According to a new survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and American Life, the face of American religion is changing. Protestants now account for just over 51 percent of the population. This number is declining. The area of greatest growth is those who claim to have no religious affiliation at all. That number rose from 8 percent to 16 percent. Most protestant denominations are marked as declining.

The survey found that 26 percent of Americans belong to Evangelical churches, 18 percent to Protestant denominations, and 23 percent to the Roman Catholic Church; about 7 percent mention other types of churches. Perhaps the most surprising part of the survey is that it revealed that 28 percent of Americans will eventually make a major change in their religion from the one in which they were raised. The number is actually higher (44 percent) if you consider the act of wandering from one Protestant denomination to another. (*The Baltimore Sun*, Tuesday, February 22, 2008, page 8-A)

Christian Anti-Defamation Commission

Rev. Gary Cass (an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America and chairman and chief executive officer of the Christian Anti-Defamation

Commission) has authored the 2007 work *Christian Bashing and the Christian Anti-Defamation Commission*. In this work he claims that though 85% of Americans profess "Christianity," those who live their faith are harassed, marginalized, or outright bullied. His work is direct in naming prominent offenders.

The commission was organized in 1999 with two stated purposes: (1) "to respond to incidents of Christian bashing and counter threats to the First Amendment rights of Christians" and (2) "to educate the church and general public about the harmful consequences of Christian bashing." (This article can be referenced at <http://worldnet-daily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLEID=59300>.)

Homeschool Challenge

The California appeals court handed down a decision in February of this year that Brad Dacus, President of the Pacific Justice Institute, described as "stunning." The decision's impact could be felt by the 166,000 Californians who have chosen to homeschool their children.

The challenge began when the two youngest children of Philip and Mary Long of Los Angeles were brought to the attention of child advocates. Lawyers representing the state did not approve of 2nd Appellate Court's ruling

that "parents have a constitutional right to school their children in their own home." The decision handed down by the appeals court was represented by Justice H. Walt Croskey, who believed that this families' claim of homeschooling is "a ruse of enrolling children in a private school and letting them stay at home to be taught by a non-credentialed parent." Further he stated, "Parents are subject to being ordered to enroll their children in an appropriate school or education program and provide proof of enrollment to the court, and willful failure to comply with such an order may be punished by a fine for civil contempt."

The decision also read; "Keeping the children home deprived them of situations where (1) they could interact with people outside their family, (2) there are people who could provide help if something is amiss in the children's lives, and (3) they could develop emotionally in a broader world than the parent's cloistered setting." The ruling also required that "persons between the ages of six and 18" be in school, "the public full-time day school," except for those in "private full-time day school" or those "instructed by a tutor who holds a valid state teaching credential for the grade being taught." The case is ongoing. (This article can be referenced at <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/>

[index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=58137](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=58137).)

Americanism vs. Islamism

Dr. Zuhdi Jasser is a former US Naval officer (he served as a medical officer from 1988-99). He writes from a Muslim perspective about the jihad the world is presently experiencing. The entire article is recommended for your reading. The following is a small excerpt:

The root cause of terrorism is the dreams of the political Islamic state, and we need to understand what that state is. It can either be the fascist state that believes in totalitarian or authoritarian imposition of Islamic law throughout society or the democratic Islamic state, which believes in parliaments, elections, and discourse and debate. These two different types of government share the identification of being an Islamic state because the source of law is the same: the Quran and the tradition, or sunnah, of the Prophet. . . . We're missing the boat if we think that we are going to solve the problems of the Middle East by simply getting those countries to have elections and parliaments. We need to bring forth the ideas of freedom, liberty and the respect for individuals, some-

times over the community. . . . Until Muslims understand that their faith is not threatened by the Enlightenment and respect for the individual, we cannot win this war.

(This article can be referenced at <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200801.jasser.americanismislamism.html>.)

No Ten Commandments

Federal judge Joseph H. McKinley of Grayson County, Kentucky, has permanently barred the use of the Ten Commandments that was part of a "Foundations of American Law and Government" display. McKinley stated that the display had the "effect of endorsing religion." (This article can be referenced at <http://www.suntimes.com/news/nation/877685,CST-NWS-ten04.article>.)

Red-Letter Christians

Tony Campolo has grandfathered a movement that has become known as "red-letter Christians." According to a review of his recently released book, this is how Joseph Farah described the movement:

■ Capital punishment is wrong, despite the clear, unequivocal Biblical commandments to take life for life.

■ Most Christians are too warlike and are guilty of "not loving our enemies."

■ Universal health care should be provided by government.

■ Poverty should be eliminated by the US government, not just in the US, but throughout the world.

