

WHEN DOES OLD AGE ARRIVE? • LEARNING FROM ALZHEIMER'S • DEATH, GRIEF, AND HOPE

FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

September/October 2008 • \$3.95

Preparing for Winter

Looking for Flexibility

in your Adult Bible Studies
and Small Groups?



Life Design adult Bible studies from RBP are
intensely Biblical, intentionally practical, and incredibly flexible
for use in small groups or the classroom.

With more than 15 titles to choose from, you'll be sure
to find something that meets your needs.



To learn more, visit www.rbpAdultMinistries.org
800-727-4440 • Canada 800-366-8004

Regular Baptist Press
Building Lives by the Book



Contents

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

FRONTLINE MAGAZINE

VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 5

6 When Does Old Age Arrive?

Dr. Bob Jones III

Whenever old age arrives, it can be accompanied with grace, cheerfulness, sweetness, and helpfulness.

8 Learning from Alzheimer's

Debbie Craven

We are as spiritually frail and needy as the person with Alzheimer's is mentally frail and physically needy. Our human nature wants to believe that we can do everything on our own, but Alzheimer's helps us to see the futility in that.

12 The Autumn of Life

Linda D. Wright

The fall of life is a time of change.

16 Death, Grief, and Hope

Ron Reese

Lessons about death I have learned.

19 Don't Stop Coming

Anonymous

It is important to be a friend through all the stages of life.

21 God's Waiting Room

Debbie Craven

Being in God's waiting room is a place of purposeful work while we wait for God's results in God's timing.

10 Our Journey

Beth Wraight

Our story unfolded like pages in a book as the Lord our Shepherd led us to amazing answers that met our needs.



15 Warning: Traps Ahead

Betty Mitchell

Falling into the traps of regret or fear can ruin the enjoyment of this very important time in our lives.



Departments

4 Mail Bag

5 On the Front Line

A Winter Song

John C. Vaughn

20 On the Home Front

24 Cogitations

On Making Decisions

Warren Vanhetloo

26 Ladies' Circle

Push the Button

Doris Fisher Harris

27 Wit & Wisdom

David Atkinson

28 National Report

29 The Evangelist's Corner

The Lord's Pleasures for His People

Jerry Sivnksty

30 At a Glance

Living Life in the Shadow of Death

Layton Talbert

33 Newsworthy

Robert Conduct

35 Global Focus

Expanding in Ethnic Evangelism

Pearson Johnson

37 Chaplain News

Soldiering On through Setbacks

Marshall Fant

39 Behind the Lines

Articles from War

Rob Johnson

We are grateful to the many ladies who have waited patiently for their articles to be published in *FrontLine*. We have selected several of these articles for this special edition.

We want to hear from you!



Let us know what you like or don't like about *FrontLine*. Address your comments to **Managing Editor, FrontLine**

500 West Lee Road, Taylors, SC 29687.

You may also fax your comments to (864) 322-0838 or send them by e-mail to info@fbfi.org.

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

Thanks for the excellent article entitled "The Fellowship Principle" in the May/June 2008 issue of *FrontLine*. One of the common charges against us Fundamentalists, sometimes even by those within our movement, is that we are too militant and have allowed our movement to be splintered time and time again. This article provides an important balanced statement of our need to take a militant stand and at the same time learn to work together, even with those who might have some areas of difference, without compromising our position as Fundamental Baptists.

The Mincys have done a great job of identifying the true Biblical position for us as Fundamental believers. Our goal is to keep that same balance here in our fellowship in the state of Wisconsin.

Wayne Vawter
Wisconsin

I do pray for the ministry of *FrontLine*, which has been spread all over the world. I do have encouragement in it. It blesses me

when I read it. . . . I ask you to pray for my sons who are in the ministry. My son Kedesh graduated from Bluewater Bible College and is a pastor in Guadeloupe. My son Wefley graduated from Bible College in Puerto Rico and is a pastor here in Haiti. My son Kedner graduated from Bluewater and will be ordained in December and will become a pastor in St. Thomas. Kelando is in Bible College in St. Vincent.

Can you send me some good cassette tapes of sacred music? May God keep you and bless you, in Christ Jesus.

Rev. Octave Jerome
Emmanuel Bapt. Church
Port de Paix, Haiti

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We have collected and sent a box of recordings from the Home Office of FBFI. If any of our readers have cassette tapes to share with Rev. Octave Jerome, who has served as the FBFI representative in Haiti since the mid-'90s, they can be mailed to him at P.O. Box 44, Port de Paix, Haiti HT 31-10.)

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscription prices for *FrontLine Magazine* are \$19.95 for one year, \$34.95 for two years, and \$54.95 for three years. Call us toll-free at 800-376-6856 or write to *FrontLine Magazine*, 500 West Lee Road, Taylors, SC 29687. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.



FrontLine

Editor

Dr. John C. Vaughn
President

Office Manager

Mrs. Malinda Duvall

Publication Editor

Mr. Steve Skaggs

Contributing Editors

Dr. Mark Minnick
Dr. Layton Talbert

Design

Mr. Mike Moreau
Harvest Media

Executive Officers

Dr. Bradley Smith
Chairman

Dr. Chuck Phelps
Vice Chairman

Dr. Kevin Schaal
Secretary

Dr. Gordon Dickson
Treasurer

Executive Board

Dr Rick W Arrowood

Rev James W Baker

Rev Earl Barnett

Chaplain Wayne A Bley

Dr David L Burggraff

Rev Richard J Cross

Dr Johnny Daniels

Dr Michael W Harding

Dr Gary O Hirth

Dr Sam E Horn

Dr David C Innes

Dr Stephen B Jones

Dr John C Mincy

Dr Mark A Minnick

Dr Fred J Moritz

Rev Jeffery D Musgrave

Dr Thomas Nieman

Dr Matthew R Olson

Dr David Pennington

Dr C Matthew Recker

Rev Wilbur W Schoneweis

Rev Ronald V Smith Jr

Dr Michael Sproul

Rev Jeremy Sweatt

Dr Wayne VanGelderren Jr

Dr Mike Yarroworth

Advisory Board

Rev Mark A Bouslog

Dr David D Byford

Rev Robert Campbell

Dr Robert A Condict

Rev Kenneth M Deande

Dr Johnny J Franco

Rev Michael Gray

Dr David R Shumate

Rev Douglas B Wright

Rev Aaron Young

Board Emeritus

Dr Charles Britt Sr

Dr Gerald B Carlson

Dr Edward G Caughill

Dr Walter L Coles

Dr Marion Fast

Dr Collins Glenn

Dr Brian Green

Dr Bill Hall

Dr Bruce Hamilton

Dr Bob R Jones III

Dr Gary Jones

Dr Walter Kirk

Dr Tom C Knauf

Dr Peter I Maruyama

Dr Bennie L Moran

Mr Mike Moreau

Dr Ed Nelson

Dr Les Olila

Dr Randolph Shaylor

Dr John E Stevens

Dr Robert Taylor

Dr George D Youstra

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.

Advertising: For information contact Harvest Media at (847) 352-4345 or FAX (847) 352-0317. All advertising in *FrontLine* is for the sole purpose of sharing valuable resource materials with our readers. Although we carefully screen the materials, we are not giving a blanket endorsement of any products or advertisers.

FrontLine Magazine

500 West Lee Road • Taylors, SC 29687

(800) 376-6856 • (864) 322-0700 • FAX (864) 322-0838

E-Mail: info@fbfi.org • www.fbfi.org

A Winter Song

John C. Vaughn

Sometimes the humor about failing memory is not as funny as it used to be. When the humor hits close to home, it can be painful. I once heard a lady say, “I don’t have a very good memory any more, but I still have some very good memories.” Good memories are some of the greatest blessings we carry with us into the winter of our lives.

Psalm 71 may be a glimpse into the psalmist’s memories. While those around him were shivering in the chill of old age, this man lifted his voice in a winter song.

We know that he had good memories and also either a good memory or a well-worn Bible, because every verse in this psalm appears somewhere else in the Psalms! He collected twenty-four verses and assembled them in a new way. In the first thirteen verses he expresses his thoughts about his trials and troubles. Then in the rest of the psalm he declares his trust and testimony.

Commentator John Phillips calls Psalm 71 “The Song of a Godly Old Man.” Here are the prayers and praises of a man who could tell us about God’s faithfulness because he had proved God faithful.

It is one thing to sing “Rock of Ages” or “A Mighty Fortress.” It is another to author the words, “Thou art my rock and my fortress” (v. 3). As human frailty encroaches, it is comforting to know from experience that divine faithfulness embraces. This old man was firm in his faith because he was on familiar territory. He could say, “Thou art my trust from my youth” (v. 5) and even, “By thee have I been holden up from the womb” (v. 6). He knew that God had been there from the first moment of his life. He would have no trouble trusting God in the winter of his life.

What a wonderful goal it would be for us to frame our own testimonies in the words of this song. “In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion” (v. 1). Most of the things we forget are temporal anyway, but when we trust the Lord, He puts things into perspective—the perspective of eternity. Retirement can be a wonderful time to reflect on the Word and spend time with the Lord, as we dreamed of doing during the earlier seasons of life. When loneliness creeps in and we are tempted to wallow in self-pity, we can remember “Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth” (v. 5).

How young we must seem to the Ancient of Days! Our children and grandchildren don’t understand—can’t understand—and we think, “I am as a wonder unto many” (v. 7). Yet there is One who does understand, who will hear our prayer. “Thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth” (vv. 7–9). The winter of life takes us away from the springtime of our dreams, the summer days of labor, and even the autumn of reaping; but if we know the Lord, we still have a ministry. In fact, it may be the time of our greatest ministry. Who among us did not depend on the prayers of our godly elders during the turmoil of our youth?