■ The minimum wage should be significantly increased.

■ The US should sign the Kyoto Protocol as a step

NOTABLE QUOTES

This we have to fear as the greatest and nearest danger, that Satan take from us the pure doctrine of faith, and bring into the Church again the doctrine of works and man's traditions. Wherefore, it is very necessary, that this doctrine be kept in continual practice and public exercise both of reading and hearing. . . . Wherefore, this doctrine can never be taught, urged, and repeated enough. If this doctrine be lost, then also the whole knowledge of truth, life, and salvation lost and gone. If this doctrine flourish, then all good things flourish, religion, the true service of God, the glory of God, the right knowledge of all things and all states of life.

—Martin Luther

We say that there ought to be no sorrow, but there is sorrow, and we have to receive it ourselves in its fires. If we try to evade sorrow, refuse to lay our account with it, we are foolish. Sorrow is one of the biggest facts of life; it is no use saying sorrow ought not to be. Sin and sorrow, and suffering are, and it is not for us to say that God has made a mistake in allowing them.

—Oswald Chambers

The better you prepare yourself to meet suffering, the more wisely you will act, and the greater will be your merit. You will bear all the more easily if your heart and mind is diligently prepared. Do not say, "I cannot endure such things from this person," or "I will not tolerate these things: he has done me great injury, and accused me of things I never considered; from another person I might bear it, and regard it as something that must be endured." Such thoughts are foolish, for you ignore the merit of patience and Him who rewards it, and think only of the person that has injured you and the wrong you endure.

—Thomas à Kempis

Thou canst not banish me for this world is my Father's house. (But I will slay thee, the Emperor said.) No, thou canst not, for my life is hid with Christ in God. (I will take away thy treasures.) Nay, but thou canst not, for my treasure is in heaven and my heart is there. (But I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left.) Nay, thou canst not, for I have a friend in heaven from whom thou canst not separate me. I defy thee; for there is nothing that thou canst do to hurt me.

—Chrysostom

toward solving the phantom crisis of global warming.

■ The US should pull out of Iraq and Afghanistan and address the real problem of terrorism by creating a Palestinian state and addressing the root cause—poverty.

■ We should make condoms available throughout the Third World to fight AIDS.

■ We should promote tougher gun laws.

■ We should spend more on government schools.

■ Christians should be offering sanctuary to all illegal aliens.

■ The US should cut the military budget and expand wealth-redistribution programs.

■ Interestingly, according to Campolo, there is no litmus test for Red Letter Christians on the issue of abortion—some are for it, others against it. (It's a big tent on this issue *alone*.)

When confronted about same-sex marriages, Campolo insists that he does not see a legitimate place for same-sex marriages but that homosexuals should be given the sanction of civil unions in order to receive the same rights as others. (This article can be referenced at <http://worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=58012> and <http://worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=60724>.)

Compiled by Robert Condict, 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.

Aligning Missions Support with Core Values

Pearson Johnson

This issue of *FrontLine* has focused on explaining the FBF 2008 Resolutions, which support the Core Values of our fellowship. Core values are vitally important. They state the ties that bind partners together. They form the grid through which everything a group does should be pressed.

I am often asked the practical question, "How do you make decisions about what missionaries to have in to your church and which ones to support?" I try to rephrase the question this way: "How can you ensure your missions support reflects your core values as a church?"* At Inter-City Baptist Church we have developed a process that has helped us make decisions carefully and objectively.

Following is a seven-step procedure for the evaluation of missionary candidates that has worked well for our church and which can be used by churches large or small to help make sure your missions support aligns with your core values.

1. Receive information from the missionary: Like you, we are on a number of different mailing lists, which causes us to receive an above-average number of letters from missionary candidates. At this stage, I file the information and await a follow-up call from the missionary. Good missionary candidates will follow up with a personal contact within a week.

2. Receive a follow-up contact/send a questionnaire: Upon receiving a follow-up contact, I send a questionnaire and doctrinal statement with a cover letter or e-mail in the candidate's name explaining our process of evaluation. Our questionnaire is a straightforward, five-page document that evaluates the candidate's views on our core values (doctrine, ideology, and missions philosophy). At this point I create a file for that deputation candidate, making a note of the date the questionnaire was sent. Some candidates never send the questionnaire back, thus ending our contact. If at the time of the follow-up contact I know support of the candidate is unlikely, I correspond with the candidate by phone or e-mail and tell him, so that we do not waste his time. Missionaries greatly appreciate clear and quick communication when they are trying to contact scores of churches.