When we outgrow the need to be up-to-date on every passing fad, we can hold firmly to the truths that have sustained us and encourage those who follow after us. With what is likely to be the greatest credibility we will have in this life, we can speak for the Lord. Yet our testimony need not be some tired reminiscence. It can be a dynamic influence for a new day, and our faith can still grow. “I will hope continu-

On September 15, 2008, Daniel Wayne Vaughn, the twenty-eight-year-old son of Dr. and Mrs. John Vaughn, was taken home to be with the Lord in a tragic accident—giving new and precious hope in the resurrection. Memorials sent to FrontLine will be invested in the Silas E. Vaughn Education Fund.

ally, and will yet praise thee more and more” (v. 14). When our strength fails we can say, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God” (v. 16). We can claim the psalmist’s words as our own for the noble task of passing the baton of belief to a new generation. “When I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come” (v. 18).

Yes, our winter song is sung in a voice that lacks the vigor that it once knew. These hands that hold the smooth hands of our grandchildren are wrinkled and drawn. We hold the Word of God in fingers no longer nimble and claim this trust as our own: “Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth” (v. 20).

What is it that brings the smile of peace across a wrinkled brow? Good memories, yes—but more than that. It is the seasoned sweetness of a life lived in fellowship with the Savior and the assurance that after the winter song is sung, there is the resurrection in the spring.

Dr. John Vaughn is pastor emeritus of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina.

This article was originally published in the 2005 issue of *Today’s Christian Senior* magazine and is reprinted with permission of Right Ideas, Inc.

When Does Old Age Arrive?

When my grandfather was the age I am now and I was a teenager, I heard him speak often about how much older people had to offer the next generation—wisdom, prudence, experience, the benefit of learning from their mistakes. I did not receive his comments with understanding or appreciation. There is no reason to expect that my grandchildren will think that I know what I'm talking about either, but my generation will, and it is to them these thoughts are addressed. They know how it feels when someone younger says to them, as was recently said to me, "Do you *still* ski?" Or, when while hunting for bear in Alaska recently, one of my younger and esteemed hunting partners said, "I can't believe the stamina and energy you have at your age."

I'd like to make a case for old age being more a state of mind than a chronological occurrence. We all know people who seem old at forty and others who seem delightfully young at eighty. The point is, whenever old age arrives, it can be accompanied with grace, cheerfulness, sweetness, and helpfulness in such great measure that although a look in the mirror says "old," the spirit says "young." James Garfield, twentieth president of the United States, said, "If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be upon the heart. The spirit should not grow old."

Someone said, "Few people know how to be old." There is no excuse for despondency about age; there should rather be a vigorous embrace of the advantages it brings. The latter years can be the most profitable and productive years of life. Our work and service are never ended so long as we have breath. The latter years of life bring with them opportunities for increased usefulness in eternal causes. Stagnation and self-pity rob the aged of the vision and purpose of this new stage of life. When the mind and spirit become jaded and the heart bitter, despair becomes a robber of the contribution and blessedness that can make the latter years the best years.

The blessing of old age is not merely a pleasant thought, a euphemism—it is a reality. Albert Edward Wiggam said, "Nearly two-thirds of all the greatest deeds ever performed by human beings—the victories in battle, the greatest books, the greatest pictures and statues—have been accomplished after the age of sixty." That isn't surprising, considering that the psalmist said, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To shew that the LORD is upright" (Ps. 92:14, 15). In the pamphlet "Letters to the Aged" by Archibald Alexander (founder of Princeton), the writer of the preface said, "Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was 80 when he finished his *Faust*; Alfred Tennyson was 81 when he wrote *Crossing the Bar*; Tintoretto, the great European master of painting, produced his greatest painting at 74; Pablo Casals played the cello, conducted orchestras, and taught music till his death at 96; Will Durant, in collaboration with his wife, Ariel, wrote five volumes of his ten-volume 'History of Civilization' between 69 and 89; Grandma Moses did not become a painter until she was 70, yet she produced more than 1,000 primitive paintings and made herself famous before she celebrated her one-hundredth birthday."

It is said that between the ages of sixty and seventy, 35 percent of the world's greatest achievements are accomplished, and between the ages of seventy and eighty, 23

percent. The years after eighty account for 6 percent.

God never brings some men to full bloom until that time in their lives that their contemporaries are retiring. Others, whose lives were fragrant blooms for God in the early days of life, are transplanted by Him, or "repotted," to blossom again while the bloom of their contemporaries—through neglect or indifference—wither and dies.

Have you ever pondered what exploits God asked aged men in the Bible to do for Him? When Noah completed the ark, he was approximately six hundred years old. Two-thirds of his life was over. When Abraham was told by God to leave his homeland, he departed Haran at the age of 75 and undertook a hike based on God's promises (Gen. 12:1, 2)—hundreds of miles with a household of possibly a thousand people—to a land called Canaan, because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8–10). The key to Abraham's success in old age was that he believed God. His faith began with saving faith that granted him the imputed righteousness of Christ (Gen. 15:6; James 2:23), the same way we enter into righteousness through faith in Christ. We really don't know what Abraham did during his working years of life in his hometown, Ur, but the significance of his life began when he became a man who put faith into the action of obedience.

Between the ages of forty and eighty, Moses was a fugitive from justice, a man living in isolation, caring for his father-in-law's sheep on the backside of the desert. For the next forty years of his life—with all of his warts, complaints, anger, and reluctance—he was the emancipator-leader chosen by God to take His people from Egypt's curse to Canaan's comforts.

Perhaps no Biblical character inspires awe or ignites the imagination more than Daniel—the captive prophet, the courageous petitioner, the chief of Babylon's princes, the conscientious man of prayer. The conundrum of Persia was in his mid-eighties when cast into the lion's den because he refused to worship Darius, the ruler, as a god. He was probably about forty years of age when deported from Jerusalem to Babylon, and the latter half of his life was spent in distinguished and persecuted service for God.

The advanced years of life are not without their faults. Older people can be cranky, obnoxiously opinionated, derisive of the young, prideful and egotistical, poor listeners, complainers, and colossal bores who speak little else but of the past or of their physical maladies. Goethe admonished, "We must not take the faults of our youth into our old age; for old age brings with it its own defects."

Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit who resides within must remain in sweet control of the believer. The Christian elderly should look not to the past years of life as though the best is over but to the remaining years on earth as holding possibilities for greater enjoyment of God and active employment in service to Him. The greatest benefit of age was best described by Richter: "As winter strips the leaves from around us, so that we may see the distant regions they formerly concealed; so old age takes away our enjoyments, only to enlarge the prospect of the coming eternity."

Dr. Bob Jones III serves as Chancellor of Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina.

Learning from Alzheimer's

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary . . .
1 Corinthians 12:22

Having a loved one diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease is a heartache. We fear the diagnosis itself and also the knowledge of how it will change our lives and our relationships. This malady is as dreaded now as polio was in the early twentieth century and as the plague was decades before that. When the diagnosis came crashing into the lives of our family, leaving disruption and discouragement in its wake, we started researching the sources available to us to help prepare for the road ahead.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, this disease is the most common form of dementing illness and is the fourth leading cause of death in adults after heart disease, cancer, and strokes. Alzheimer's has been called "the disease of the century" and is devastating for both victims and their families. It strikes fear in us because it does not just attack the body but also the mind and the memory, erasing the person who was.

In my work as a physical therapist I have had opportunities to work with people in various stages of Alzheimer's. With them and now with our own loved one, God has impressed upon me that there are some important lessons we can learn from those suffering from Alzheimer's disease. My intent here is not to gloss over, minimize, or simplify the symptoms that accompany Alzheimer's but to research God's Word, my most valuable resource, focus on a few of the spiritual lessons that the Alzheimer's patient portrays, and compare those to my relationship with my Heavenly Father.

The Early Stages

In the early stages of the disease, the short-term memory is greatly affected and the person will often repeat the same question every few minutes, forgetting that it has already been answered. It is easy for family and friends to become exasperated or frustrated by this. But God sets the example for us in His Word: He never tires of repeating His truths, principles, and commands to us. He knows our frailties and is prepared for them.

For example, there are over sixty references in the Bible

about reading or studying God's Word. The Lord could have said it just once, but instead He repeated it over and over and over again. There are well over three hundred verses speaking of sin. That concept is repeated so that we will be knowledgeable of our sinful state and our need for a Savior. Twenty-six times the cross is mentioned—that we might grasp the significance of Christ's loving sacrifice for us. More than one hundred verses emphasize the word "believe," challenging us to respond to God's Word. Almost two hundred times God uses the word "faith" so that we might understand that our salvation is a free gift, received not because of works.

The Second Phase

In the second phase of Alzheimer's one has trouble comprehending the written word. How difficult and frustrating it must be to stare at a page of words and not have any idea as to their significance! It would be like trying to read a foreign language or a page from a complex technical manual. The Alzheimer's patient no longer has the appropriate mental faculties to understand the meaning of what has been written.

This reminds me of an unsaved person trying to read God's Word. He doesn't have the appropriate spiritual faculties to discern the truth of the Word. After salvation the Holy Spirit aids our minds to comprehend His Word and helps us to apply it to our everyday life. We are as spiritually frail and needy as the person with Alzheimer's is mentally frail and physically needy. Our human nature wants to believe that we can do everything on our own, but Alzheimer's helps us to see the futility in that.

The Later Phases

In the later stages of Alzheimer's communication becomes even more difficult. I once worked in a nursing home with a woman I will call Bessie. She had fallen and broken her hip. Because of her Alzheimer's, following directions was very difficult for her. She was only able to process one-word commands. Our therapy time consisted of: "Stand. Careful. Step. Wait. Again. Stop. Sit. Good." After each command, Bessie would look at me and say, "What do I do now?" When we were finished with the therapy, I would answer her question with the word "hug," and we would then embrace to complete our time.

Bessie's therapy reminded me that God has also filled His Word with many one-word directives to help those of us who have difficulty processing information:

- Love (1 John 4:7).
- Study (2 Tim. 2:15).
- Obey (Deut. 13:4).
- Pray (1 Thess. 5:17).
- Believe (Acts 16:31).

Each word is full of meaning and requires an action on our part. I wonder how often we, like Bessie, are responding each time with, "Lord, what do I do now?"

With Alzheimer's it is easy to focus on the negatives and on the loss, but God has reminded me that even in this I am to follow the words of Philippians 4:8.