3. Evaluate the questionnaire: I immediately e-mail the missionary upon receiving his questionnaire. Within one week I personally evaluate the answers given. If there are any clarifications needed or definite contradictions with our church's doctrinal distinctives or philosophy, I contact the candidate by phone or e-mail to discuss these. Some contacts are terminated at this point due to various issues

("KJV-onlyism," for example).

4. Discuss with pastor or committee: If a candidate reaches this point, our pastor and I discuss budgeting, calendar issues, and other factors that help me proceed with the missionary.

5. Send and receive reference forms: If we feel they are needed, we send reference forms to the missionary's pastor, a personal contact, and an educational contact.

6. Contact the Missionary: After careful evaluation as to our core values and the competence of the candidate, the following options are considered:

Contact the missionary and give the reasons we cannot have him to our church at this point. We have had candidates whom we could not support for practical reasons at one time come back and raise support on their next furlough. I keep a file of candidates whom we would like to support in the future, and I personally subscribe to their regular updates to follow and pray for their ministry.

Choose a Sunday service for the missionary to present his work to our church. We request that a missionary come for at least an entire Sunday and Monday so he can teach an adult class, preach, present his ministry in the evening service, and minister in our school chapels on Monday during the school year. It is ideal if he can stay for a week or more and get to know some families in our church.

7. Vote on the missionary: After having seen the candidate's presentation and his ability to preach and teach, our church leadership makes a recommendation for support to the congregation. Finally, the recommendation is presented to the congregation, who votes to accept or not accept the candidate for support.

While this process may seem somewhat lengthy, I guarantee it will help you partner with greater confidence with your missionaries and will ensure your missions support reflects your core values.

*For help with developing core missions values from a local church and God-centered perspective, I would encourage you to read *For the Sake of His Name: Challenging a New Generation for World Missions*, by David M. Doran, Pearson Johnson, and Benjamin Eckman (Allen Park: SGI, 2002).

Pearson Johnson is the Pastor of Missions and Evangelism at Inter-City Baptist Church. You can e-mail him with questions or comments at pjohnson@intercity.org.

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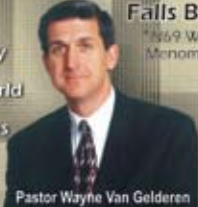



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One Chaplain's Report

John Shay

Editor's Note: *FBFI Chaplains send in quarterly reports about their ministries. Chaplain John Shay had less than two weeks in the Army when his first report was due. Based on this one, we are looking forward to his future reports!*

Sgt. Rakow was among my first contacts when I walked into an armory to pursue the chaplaincy. Seven months later, waivers were approved, my packet was in order, and within a few weeks I would have my appearance before the Federal Recognition Board. Evidently reaching enlistment goals provides rewards for recruiters, so to help my recruiter I agreed to pre-enlist prior to commissioning as an officer. At age forty-one I was initially nervous about entering the Army as an enlisted man. Capt. Chilson, my other recruiter, assured me that pre-enlistment was legitimate and gave me further guidance. I carefully helped the sergeant draw up my contract with the National Guard. "If for any reason John Shay is not offered a commission as an officer, there are no requirements or obligations to the Minnesota Army National Guard." Hopefully this would protect me from a career of cleaning latrines as an E-nothing grunt.

On Tuesday, March 18, at 5:30 a.m. (that's Oh-Five-Thirty, 18 MAR, to my fellow enlistees) we raced through the snow to make it to MEPS ("Military Entrance Processing Station," where you begin to speak in the first letters of words) before the doors were locked. We made it just in time to find a chair and wait. At the inspect I killed time with about twenty young men waiting to see the doctor. Finally he got to me. Palms up, palms down, turn around, right foot, left foot, turn around. The doctor looked me over again (probably thinking, "Short, balding, DOB:1966").

"No offense," he began, "but do you think you can keep up with these young men?" I answered him, "I'll give it a go." Inwardly I was hoping that "no soldier left behind" could somehow apply to PT and the "Confidence Course."

As part of the pre-enlistment that day, I took the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) test. Defying sound statistical probability, I guessed the correct answer frequently enough to score a 99. I had asked the Lord to help me not blow a simple test so badly that it would prohibit me from becoming a chaplain. He evidently answered that prayer! After waiting around for a while, I was taken into a room by a former Marine gunnery sergeant who then sat down at his PC. We chatted for a little bit, then without warning he slowly worked the keys on his keyboard while racing through a memorized speech faster than an auctioneer on meth. The successive paragraphs he recited

seemed to have something to do with my knowledge of the information they were supposed to disclose and my truthfulness in providing answers. Each time he paused for breath I alternately nodded, said "I do," and eventually "uhm-hmmmed," as I wasn't sure whether he was listening to me. Next he dexterously forced my contact and family information into his computer with only two fingers. When the database forms gave him trouble, he introduced me to a vocabulary that must have been employed to verify the need for another chaplain. After that he took my fingerprints, we chatted a little, and he wished me luck.