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

And so I must choose to concentrate on the truth of God's Word and on His just and honest character. He is the true Teacher and makes each obstacle in my life a lesson if I am open to being His student. I need to make a conscious effort to center my thoughts on the loveliness around me when I am feeling overwhelmed by the unlovely. Sickness

I NEED TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO CENTER MY THOUGHTS ON THE LOVELINESS AROUND ME WHEN I AM FEELING OVERWHELMED . . .

of any kind is not beautiful, but there can be beauty in seeing a smile, hearing a laugh, or sharing a memory. I strive to give my attention to what is of good report and not of bad. I ask God's help that I might make a decision to praise, when in my weakness I would prefer to complain. Praising, I find, is a habit that must be cultivated and especially so during the difficult times. But once the habit is learned, then the focus can shift from self to Savior.

So let me now praise our loving Lord, who sees through disabilities and diseases to the real person. He knows and loves us regardless of our frailties and carries us through the difficult times when we follow His special lesson plan.

Debbie Craven, a former missionary, now works as a physical therapist in Michigan.



Our Journey

Life is what you make it. When disaster hits how do you react? You can choose to sit down and suck your thumb or pick up the pieces and go on. I chose the latter.

After my husband had served for seventeen years as a pastor, his body refused to function correctly. We first noticed it when we took our three small girls up into the North Carolina mountains and stopped our car to take a ten-minute walk back to view a beautiful waterfall. When it was time to return, he couldn't walk. We rested a while, after which he made it back to the car.

"We'll see what can be done about this," I said.

Some time later we had him checked into the hospital. When he returned from the examination, my husband's face looked sad as he limped along the hospital sidewalk and climbed carefully into our car.

"Well, what did the doctor say about your leg?" I wanted to know.

"It's not good news, Beth. It's Lou Gehrig's disease."

"What does that mean?"

"The doctor says this is a crippling disease. The nerves and muscles slowly die. It's progressive, and it's fatal."

"There's nothing they can do?"

"Nothing." The word hung in the air.

I drove home in stunned silence. How could this happen to my tall, handsome husband who used to walk across a classroom in two steps? Besides, he was only forty-two!

"Beth," his words interrupted my thoughts, "when I got the news I was so troubled. I walked to a porch behind the hospital where I could be alone." His voice sounded strangely peaceful. "I started reciting the Twenty-Third Psalm. I only got as far as the first phrase, 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' My first thought was, 'That's all I need.'"

Somehow his peace from God helped me know we'd make it. But the shock sure made me breathe deeply. Faith, our eldest daughter, was almost ready for high school. Hope and Grace were in junior high. How could I become the breadwinner? How could I nurture three young girls, work full time, and take care of my husband?

Our story unfolded like pages in a book as the Lord our Shepherd led us to amazing answers that met our needs. Mercifully, we had a year to prepare. I earned a beautician's license as my husband finished his last year of pastoring a small church. With our savings we were able to purchase a house. Faith and I remodeled the front room into a beauty shop. Meanwhile, President Eisenhower signed a bill that any disabled person could receive disability checks. So, between Clarence's checks and my income, along with a summer of assistance from many churches, our financial needs were met.

It wasn't easy watching my husband limp, then walk with crutches, then sit in a wheelchair, and eventually lie on his back. And it wasn't easy fixing hair all day, running the household, and taking care of Clarence. But, oh, the blessings along the way!

We all worked together. Our brown-eyed girls and I wheeled him everywhere: ball games, church, the grocery store. "Let's go, Dad!" and off we'd go like a little parade with a smiling father, three beaming daughters, and a busy mom bringing up the rear. All those smiles could

light up a room in two seconds.

Saturday mornings were more serious. Clarence took charge of the backyard chores while I curled hair in the beauty shop. Peeking out the window, I'd see three busy girls pulling weeds from flowerbeds or mowing grass with a serious-faced dad overseeing the project from his wheelchair. Afterwards I'd see one of the girls standing beside her dad under the shade tree talking out life's problems. He always listened.

"Let's look at this from all different directions," he'd say. Then he'd share some wisdom and encouragement. He was still their dad, and he was still in charge. He never left his position in our family to hide in a dismal corner of self-pity.

Miraculously, the Good Lord protected his brain (the part of his body he needed the most) from ever being affected by the disease. I was so glad he was there for me—especially through the hard times.

"Oh, Clarence, I just don't know what to do, and I've got no time to figure it out." We'd hash it all out the best we could. Life's complexities along with tears and laughter were still ours. We weren't alone. We had God, we had Clarence, and we had our three girls.

For thirty years we fought this battle together—him on his back and me running around doing everything. At bedtime it seemed I always had one last thing to do

for Clarence. He'd always say, "Thank you, Beth. I love you so much." As the stillness of the night wrapped around us, together we entered the throne room of God in prayer.

When Clarence went to be with his Good Shepherd, I was glad for him. After all, he had finally asked us to let him go. His journey had been long and hard. I knew that he was walking again and singing joyful praises with his loved ones in Heaven. I could almost see him talking with his loving Shepherd, who understood the whole plan and could show him how his many prayers and tears for his family and people all over the world were going to be answered. I thought I was fine.

But Saturday night, when I sat down to watch the *Lawrence Welk Show* (which we had always watched together) I realized I was alone, and I grieved. I miss him. Someday, I know, we'll be together again in the throne room of God. And between now and then, I'll remember my husband's words from long ago when he first heard of the journey he was to take: "'The Lord is my Shepherd.' That's all I need."

Beth Wraith's husband pastored for seventeen years until attacked by Lou Gehrig's disease. She cared for him for twenty-eight years in their home and for years in the nursing home.



Adaptation
Evangelism
Nurturing
Church Development
Formal Training of Nationals

FORMAL TRAINING OF NATIONALS



GFA MISSIONS PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

for more information visit www.gfamissions.org

Successful missions means that the responsibility for propagating the Gospel message simply changes hands.



Gospel Fellowship Association | Phone: (864) 609-5500 | gfa@gfamissions.org

The Autumn of Life

Linda D. Wright

Autumn . . . As the emerald of their chlorophyll deteriorates, the leaves unfurl their warm, brilliant colors. The sky is an incomparable deep blue. As we ramble through the woods there's a crispy, crunchy sound and the smell of damp earth. The air takes on a tangy coolness that reminds us of change. . . .

The fall of life is also a time of change: it's the colorful in-between stage of middle age when you sometimes look back with sadness at what is gone and look ahead with uncertainty at the snows and cold to come. Fall is the time when the lovely birds, which bring such joy in spring and summer, fly away—just as our children fly from the nest to pursue their own ways and dreams. Fall is a time of change—change that's not always welcome, so we need to remember Hebrews 1:10–12: “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Fall can bring a time of midlife crisis, when people do stupid things because they are restless, discontented, and bored, or because they are trying to recapture lost youth, or because they are afraid of the looming winter of old age. Fall is a time of temptation to weaken and relax our standards and let down our guard. Fall can be a time of fatigue: we are weary after the battles of spring and summer and can begin to feel a temptation to self-indulgence. “I can begin to take it easier now,” we might think. After all, retirement with its imagined pleasures is in closer view.

Fall can be a time of emotional struggles: we dwell on lost dreams and experience a sense of hopelessness, wondering what else there might be to life. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God” (Ps. 42:11).

Fall is a time of preparing diligently to meet the onslaught

of winter: we “winterize” our cars and homes, do the fall cleaning, survey the winter clothing needs, and examine the winter sporting equipment. The autumn of our lives should also be a time of preparation . . . a time to make ready for the rough spots or dangers ahead, as well as the surprises and new opportunities. We can “winterize” our souls by spending more time with the Lord who knows what snowstorms lie ahead in our lives. “Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore” (Ps. 105:4).

Fall is also a time of harvest: we harvest what we sowed in younger years, and perhaps we do not like the crops that we see. “For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Sometimes the yield is not what we expected; that reality sobers us and makes us wonder how we could have planted more effectively. So fall is a time of reflection and evaluation—and sometimes, distress. It is a time for rejoicing when we look back and see the victories won by faith. It can also be a time for confessing failure, receiving forgiveness, and correcting our lives so that we will not be ashamed of the produce of our remaining seasons. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee” (Ps. 51:10, 12, 13).

And—dare I say it?—fall is a time of physical changes that impact our whole being as ladies. How many of us are experiencing hot flashes, aches and pains, and mood swings? As the trees undergo physical changes in the autumn, so do our bodies. (But think about it, ladies: without those changes within the tree, there would be no dramatic, gorgeous leaf colors!) “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1). Instead of focusing downheartedly on the fact that our bodies are on the way to dissolving, we should ask the Lord to help us just face it, brace up, and accept it. We can meet our responsibility with good nutrition and physical exercise, but

we cannot deny it, for, as the song says, "The old grey mare, she ain't what she used to be"!

Autumn has long been my favorite season of the year, but I'm still not sure that it's the favorite season of my life. The fall of life is in some ways the most demanding and challenging season, I think. Fall represents the peak of ripening maturity—the full ripening of the gifts God has given to us. Fall should represent for us a time of richer, more mature understanding, experience, and knowledge, a time when we have more to share spiritually and emotionally than ever before. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).

Fall is a time of renewing our commitment to Christ as we prepare for the final push to the finish line, a time to rouse ourselves afresh to service and sacrifice. Autumn is a time to exercise faith and courage to face what lies ahead; it is a

time to let go of what belongs to former seasons. Fall is a time for perseverance as we prepare to run the final laps faithfully according to God's rules: the marathon runner must put one foot doggedly in front of another with steady purpose and endurance. We, like the runner, must set our faces toward the goal and not look back. So fall is a time for fixing our hearts firmly, not for letting go or letting down. "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise" (Ps. 57:7). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).



In the autumn winds of our lives, we must not let our love for Christ grow cold! A fervent love for the Lord Jesus must carry us through all the seasons of life—especially through fall. “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30). Love for Christ will enable us to be steadfast, faithful, obedient. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Autumn is the season for change, but—at all costs—our love for God must not change. Autumn is a season of lessening energy, but we should ask God to revive our zeal—not let it cool. Autumn is a season of alteration, but we must not be among those whose love of the Truth alters, those who let doctrine slip away as youth and strength slip away. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).

In fall we need to rouse ourselves to be overcomers and not allow ourselves to slowly and lazily go to sleep as nature around us prepares for winter’s hibernation. Proverbs 10:5 reminds us that “he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.” We can gird up our loins and say with Paul, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). With the Lord’s help, we need to “rev up” our engines and “crank up” our spirits at this critical juncture when our bodies might start saying, “Slow down! Slow down!” “Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us” (Ps. 68:28).

In the fall we celebrate Thanksgiving, and so it must be in our lives. “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:18). Give thanks when you’re missing the children who have grown and gone. Give thanks when the hormonal surges wreak havoc on your day. Give thanks when you go downstairs for something and then can’t recall what you intended to do. Give thanks when you’re tempted to feel that your best years are behind you and it’s all sadly downhill from here. Give thanks when young people begin to think of you as “old.” Give thanks when you can’t remember what a good, solid night’s sleep is. In the autumn season we need more than ever to be thankful to our Savior, for the Christian can look back and see that the sins of past seasons are covered

by the blood, and she can look ahead to see that the hope of future days is eternal life. When we look back at summer and spring and wish that we had been better farmers, we can thank “the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” that He still answers prayer, and that He is still able to work, even though the season would seem to be over.

It is difficult to put numerical boundaries on “middle age,” but most say it runs from the ages of forty to sixty. According to an online *Psychology Today* article on “Mid-Life,” during these years many people experience “confusion about who [they] are or where [their] life is going.” Individuals also “feel a need to reassess where they are and make changes while they feel they still have time.” That brings up an important point: as we evaluate the earlier seasons of our lives, we should resolve by God’s grace that the harvest or produce of the remaining seasons will be “gold, silver, precious stones,” not “wood, hay, stubble” (1 Cor. 3:12). In the power of the Holy Spirit, we should use both our mature spiritual and natural gifts more than ever before. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13)—this applies through all the seasons of life, and as we enter the challenges of fall we need to remember that.

As autumn is a time of wonderful, rich hues that glorify our Creator, so our midlife time can be a season when we glorify God by adding and giving rich color to the lives of others; a time when others can look at our lives and see, in all of its beautiful variety, a love for God, a ripening and maturing of spiritual gifts and understanding, a determined endurance, a solid doctrinal position, and a steadfast faithfulness.

If we press on in autumn, we will know the blessedness of a daily walk with the King of Glory and know what it is to cry out in love to Christ, “O my God, I trust in thee” (Ps. 25:2). If we press ever onward as the seasons change, we will know the joy and assurance of Psalm 23:6: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Linda and her husband, Perry, were missionaries in Lebanon and Canada for twenty-four years. They have three children and now reside in Greenville, South Carolina.

BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES

Training Nationals

Church Planting

Bibles & Literature

Evangelism



Russia, Ukraine, Romania,
Moldova, Central & Western Asia



Helping churches fulfill the
Great Commission through
partnership with nationals.



121 Commerce Drive, Suite 50
Danville, IN 46122 • 317-718-1633

www.BaptistInternational.org
email: Missions@BaptistInternational.org

. . . *I will fear no evil: for thou art with me* (Psalm 23:4).

We are often told that the senior years of life are supposed to be the golden years—years of enjoying the fruits of our labor and handing the tools over to the next generation. Robert Browning describes these years as “the last of life for which the first was made” and comments that “the best is yet to be.” When we turn fifty or even sixty and are in good health, it is easy to romanticize these years and enjoy the privileges of being a “senior citizen,” but as the years go by—faster than we had anticipated—realism begins to set in and lead us into the path of two very common and disturbing traps: the trap of *regret* and the trap of *fear*. Falling into either of these traps can ruin the enjoyment of this very important time in our lives and destroy our peace and productiveness.

The Trap of Regret

The point of realization comes at different times to different people. It seems more traumatic, however, as we approach our seventieth year—God’s allotment of three-score and ten. Suddenly we are forced to confront our position: Even if by God’s grace we should live ten more years, seven-eighths of our journey is already over. We begin to look back on the road behind and to evaluate our progress. We remember words of encouragement or praise that came to mind but were never spoken, and we remember words spoken in anger that were never retracted. We mourn the unwise decisions, the selfish choices, and the missed opportunities. We wish we could redeem the unproductive hours, days, or years and the wasted resources. We fear that God will never be able to say to us, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

Paul tells us to forget those things which are behind and to press on. The past is past. Deeds cannot be undone nor time retrieved. Time is in God’s hands, and a life that has been committed to Him is never wasted. God knows our hearts and our intentions as well as our deeds and our failures. He promised the Israelites to restore the years the locusts had eaten. He can do the same for us.

The Trap of Fear

When we come to terms with our past mistakes, we begin to look at the road ahead. It is not death that we fear if we love the Lord and yearn to be with Him. It is what comes before that gives us concern. What is ahead for us? Will the Lord give us one more year, or five, or ten or more? Will we retain our health, our strength, and our mental capacities until the end? Will we become dependent on our children for our physical or our financial well-being? Will

Warning: Traps Ahead!

Betty Mitchell

we lose our mate and have to live alone, or will we go before him and leave him to the same fate? The resolution of all these questions is not in the distant future; it is fearfully imminent and cannot be easily dismissed.

Spiritually, where do we stand? Have we been put “on the shelf” so that our usefulness

is over, or can the Lord still use our diminished strength and productivity for His purposes? Can we continue to grow in spiritual maturity? Can we still have an influence on the lives of our children and grandchildren? The temptation often is to give up because the journey is almost over and we haven’t much time left to go forward. Satan would love to see us turn off our motor and just coast the rest of the way.

Our predicament is really no different from that of anyone else. None of us knows what tomorrow holds. So what is the answer? In the words of Oswald Chambers, “God never gives strength for tomorrow, or for the next hour, but only for the strain of the minute” (*My Utmost for His Highest*, Aug. 2). We cannot predict today how we will respond tomorrow when that inevitable strain comes upon us. But we can give our fears over to the Lord with the confidence that when strength is required He will be there to supply all that we need.

Avoiding the Traps

God has given us a road map for our journey—His Word. Over and over in Isaiah, God pleads with Israel to “fear not.” In Isaiah 30:15 he tells them, “In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.” And in Isaiah 43:1–3 He says, “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.” He further promises, “And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Isa. 46:4).

We, too, have been redeemed by the Lord, the Holy one of Israel, our Savior. If we belong to Him, we can claim these promises as ours. We can avoid the traps by pressing onward, secure in the knowledge that our past, our present, and our future are all in His wonderful and loving hands.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever (Psalm 23:6).

Betty Mitchell is a retired English teacher. She is the editor for “Monday Morning Manna,” an e-mail devotional for the ladies of her church.

Death, Grief, and Hope



This past year we Christians have once again been reminded that the “wages of sin is death.” From celebrities to government officials, to people in our church and community, and even to loved ones in our immediate family, death has taken its toll. Many times this past year I have had to stop and think about death, grief, and hope.

I work in a nursing home, a place where dying and death are all too common. When I started working here, we had 119 residents. And now, four years later, only thirteen of those original residents remain. Granted, a few of our residents got better and went home or moved to a different facility, but some of those rooms have seen several deaths in that four-year span of time. Usually when I feel a person doesn’t have much time to live, I put a hand on his forehead and say a prayer for him that God will help him as he’s going through this present trial.

Because of my time spent working here at Pisgah Manor and because of my relationship with God, my view of death is different from that of many of the residents. However, it hasn’t always been this way. To most humans death is viewed as a very permanent end. I remember growing up in an ungodly home and having problems sleeping at night because of my fear of death and dying. Sometimes I would whisper to my pillow, “God, I hope You’re real; I don’t believe in You, but I sure wish You were real.” Then I’d drip tears on that pillow. Sometimes Mommy and Daddy would come in, and I would lie very still. I didn’t want them to think I was a sissy. I didn’t want them to be bothered by a kid blubbering about death and dying.

I can remember only one close relative dying between the time I was age four and age twenty. My Grandpa Reese died on a Friday night when I was in the fifth grade. I remember Mom telling me the next Saturday morning, when I got up to go the Scouts pool party. After Mom told me, she urged me to go ahead and have a good time swimming with my fellow scouts. I remember to this day how my heart just wasn’t in it. When they buried Grandpa the following Monday, I wasn’t allowed to attend. I was too little. I remember doing a lot of sobbing in school that day.

Because I’d experienced the death of only one family member growing up, I didn’t know a lot about the grieving process. And then after I became a Christian I learned how God’s beckoning voice can wake His sleeping saints from death’s slumber. Because I hadn’t been around death that much, and because I knew God would raise His saints from the grave, I really wasn’t very comforting to be around when someone was grieving. My rationale to everyone who had lost a loved one was, “No use crying about it. They’ll be in Heaven. You’ll see them someday!” When my wife, who had lost her dad at age eleven, lost her mother to cancer, we were both in our late twenties. My wife seemed to sob endlessly. I kept telling her things like, “Get over it;

you’ll see her again in Heaven. Toughen up!” I even threw Scripture at her—John 16:20–22 comes to mind. I was a heartless Christian. I thought I knew all there was to know about death and dying.

It wasn’t until several years later that I realized I did not have total knowledge on how people should be reacting when they’re going through the loss of a loved one. And then one summer a fellow teacher gave a talk to several of us on the grieving process from her own personal vantage point. (I have changed the name of her and her family members to protect their privacy.)

Connie told us of one sunny day in June in her home state of Ohio. Her son Daniel had recently gotten his pilot’s license, so he and their other son, Jacob, set out in a light twin-engine craft. Their daughter, Rachel, decided at the last minute not to go up with her brothers on the first flight. She watched them take off, but it wasn’t long after takeoff that something went wrong. Horrified, fourteen-year-old Rachel witnessed her brothers’ plane crash. She ran to the scene, certain they’d crawl out of the mess.

The mangled bodies amidst the wreckage were so shocking that Rachel had to be hospitalized. Connie and her husband, upon learning of the accident, became extremely

HOW LONG IS THIS GRIEVING PROCESS? IT MAY LAST A FEW WEEKS, OR IT MAY LAST FOR YEARS! DON’T RUSH THE GRIEVING PROCESS.

upset at the thought of almost losing all three of their children in one day. Daniel, engaged to be married in six months, died as a result of his injuries.