Once again I waited around for a while passing time by reading some things for work. Eventually they were ready for me to swear in. I took the oath on Tuesday, March 18, as an E4, which is 4 better than E-nothing. The Captain that administered the oath had a thick, rolling Spanish accent. He was friendly and asked each of us what type of military career we intended to pursue. When the others were done, he concluded with me. I informed him of my desire to serve as a Chaplain and asked him if I could have my first assignment. He gave me a questioning look, and I asked if I could pray for the new recruits. He agreed, and I leaned out and asked if anybody objected. Seeing none, I asked the Lord to bless us, to help us to succeed with our missions, and to live up to the oath we had taken.

One week later I appeared before the Federal Recognition Board, comprised of three Army National Guard officers who reviewed my packet and had an opportunity to ask me some questions. This interview was short and successful. Later in the week I found out that the administrative review board in Washington had also approved me. It was March 28 when I was informed that I was offered a commission. This concluded my ten days as an enlisted man, and a long process where we were asking the Lord to shut the door or leave it open as He saw fit. "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps" (Prov. 16:9).

My recruiter told me that I could be sworn in at MEPS, at the armory, at home, or any place where there was an American flag. Our pastor agreed that it would be good to have it at church. This would help us to tangibly articulate our desire that this ministry would be part of our church. It was scheduled for April 6, to begin my journey serving the Lord in a new way.

Thank you for your prayers for my new mission, and may the Lord bless you, help you succeed in your mission, and live up to the high calling with which you have been called (Eph. 4:1).

Chaplain's Contributions Honored

Joyce McKenzie, *Tampa Tribune*

Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the *Tampa Tribune* on February 9, 2008, and is reprinted here in its entirety.

It is the level of concern and compassion of chaplains that often accounts for success or failure in the lives of their troops.

Such was the sentiment of Army Maj. Gen. Michael Diamond of U.S. Central Command, one among several members of the military and guests on hand Monday at the Residence Inn in Temple Terrace to honor Army Capt. Mike Shellman, a chaplain with the 3rd Battalion of the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Ga.

On leave from his sixth overseas deployment in his eight years of service, Shellman was in town to accept a Project Gratitude tribute, a recognition given to active-duty military chaplains as a thank-you for their sacrifices and service to troops fighting on foreign soil.

In addition to rounds of applause, the chaplain received accolades about his commendable service in letters from Gov. Charlie Crist and Sens. Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez and a proclamation from Temple Terrace Mayor Joe Affronti.

In addition, he was presented with gift certificates to Busch Gardens, the Museum of Science & Industry and restaurants, including Lupton's Buffet and Catering and Antonio's Pasta Grille. Marriott TownePlace Suites Tampa donated a three-day lodging package.

"I think God orchestrated this, and I'll never forget it," Shellman said. "This is very special."

The program was spearheaded by David Lefavor, an October 2007 recipient of the Florida governor's Points of Light award for outstanding volunteerism. Prior to his move to Dayton, Ohio, late last year, Lefavor ministered to spinal cord injury victims and their families at the James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa and orchestrated several programs to support wounded veterans.

Since Lefavor's departure, Affronti has taken over as Project Gratitude's coordinator.

"I just think it's wonderful we have the opportunity to show our appreciation to the people who do so much for our young men and women serving our country," Affronti said.

Shellman—who has earned five Bronze Star Medals, two Army Commendation Medals and a Combat Action Badge—served two combat tours with the 101st Airborne Division out of Fort Campbell, Ky., three combat tours with the 3rd Special Forces Group out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and a combat tour with the 75th Ranger Regiment from Fort Benning, Ga.

"A Bronze Star can only be given out at time of combat, and they are only given out for exemplary service. He has five Bronze Stars, so that tells each of us the type of person he is," Diamond said. "As a chaplain, you can't have a bad day, and whereas soldiers have 8- to 12-hour days, a chaplain doesn't have downtime. He can get a knock on his door at any hour of the day."

Diamond went on to classify Shellman and his fellow chaplains on active duty as a "special breed."

"There are a lot of problems they deal with: depression, loss of a buddy and family issues," he said. "They are a real blessing for our soldiers. What they do is very important."

Retired Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Curt Brownhill, who served as the event's master of ceremonies, agreed.