Rachel was in a psychiatric ward for a month, and Jacob underwent operations for a full year and a half afterwards. He will have both physical and mental scars the rest of his life. Rachel had to be hospitalized several more times because of recurring anxiety, nightmares, and spells of depression.

How long is this grieving process? It may last a few weeks, or it may last for years! Don’t rush the grieving process. If you know someone like Connie or one of her family members, be patient with him. The strain was crushing on both her and her husband. They had to take time out from consoling their daughter and visiting Jacob so they could bury their oldest son on Father’s Day.

People didn’t seem to understand why this family didn’t recover quickly and carry on like they had before. Friends and acquaintances quit associating with them, thinking them a bit odd because they hadn’t gotten over it. Nobody called or visited after the funeral. They’d ask others how the family was doing but seemed too scared or busy to approach Connie and her family themselves. It would be some time before Connie and her family would be able to cope with the grief in their lives.

Death takes a toll. Here are several statistics Connie shared with my colleagues and me:

- The divorce rate goes up fifteen percent among couples who've lost a child.
- The surviving siblings of such a family have a forty-three percent greater chance of divorce when they grow up.
- During the first six months after a sibling dies, teenage siblings stand a fifty percent greater chance of attempting suicide.

So where do Christians come in on all of this? We want to help, but we don't want to do the wrong thing. We don't want to hurt people any worse, but what are we to do?

Just be there! Be ready to listen, but don't expect the grieving person to talk. And don't sermonize. Preaching one's loved one into Glory doesn't really help. The grieving person needs to deal with the here and now. He's not necessarily ready to deal with the hereafter. Give him space and time.

Connie and her family continue to work through the

grieving process. Their hardest times are birthdays and holidays, particularly Father's Day. But they're now to the point where they can help others going through the grieving process.

Connie tells of one friend who was a special source of comfort. Janice had been a sixth-grade classmate of Daniel's. Connie had taught the both of them that year. What was it about Janice that helped Connie? What experience was it that helped Janice to get through to Connie?

SO WHERE DO CHRISTIANS COME IN ON ALL OF THIS? WE WANT TO HELP, BUT WE DON'T WANT TO DO THE WRONG THING. WE DON'T WANT TO HURT PEOPLE ANY WORSE, BUT WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

Did she have a degree in psychology or psychiatry? What could a former student teach her teacher?

The year Connie had taught Janice in sixth grade, Janice

had been walking to school with her little brother, and as they walked around a curve a drunk driver struck and killed her little brother. Janice shared with Connie that for years she had harbored guilt that it was her fault, that somehow she could have prevented her brother's death.

After Janice's call, Connie began to be her old self again. A compassionate friend with whom she could identify helped Connie overcome her own grief.

When we sometimes go through severe trials like little Janice did, it may be that down through the corridors of time we may be able to help someone else through a tight spot, where we've once been. It might be that someday we might teach our teacher about death, about grief, and about hope.

Ron Reese is a freelance writer. He now works as an emergency department technician at Haywood Regional Medical Center in Clayton, North Carolina.

Further your education. Further your career. Further your ministry.



For 50% less.

For a limited time, CCC is offering a 50% discount on your first semester when you enroll in the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership program of study.



CLEARWATER
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
GRADUATE
STUDIES

Contact us today for more information:
www.clearwater.edu/graduatestudies

graduatestudies@clearwater.edu or 727-726-1153 x. 232

Don't Stop Coming

She was a beloved relative. Her frequent visits brought laughter and magic into the house. What joy she brought! Then when age and weariness crept into the house, she stopped coming. She had only come when it was pleasant for her to come. The old folks looked longingly for her. They'd say, "Maybe today." But she never came again. As a young teen who adored her I couldn't understand it. How could one be a friend one day and no longer a part of a life the next?

Now, in maturity, I understand it. She was afraid. She didn't want to be reminded of her mortality. I can understand that, but I cannot condone it.

At the wedding altar we vow to be faithful "in sickness and in health." The vows of friendship are intangible but nevertheless real.

Are we friends only in health? What about your homebound or institutionalized friend? If you could observe the eagerness when a voice or a step is heard in the hall. The effort to look and see if someone is coming to the door. If you could observe the huge difference in the person when someone comes to visit and bring news of their daily life. The weary person sleeping on the bed comes alive, smiles, jokes, feels loved and cared for.

If we are honest with ourselves we must admit that we don't visit because it is not pleasant for us. But we should visit because it is pleasant for them.

We are uncomfortable if their speech shows that they are not the same people they once were. Who does that hurt? The elderly may ramble about the past. Listen and learn. They may ramble about dreams they've had but can't sort from reality. Agree with them. Tell them it sounds like an exciting adventure. It may make no sense at all. So what! If you are a friend, you remain a friend. A step in the hall and they look. Could it be a visitor to enliven the routine days? Could someone care enough to stop and talk and make them feel a part of the world they served and loved?

I know one senior citizen who worked for fifty years in a segment of a large organization. Now that the person is institutionalized, of all the scores of colleagues only three have come to visit—and they have stopped too. Fifty years of service and instantly forgotten. How sad. What a reproach to those friends.

Let's look at ourselves.

"I can't stand it to see old friends who have changed."

"I'm terrified. I know it can happen to me."

I admire your honesty. Just ponder the Golden Rule and perhaps you will change your mind. The Lord's admonition will place a new light on it.

"I'm busy. I mean to stop by. Has it been a year already?"

You schedule everything else. Schedule visits to friends who are ill. Make up your mind that "I will visit once a week or month" and put it in your date book. You don't have to have huge segments of time. A brief visit will be treasured. But he will want you to do more than stick your head in the door (though that is appreciated and better than nothing). He will want you to sit down and visit.

"I don't know what to say."

Talk about your everyday life. Tell what you did that day. Talk about your family and church. Tell what is going on in his former workplace. Read a chapter in the Bible to him. Pray with her. The time will fly by.

"I hate the smell. She has a spot of food on her dress. He wears a catheter. He's not the same."

This may be inelegant, but so what? Who or what is important, your sensibilities or your friend?

This could be your ministry. I promise you, without qualification, you will be blessed beyond your wildest imaginings. Put yourself in the other's shoes. What if you were bedridden? What if you got confused and you knew it? What if you were lonely to see beloved faces and hear familiar voices? What if you'd like to have someone talk to you about something other than medical problems? They want to hear about you and your family and children and what is going on at church.

The Lord tells us not to fear. Pray about it. He will take away the fear of seeing an old friend who is not well. In fact, when you leave I'll guarantee that you will have been blessed.

Maybe they will be confused, maybe they won't remember, maybe they'll get mixed up—but they will know you are there, they will smile and come to life, they'll know you care. Please, please don't stop coming.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

The author has asked to remain anonymous.

On the Home Front

FBFI NEWS AND EVENTS

2008 Meetings

October 20-21, 2008

New Mexico Regional Fellowship

Northwest Baptist Church
402 San Clemente NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
505.344.5544

October 20-21, 2008

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

January 26-27, 2009

North Central Regional Fellowship

Beth Eden Baptist Church
2600 Wadsworth Blvd.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
303.238.7711

March 2-3, 2009

Southwest Regional Fellowship

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

March 6-7, 2009

Upper Mid-West Pastors' and

Laymen's Meeting
Pillsbury Baptist Bible College
315 S. Grove Avenue
Owatonna, MN 55060
507.451.2710

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

89th Annual Fellowship

Bethel Baptist Church
200 N. Roselle Road
Schaumburg, IL 60194
847.885.3230

June 23-25, 2009

Pacific-Rim Regional Fellowship

Dep-Ed ECOTECH Center
Cebu City, Philippines
dynamis06@yahoo.com

July 27-29, 2009

Alaska Regional Fellowship

Maranatha Baptist Church
7747 East 6th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99504
907.338.2321
akfbf@earthlink.net

FBFI Membership and *FrontLine* Subscription Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

☐ FBFI Membership—\$35 (Includes subscription to *FrontLine*)

FrontLine Sub only: ☐ One Year (\$19.95) ☐ Two Years (\$34.95) ☐ Three Years (\$54.95)

Gift subscription for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

☐ One Year (\$19.95) ☐ Two Years (\$34.95) ☐ Three Years (\$54.95)

*International subscriptions please add \$7 per year.

Check all that apply:

☐ FBFI Membership

☐ New sub for me

☐ Gift sub

Payment:

☐ Check enclosed

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card Number _____

_____ Exp. Date

(_____) _____
Your Telephone Number

Mail to: FBFI

500 W. Lee Road
Taylors, SC 29687

SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

What's an Evangelical to Do? Part 2

Resurrecting the Question

The last issue's column began discussing a persistent problem confronting conservative Evangelicals: How should they respond to unorthodox "Evangelicals"? A case in point is their position toward British theologian N. T. Wright. Wright insists that almost all Christians for the last fifteen hundred years have misunderstood the doctrine of justification. Leading conservative Evangelicals such as D. A. Carson, Sinclair Ferguson, and, most recently, John Piper have analyzed Wright's position minutely. They find it seriously defective. Therefore, how should conservative Evangelicals relate to Wright in the future? But Wright is just one recent example of a whole company of aberrant theologians whose heterodoxy leavens Evangelicalism. Yet orthodox Evangelicals don't seem to know how to come to Scriptural closure about them. *What's an Evangelical to do?*

John Piper's Approach

For the sake of continuity, let me repeat the conclusion of the first article in this series. British theologian N. T. Wright is widely accepted among Evangelicals as a fellow Evangelical. Yet the consequences of his ministry duplicate everything the Scripture warns that wolves do (Acts 20:29, 30). He causes dissensions and hindrances. He teaches and writes contrary to apostolic doctrine. He speaks perverse things. He makes disciples in his aberrant image. So for the flock's sake and for the Chief Shepherd's sake, why not play it safe

and just say it? N. T. Wright is a wolf. If there's an outside chance that he's not, then the burden of proof lies entirely with him.

But conservative Evangelicals hesitate. Let me illustrate. One of the most rigorous recent analyses of N. T. Wright's teaching is John Piper's *The Future of Justification* (Crossway Books, 2007). In it Piper voices his concerns: *His portrayal of the gospel—and of the doctrine of justification in particular—is so disfigured that it becomes difficult to recognize it as biblically faithful. . . . In my judgment, what he has written will lead to a kind of preaching that will not announce clearly what makes the lordship of Christ good news for guilty sinners or show those who are overwhelmed with sin how they may stand righteous in the presence of God* (15). *Following N. T. Wright in his understanding of justification will result in a kind of preaching that will at best be confusing to the church* (165). *It is more likely that his view will be co-opted as confirmation for the Catholic way* (183).

Yet when it comes to his assessment of Wright himself, John Piper doesn't so much as suggest that the unorthodox theologian may be fencing himself out of Christ's fold (Matt. 7:15–23). Here is his assessment: *My conviction concerning N. T. Wright is not that he is under the curse of Galatians 1:8–9. . . . It may be that in his own mind and heart Wright has a clear and firm grasp on the gospel of Christ and the biblical meaning of justification* (15). *. . . N. T. Wright loves the gospel and justification* (17). *. . . Wright loves the apostle Paul and reverences the Christian scriptures* (27).

The disconnect between Piper's conclusions about Wright's twisted teaching and his convictions about Wright's loves and reverences is simply stunning. To my mind, it's nearly incomprehensible.

Why did Piper even bother to expose Wright's insidious errors? He states, *My hope, most remotely, is that Wright might be influenced to change some of what*

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

Inside

Bring . . . the Books—Key books for the pastor's study	5
Straight Cuts—An exegetical study	6
Windows—Themed sermon illustrations	7

he thinks concerning justification and the gospel. Less remotely, I hope that he might clarify, in future writings, some things that I have stumbled over. But most optimistically, I hope that those who consider this book and read N. T. Wright will read him with greater care, deeper understanding, and less inclination to find Wright's retelling of the whole story of justification compelling (16).

Yet after hearing multiple appeals from fellow Evangelicals over all these years, N. T. Wright remains unmoved in his views. So what's an Evangelical like John Piper to do?

I want to clarify that the issue I'm raising isn't primarily about John Piper or even N. T. Wright. It's the question of how the John Pipers of the Evangelical world ought to respond to the N. T. Wrights of their world. I'm assuming that there's a Biblical answer. Do conservative Evangelicals know what it is? Does their preaching and writing articulate and attempt to model that Biblical answer?

Teaching things that the Bible doesn't, or teaching things contrary to the Bible, is bad fruit. That's clear. But this ought also to be clear. Refusing to say what the Bible says is also telltale.

All of us can sympathize with the difficulty of making some determinations. On the one hand, we don't want to accuse falsely. We do well to remind ourselves from time to time of the ninth commandment, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour* (Exod. 20:16). On the other hand, because there are false individuals so adroit at disguise that they're nearly undetectable, we must be alert to their infiltration. That, in fact, is the very point of our Lord's warning, *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves* (Matt. 7:15). Let me call our attention now to two of the most informative examples in history.

Back to the Question of Wolves

First, take the case of Balaam (Num. 22–24). Let's begin with the positives. Here's a man ostensibly committed to speaking nothing but precisely what God said. Again and again, even under fierce pressure, he refuses to budge on that point. The Scripture makes sure the reader catches this (cf. Num. 22:38; 23:3, 12, 26; 24:13).

Scripture affirms that Balaam did exactly what he professed. It wasn't that Balaam deceptively claimed a homiletic that wasn't really the case. To the contrary, *The LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth* (23:5). The

LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth (23:16). *The spirit of God came upon him* (24:2).

To top it off, Balaam's sermons eventually became inerrant Scripture. Talk about a guy whose sermons make good books! And some of it is even breathtaking Christology (24:17–19). Balaam preaches Christ!

Yet the New Testament's warning is that Balaam is False Prophet Exhibit A. He's the ancient archetype for first-century religious teachers who *have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam* (2 Pet. 2:15). *Woe unto them, for they . . . ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward* (Jude 11). The Lord indicts the church in Pergamum, *I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam* (Rev. 2:14).

It's beyond our scope to analyze thoroughly what makes Balaam a negative example. In brief, the two things for which God faults him were his mercenary motives (Jude 11) and his counsel to Balak to seduce Israel sensually (Rev. 2:14; cf. Num. 25:1–9; 31:16). Obviously then, these are two of the distinguishing evidences of a wolf. It isn't my purpose here to enlarge on these at present. I simply want to hold up the case of Balaam as an illustration of the fact that what a man preaches can be entirely God's Word, including its Christology, and that what he preaches can end up in good books, and yet he himself can be false.

Second, let's investigate a New Testament example of the same phenomenon. Think about how Judas must have appeared to the other apostles. What did they see? To begin with, they saw him as one of only twelve companions chosen by Jesus out of all of the hundreds of thousands of possibilities in Israel. Like themselves, this man was picked by the Master for the rare privilege of the closest possible hour-by-hour fellowship. He also appears to have been trusted implicitly. *Judas had the bag, and bare what was put therein* (John 12:6). This trust elevated Judas even among the apostles! Further, to Judas also, like the others, Jesus imparted His very own authority to exorcise demons, heal the sick, and preach the Kingdom (Matt. 10:1, 7). It's no wonder that the other apostles never suspected him to be a counterfeit. Even after our Lord explicitly revealed that one of them was at that very time betraying Him (Luke 22:21), they seem to be utterly blind to the possibility that it was Judas (Luke 22:23; John 12:21–29). Yet *inwardly* this man truly was the *son of perdition* (John 17:12).

In all of our discussions about associations in ministry, have we seriously considered the phenomenon of an influential Evangelical leader who (1) seems to enjoy an almost unique relationship with Jesus Christ, (2) appears to be elevated by Christ Himself among even other spiritual leaders, and (3) is remarkably gifted, but tragically (4) is actually a son of perdition and an instrument of Satan? A Satanic masterpiece?

The applications of these considerations are mind-boggling. They're almost so beyond the realm of believability that it actually takes a while to come to

terms with them. I don't think any of us can really be adequately prepared to accept the implications of these two examples unless the Lord Himself opens the eyes of our understanding.

The Scripture teaches the possibility that there are respected theologians, pastors, and influential church leaders among us of whom other Christian leaders say: *I don't think I've ever known a man much closer to Christ* (he's one of "the Twelve"); *he's clearly been entrusted providentially with great leadership* (he carries "the bag"); *his spiritual gifts are incredible* (he has authority to cast out demons and heal every kind of sickness and preach the kingdom); *his commitment to the exact words of Scripture is unshakeable* (he refuses to say what God has not said); *I seldom hear preaching that impresses me any more profoundly as being exactly what God has said* (it's nothing less than the Lord's Word that comes out of his mouth); *God's power is obviously on his life* (the Spirit of God is with him)—but in actuality, the man is a false prophet.

We acknowledge, of course, that Scripture warns that *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light* and that *his ministers also are transformed as the ministers of righteousness* (2 Cor. 11:14, 15). So we have a place in our theoretical paradigm of church leaders for the man who is a counterfeit. But practically speaking, how are we to detect him?

Back to the Question of Fruit

We're back to the question of fruit. Our Lord says that wolves in sheep's clothing cannot produce good fruit. But that raises a question. How then do you explain bad men (e.g., Balaam and Judas) who apparently did and spoke so much good? The answer to that question can evidently be complex. But I think that there are certain considerations that point toward the answer and start us on our way.

The first might be to remember that it takes time for fruit to make its first appearance and even longer for it to ripen fully. The Lord Himself seems to remind us of this when He warns that some professing Christian leaders are such masters of disguise that it won't be until the Judgment that they're exposed beyond all doubt (Matt. 7:21–23). However, it doesn't seem likely that He intends us to understand from this that we're hopelessly at the mercy of wolves that we can't ever identify in this life. He assures us at both the opening and closing of the section on identifying false prophets, *Ye shall know them by their fruits* (16). . . . *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them* (20). So although it's possible that pseudoprophets may fool all of us for awhile, and perhaps some of us forever, it is nevertheless possible for us to know them by their fruits. But what are those?

Secondly, it is possible that some take a wrong turn when they assume that certain characteristics of professing Christian leaders are "fruit" when in fact they are something else. For instance, is it really theologi-

cally correct to think of spiritual giftedness as fruit? Or leadership positions? What about accurate exegesis? Theological precision? Empowerment by God's Spirit? Are these fruit? Or are these things something else—endowments, privileges, talents (Matt. 25:15–28), or a stewardship (1 Pet. 4:10)?

Our times, saturated with theological confusion and populated with deceptive leaders, demand that we formulate a more precise theology of spiritual fruit. But this much at least seems clear: spiritual gifts, positions of leadership, spiritual power, and miraculous works are evidently not *fruit*. At least not the kind of fruit our Lord was directing our attention to for identifying either good or evil religious leaders. So what is the fruit?

My heart explodes in a mighty "YES!" when I read the wording of the vow which the early Princeton Seminary professors were required to take publicly in a clear voice, "In the presence of God . . . I do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate any thing which shall appear to me to contradict or contravene, either directly or impliedly, any thing taught in the said Confession of Faith or Catechisms." That's the spirit!

Belief

Many years ago J. C. Ryle stated the evidences of a true minister as Biblically and succinctly as anyone could: *Sound doctrine and holy living are the marks of true prophets*. It comes down to a man's beliefs and behaviors. *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine* (1 Tim. 4:16). These are the two things Scripture conjoins inseparably as the evidences of our regeneration. This is especially true of the doctrinal fundamentals about Jesus Christ (*Whosoever . . . abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God*, 2 John 9) and our personal separation away from the world and unto God (*holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12:14).

I'm going to begin with the matter of a man's theological positions and frame it in this way. It's indisputable that someone can, Balaam-like, parrot in his preaching or teaching exactly what God has said while not being true to it himself. No contest here. This is what makes it possible for an unbelieving scholar to do

accurate textual criticism or to produce a helpful work of exegesis. But what he does with that text *theologically* and *homiletically* will eventually betray what He is in his heart. I may be wrong here, but I think that this is almost always the case. As he is in his heart, he will eventually be in what he *makes out of the text* for which he professes so much reverence.