"It's a great privilege for me to recognize one of our nation's most important people—a military chaplain. His sacrifice and commitment is huge, and it's huge for their families,



Mike Shellman

"I think God orchestrated this, and I'll never forget it. This is very special."



Army Capt. Mike Shellman prays with pilots prior to one of the first missions during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002. Shellman was the first Army chaplain deployed to Afghanistan.

Photo from Mike Shellman

Too," said Brownhill, as he also acknowledged Shellman's wife, Cheryl, and Brittany, 21, the oldest of the couple's three daughters.

"It's my wife who is the hero, the person who deserves the most credit. She's had to prep our house, sell the house and buy a house," said Shellman, who while serving as a senior pastor at a church in Oak Ridge, Tenn., received a calling to serve his country. He reported for duty Sept. 11, 2000.

Cheryl, the daughter of a preacher, said that because she and her husband view his calling as a ministry, she has taken most of life's adjustments in stride.

"As women, we like to nest, but I have adjusted to the moves because each time it gets better and better," she said. "God has been on our side all the way."

Brittany, on the other hand, admitted that although she is proud of her dad, not having him around very often during her teenage years was at times hard. But, her main concern has been for his safety.

"You kind of get used to it, and you pray God will take care of him," said Brittany, a junior at Clearwater Christian College, where she is studying to be a teacher, the same profession her mother has chosen.

Since Shellman—who holds a master's degree in divinity—changed his career path, he has gone through pilot school and undergone a rigorous three-week Ranger Regiment training program, during which he lost close to 30 pounds.

"For me, that personal initiative to go through all the training the soldiers did has earned me credibility," said Shellman, who noted he and his troops went for 30 days without a shower during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. On the flip side, he said the rewards have been enumerable [*sic*].

"Just knowing I've saved that one individual soldier through marriage counseling or whatever the issue is, is satisfaction enough for me," Shellman said. "A lot of soldiers have that spiritual side but don't often display it, but this past deployment I led 10 soldiers to the Lord."

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The Trip of a Lifetime

Continued from page 21

For those who are not pastors, you too would benefit greatly from a trip to Israel, but may I say frankly, "Please, send your pastor to Israel." The cost and time involved may be keeping your pastor from going—and they make it impossible for many pastors to make this trip. But if you as a congregation will send him, every one of you will benefit. A study trip to Israel for your pastor and his wife is an investment in the lives of everyone they teach. He will come back with a renewed vision for preaching, especially the narratives of the Bible. He will illustrate the Bible with personal experiences and his own memories of what he has seen. His education will be your edification.

Pastors, you should consider organizing a tour for your people. If you have a smaller congregation, you should consider teaming up with other pastors with a few members who want to go. A trip to Israel is not put together without work, and it doesn't happen quickly. It requires advanced planning somewhere in the range of a year to a year and a half. Several tour guides told me that the ideal times to go to Israel would be February, March, and November. Even though May, June, and July are popular times for family trips, those months are harder on people because the temperature ranges into the 90s with temperatures by the Dead Sea climbing into the 100s. Israel is green and the wildflowers are in bloom in February and March. November is off-season and misses all the Jewish and Christian holidays, but it is a good time to go to avoid major crowds.

A good tour planner who is familiar with flights and hotels in Israel is a must. Consider in your planning to stay in as few hotels as possible—less packing up and handling luggage. Most

destinations in Israel are easily reached from central locations such as Galilee in the north and Jerusalem in the south. Remember that Israel is not a large nation; it has about the same land mass as New Jersey. A reputable tour company will arrange for a knowledgeable guide from Israel who is thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the country, its history, and the significance of the sites you will visit. Your guide will be well prepared to resolve any problem that arises and can adapt the tour to traffic, weather, politics, or the personal concerns of the group.

I benefited from *The New Christian Traveler's Guide to the Holy Land* by Charles Dyer and Gregory Hatteberg, and there are many other such guides to use when preparing for or during the trip. Some pastors even prepare their own tour guides with Bible references, familiar hymns to sing along the way, and, most importantly, an alphabetical list of all of the Biblical locations on standard tours. Dyer and Hatteberg's book has a wealth of information to peruse as you travel each day.

Our trip was indeed "The Trip of a Lifetime." But, like many others who have made the trip, we hope that the Lord will allow us, in this lifetime, to make the journey again. We have heard from those who have been many times that every visit is like going home but is at the same time fresh and new. May the Lord give us all the desire of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:1, 2).

Keith Morris Betry is the assistant pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Frankfort, Illinois. He can be reached at 16002 Kathryn Drive, Manhattan, IL 60442, 815-478-4763, or at betryk@juno.com.



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