Many years ago I was impressed with this dynamic as it surfaces in the commentaries of William Barclay. His *Daily Study Bible* series on the New Testament is renowned for its insights into the text. Barclay will employ the Scripture's precise Scriptural terminology as he explains a text's context and general content. But it's when he turns to theological interpretation that his unbelief shows, often—and this is extremely important to note about all theologians of this kind—not in what he says, but in what he *won't* say.

This is the first thing Evangelicals ought to do. They ought to require . . . unfeigned, unqualified, dogmatic assent to every single fundamental of the Christian (that is, “evangelical”) faith. . . . Interminable, deferential, academic fencing will not do. There’s no Scriptural paradigm for it whatsoever.

Teaching things that the Bible doesn't, or teaching things contrary to the Bible, is bad fruit. That's clear. But this ought also to be clear. Refusing to say what the Bible says is also telltale. It's *fruitlessness*. This is how men like Barclay are sometimes detectable. They don't bear Bible theology when you give them the seed of a text and ask them to produce. They can accurately classify it, get its taxonomy correct. They can break it apart and describe the pieces. But they won't take that seed, plant it like a growing thing in their own hearts, and produce from their tongues and their pens healthy doctrine springing up into men's everlasting life and godliness. This is what our Lord was referring to when He said that it was a thing which they *cannot* do. They are constitutionally incapable of it.

We don't have the record of anything Balaam said apart from what he was given by direct revelation and commanded to pronounce verbatim without variation. And yet the New Testament identifies as “the doctrine of Balaam” the fact that he “taught” Balak how to cause God's people to sin by creating opportunities

and arguments for them to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication (Rev. 2:14). Balaam's “doctrine” was a personal contradiction of everything else wonderful that came out of his mouth.

It is in the interest of screening out Balaams and Barclays that churches and other Christian institutions have found it necessary to formulate constitutions and creeds stating clearly their doctrinal positions, and to require that their members subscribe to these *without mental reservation*. My heart explodes in a mighty “YES!” when I read the wording of the vow which the early Princeton Seminary professors were required to take publicly in a clear voice, *In the presence of God . . . I do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate any thing which shall appear to me to contradict or contravene, either directly or impliedly, any thing taught in the said Confession of Faith or Catechisms.* That's the spirit!

Certain truths are Scripturally incontestable. They are holy ground, doctrines before which men ought to remove their shoes and bow their heads. In the presence of God, ministers and teachers of theology ought solemnly to promise never to teach or insinuate anything that in any way contradicts them. And it ought to be spelled out what the terms and Scriptures are that we're employing to define and demarcate those truths, so that no applicant for a trusted position can manipulate semantics to his own ends. It's not sufficient to ask a William Barclay, *Do you find God in Jesus?* Or, *When you see Jesus, do you see God?* Or, *Do you believe that he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father?* A William Barclay says “yes” to all three of these questions (see his autobiography, *William Barclay*, 56–57). But if you press him, if you force him to reckon with the wording of the old, time-tested confessions of the Christian faith, he'll finally flush out. *It is not that Jesus is God*, he'll clarify. *Nowhere does the New Testament identify Jesus and God*, he'll argue. *Jesus did not say, “He who has seen me has seen God.”* He said, “*He who has seen me has seen the Father.*” That's what Barclay says when you keep his feet to the fire.

This is the first thing Evangelicals ought to do. They ought to require that any organization to which they belong for Christian endeavor or any professing Christian theologian with whom they enter into any spiritual cooperation whatsoever give unfeigned, unqualified, dogmatic assent to every single Fundamental of the Christian (that is, “Evangelical”) faith.

If, after repeated appeals, an organization or individual refuses to do so, those who are truly Evangelical ought to withhold Christian recognition and avoid him (Rom. 16:17), and for the love of the Truth and the safety of Christ's flock, cry “wolf!” Interminable, deferential, academic fencing will not do. There's no Scriptural paradigm for it *whatsoever*. Well-intentioned or not, it's a betrayal of Christ and the gospel. ☞

Mark Minnick is pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, where he has served on the pastoral staff since 1980.

Bring . . . the Books

More Great Missionaries to China

The last column introduced J. Theodore Mueller's valuable but little-known work, *Great Missionaries to China*. Writing in 1947, Mueller had a goal of stirring the Western Church to consider again a great country that needs Christ—China. Even as Communism was entrenching itself and a bamboo curtain was falling that would once again isolate China from the outside world, Mueller appealed along these lines.

Half a century later a new opportunity is at hand to reach China, and believers would do well to become reacquainted with Mueller's little work. The previous column explored the early missionary activity in China that proved to be the foundation upon which the more familiar work of men like Hudson Taylor was built. The final half of Mueller's book presents a brief, informative, and inspiring portrait of seven missionaries whose work produced a Chinese church that today numbers more than 100 million believers who have endured some of the harshest persecution brought against Christians in this century.

The first of those men was Karl F. A. Gutzlaff, who arrived in China in 1827. After answering the call to foreign missions as a young man, he went to Berlin and entered a seminary dedicated to training missionary workers. He joined the Netherlands Missionary Society and was initially sent to the East Indies. While in Java he became burdened for the Chinese and was greatly encouraged to go to China by English missionary Walter Medhurst. After learning Chinese, Gutzlaff arrived in China and eventually settled in Hong Kong. Gutzlaff was an excellent linguist, and his greatest contribution to Chinese missions was his revision of the Chinese Bible produced by Robert Morrison.

His passion for reaching Chinese led him to perhaps one of the greatest missionary blunders on record. He sought to encourage national converts to become evangelists by providing them with funds and literature. They were to return at an appointed time to report on their labors. Initially, the reports were unbelievably encouraging. These evangelists brought back reports of scores of converts and gave credible evidence of the suffering they endured for the gospel's sake. Motivated by a desire to seize the moment, Gutzlaff went to England to recruit men and funds to expand his program. However, when the men he recruited arrived, they uncovered a horrible deception. The native evangelists were in fact impostors who had been spending the money they had received on sinful pleasures and had fabricated an elaborate ruse that had been completely deceived Gutzlaff. Gutzlaff never recovered from this blow; he died in 1851 at forty-eight years of age. He never saw the fruit that God eventually brought from his endeavors. Two years after Gutzlaff's death, a young man whose interest in China had been fueled in part by Gutzlaff's enthusiasm set sail for that country.


His name was Hudson Taylor.

Germany, Europe, and England had all been represented in the great Chinese missionary endeavor, and in 1829 an American missionary named Elijah Coleman Bridgman arrived to work alongside Robert Morrison. Bridgman labored for thirty years to bring to completion a reliable Chinese translation of the Scriptures. He was soon followed by another American from North Carolina, Matthew Yates. Trained as a teacher, Yates turned down several lucrative teaching offers to go to China, where for forty years he labored in Shanghai. His instincts and abilities as a teacher served him well and gained him a hearing among the learned and scholarly elements of Chinese society. In 1855, seven years after his arrival, Yates baptized his first Chinese convert. He continued to serve with distinction and faithfulness until his death in 1887.

Mueller devotes a chapter each to sketch the life and ministry of men such as John Livingston Nevius, who arrived in China in 1854 after studying under the famous Charles Hodge. Nevius went on to introduce theological training in China as one of the important pillars for the indigenization of the Chinese church.

A chapter is devoted to the ministry of the Welsh missionary Griffith John, who arrived in China in 1855 and labored in the interior for over half a century. The pioneer translation work of earlier missionaries had produced a Chinese Bible but one that was written in the scholarly dialect rather than in the more familiar language of the common man. Griffith John set his hand to this task, and the result was the first translation of the Bible in Mandarin.

A sketch of James Gilmour of Scotland, who went to Mongolia, completes Mueller's list of famous missionaries to China. Arriving in Peking, Gilmour became burdened to reach the Mongolian people. After arduously learning their language he spent the next twelve years traveling from tribe to tribe learning their customs and adopting their dress. Eventually he compiled a Mongolian grammar dictionary and linguistic tools that would prove invaluable aids in producing a Mongolian translation of the Scriptures. Mueller says of him, "He loved a strange people with sincere, saving love."

May we never forget the lives and ministries of these great missionary heroes. And may we remember that they were common men who responded to God's call with an uncommon fervor, who achieved great things for God by means of their simple, faithful obedience to His call. As it happened in their day so may it happen again in ours! 

*"... 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.

Straight Cuts

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

This has been a favorite verse for many people in their evangelistic efforts. Indeed, it would be difficult to improve upon the simplicity of its gospel invitation. A careful reader, however, senses at least some degree of tension. If entering the door of the sheepfold represents salvation through Christ, why does the verse go on to portray the sheep as passing *out* of the same door? Most Bible-believers instinctively reject the possibility of losing one's salvation and look for some other explanation, but the suggestions are few and tend to be vague and unsatisfying. At the very least Christ *seems* to be guilty of confusing the imagery of the passage by having the door of the fold function in two different ways in the same story. There is another problem as well: the word rendered "man" in this verse is actually the Greek indefinite pronoun in the masculine form. One would expect the neuter if the antecedent is the "sheep" (a neuter word in Greek) referred to in the previous verse.

The search for a masculine antecedent leads to an alternative interpretation, if one is willing to consider the possibility that verse 9 is not portraying sheep entering the fold. Who else would go through that door? The shepherd would. This suggestion not only has the advantage of providing agreement with the masculine pronoun, it also matches the context perfectly. In fact, Christ has already referred to the shepherd's use of the door in verse 2: "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." Many assume that Christ is describing Himself as the shepherd. He cannot be the shepherd in this passage, however, because He is the door. Christ states that point emphatically in two places (verses 7 and 9) in response to His hearers' failure to understand. It is not until verses 11–18 that Christ changes roles and presents Himself as the Good Shepherd. He can function in two different roles in *successive* passages, but not in the *same* passage. Since Christ is the door in verses 1–10, someone else must be the shepherd.

This shepherd is actually the main subject of the passage, so properly identifying him should help us discern the message of this text. He clearly represents spiritual leadership. I would suggest that in our day he corresponds most closely to a pastor shepherding a local church. Based on his familiarity with the sheep and his pattern of faithful leadership (v. 3), the sheep know his voice and willingly follow him (v. 4). He fulfills Christ's plan for the sheep by selflessly providing their nourishment (v. 9) and promoting their welfare (v. 10). By contrast, "a thief and a robber" (v. 1) is "a stranger" (v.

Who Is Entering the Door? John 10:9

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

5) who is destructive to the life of the sheep (v. 10). In this passage, the primary point of distinction between the stranger and the shepherd is their means of access to the sheep. Whereas the shepherd enters through Christ, the door (v. 2), the stranger enters "some other way" (v. 1). Thus everything in the story hinges (pardon the pun) on Christ.

Taking this contextual evidence as the interpretational key, verse 9 actually portrays the shepherd, not the sheep, as entering the fold through Christ. This seems to encounter the same problem we faced earlier, however, except now it is the shepherd going in and out. It is necessary, then, for the exegete to re-examine the presupposition about what it means to enter through the door. Perhaps it is not referring to salvation at all. In fact, one would expect a shepherd entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the sheep to have entered a relationship with Christ previously. What else could "saved" mean? Frequently in Scripture it means "rescue from danger" (see Peter's cry for help in Matt. 14:30, or Paul's admonition in 1 Tim. 4:16, neither of which refers to regeneration). Apparently, shepherds face some kind of danger against which Christ provides protection. That point needs some additional exegesis, but for now simply note that this interpretation relieves the passage of any hint of doctrinal aberration. If entering the door does not portray salvation, then going in and out repeatedly is not a problem. Why does the shepherd go in and out? He does so in order to lead the sheep to the nourishing pastures. By the way, this answers yet another problem with the traditional interpretation, because sheep do not "find" pasture: they depend on the shepherd to lead them there.

What, then, is the danger that shepherds face? In this context, it is the danger of misleading the sheep, withholding the nourishment they need, and causing their destruction. Those are all characteristics of the stranger, who corresponds to the false shepherds in Israel's past (Ezek. 34) and the religious leaders who were currently opposing Christ (John 9). God's Word warns both groups about dire consequences for their abuse of God's people. How can the shepherd avoid that danger? There is only one way: enter through Christ. That means on every occasion of ministry to the sheep the shepherd must consciously submit to the Lord, depending on Him for grace to fulfill the tasks of shepherding exactly as Christ directs. R.C.H. Lenski captures the sense with this urgent call to all pastors: "Use the door, use the door!—Then all will be well" (*The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, 717). Such submission to Christ is a message every pastor, as well as those who follow him, must understand and obey. ☞

Dr. Gary Reimers is senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, and a member of the seminary faculty at Bob Jones University & Seminary since 1998. He also leads Holy Land and Journeys of Paul study tours.

Bryant Northern had the world at his fingertips as a walk-on guard with a full scholarship at basketball powerhouse University of Louisville. He dreamed of dead-eye jump shots, March Madness, even a pro career. But the six-foot-tall Northern also had a hidden problem, one more common than Americans may want to admit—a problem that created by what is now a half-trillion-dollar-a-year industry in this country. He was addicted to gambling. Caesars Indiana, the riverboat casino across the Ohio River from Louisville, was Northern's hangout in high school. It became his scourge. A run of bad luck left him short of money and in trouble with the police. He dropped out of college at age twenty-three after being sentenced to five years' probation for trying to cash stolen checks to pay his gambling habits.

Jim Chesser, fifty-five, a former Louisville bus driver, jokes that he was "born on a card table and raised on a race track" because of his parents' love of bingo halls and horses. When Casino Aztar opened in Evansville, Indiana, in 1995, it was only natural he'd be a frequent patron. "That's when recreational gambling crossed the invisible line to irresponsible, uncontrolled, compulsive gambling," Chesser said. "When we're gambling, we will lie, we will cheat, we will steal from everybody," he continued. "It will take you places you never thought you would go." He finally left those places, quitting gambling cold turkey to save his fourth marriage.

These stories are not uncommon in the USA, where less than thirty years ago legal gambling existed in just three states. It has now spread as an "engine of economic development" to every state in the union except Utah and Hawaii. America is sold on lottery gambling with its annual payoff of \$20.9 billion to state governments. With its promises of new jobs and schools, more pay for teachers, smoother roads, and financial aid to other public services, it has become one of the biggest and most powerful political special interests in the land of the "free" (which is what gambling promises to deliver—something for nothing).

Gambling sounds simple: "to play at any game of chance for stakes, to stake or risk money or anything of value on the outcome of something involving chance or hazardous uncertainty" (*Random House College Dictionary*). It is taking a calculated risk for monetary or personal gain.

But this "simple" activity involves billions of dollars. *Gambling in America* says that the total spent in America on gambling is greater than the combined profits of US Steel, General Motors, and General Electric—in fact, more than the combined profits from all the one hundred largest US companies. Gambling generates more revenue than movies, spectator sports, theme parks, cruise ships, and recorded music combined. In Las Vegas, one of the fastest-growing cities in America, players lose more than \$6 bil-

lion a year at casinos. In the twenty-one-year period from 1974 to 1995, the amount of money Americans wagered increased 3200%, from \$17 billion to \$550 billion!

Gambling in America

Gambling was not a part of early America, but it has been accepted and embraced as America has aged and morally declined. Here are some significant dates in our gambling history.

- 1624—The Virginia Assembly decreed: "Mynisters shall not give themselves to excesse in drinking or yet spend their tyme idelie by day or night, playing dice, cards or any unlawful game."
- 1656—Card fiends in the Plymouth Colony were fined forty shillings.
- 1748—Benjamin Franklin helped organize the Pennsylvania lottery "to raise 3000 pounds for military supplies to defend Philadelphia against the Frenchmen and Indians."
- 1777—President Washington issued orders forbidding "all officers . . . and soldiers . . . playing at cards, or other games of chance . . . At this time of public distress [they] must find enough to do in service of God and their country without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality."
- 1963—No state had a lottery.
- 1975—The federal government allowed state lotteries to advertise on radio and television.
- 1976—Casinos were legalized in Atlantic City. The number of state lotteries doubled.
- 1998—Over forty riverboat casinos operated in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa. Nearly fifty riverboat and dockside casinos were in Louisiana and Mississippi. About 298 Indian casinos and bingo halls operated in thirty-one states. Some form of gambling was legalized in forty-eight states—lotteries, casinos, riverboat casinos, Indian casinos, video lottery machines, pari-mutuel betting (horse racing, dog racing, jai-alai).

Pathological Gambling

According to Gamblers Anonymous, at least 12 million Americans are compulsive gamblers, with an average personal debt exceeding \$80,000 (*Dallas Morning News*). They are victims of their own incurable optimism, always believing they have a pretty good chance to win. But statistics say that a gambler is seven times more likely to be killed by lightning than to win a million dollars in a state lottery (*Harper's Magazine*). They are also duped by the Gambler's Fallacy—the mistaken notion that repetition changes the odds. If you

"To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, 'A window shalt thou make in the ark.'"

Charles Spurgeon

flip a coin five times, always getting tails, there's *still* a 50-50 chance that you'll get tails on the next flip. But a gambler thinks instead: "Tails has come up five times in a row, so now it's 'time' that heads comes up."

Pathological (compulsive) gambling is recognized as a diagnosable mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association and the American Medical Association. The *American Family Physician*, a periodical published by the American Academy of Family Physicians, says pathological gambling affects 5-to-15 million Americans, is prominent in young people, and is often accompanied by alcohol abuse and depression. Following is a typical case history.

A 51-year-old businessman presented with complaints of fatigue and weight loss. Findings revealed evidence of alcohol dependence and depression, withdrawal from the family and social activities, and a lifelong history of compulsive gambling. In the previous three years alone, he had lost \$13,000 playing the state lottery and slot machines. His spouse was concerned about possible economic and personal ruin if his gambling persisted. The patient admitted that he had claimed nonexistent winnings, gambled more than intended, felt guilty, had difficulty stopping, hid the evidence of his gambling, and secured loans to cover gambling debts.

Here are some diagnostic criteria to help recognize compulsive gambling.

- Preoccupation with gambling (reliving past gambling experiences, planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money to gamble)
- A need to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired excitement
- Repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- Restlessness and irritability when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
- Gambling to escape from problems or moods
- Losing money one day and returning the next to get even (chasing losses)
- Lying to family members and others to conceal the extent of gambling
- Committing illegal acts such as forgery, fraud, and theft to finance gambling
- Jeopardizing or losing a significant relationship, job, or career opportunity because of gambling
- Relying on others to provide money

Sports Gambling

Sports gambling is illegal in almost every state, but there are efforts to legalize it—thus inviting organized crime into every arena and threatening the integrity of officials, coaches, players, and fans (as recent scandals illustrate).

Several years ago, a Gallup poll reported by *Psychology Today* revealed that one in four American men and one in eight women planned to gamble on the next Super Bowl.

Virtual (Online) Gambling

It is now possible to gamble twenty-four hours a day from the comfort of home using the Internet and a credit card. In addition to traditional games such as poker, roulette, slots, card games, and blackjack, one can bet on virtual reality TV shows, World Cups, Saturday matches, the weather, etc. It is touted as "fun" and "safe" online because of the difficulty of cheating in that medium. Satan sponsors these free gambling sites as bait and as stepping stones to gambling addictions.

Teens and Gambling

With their friends at parties, at school, or in solitude on the Internet, millions of American teens are taking up gambling. Much of the action is small-time—underage purchases of lottery tickets, playing cards or dice games for spare change. But experts say the long-term stakes are high because *gamblers who start young are the most likely to develop addiction problems.*

A parent's passion for gambling may be passed on to an adolescent. Sarah, now a thirty-one-year-old executive in New York City, became hooked after accompanying her parents to Atlantic City casinos as a teenager. She now attends regular sessions of Gamblers Anonymous to shake an addiction that plunged her into a six-figure debt.

"I wouldn't want to get up even to go to the bathroom" said Sarah.

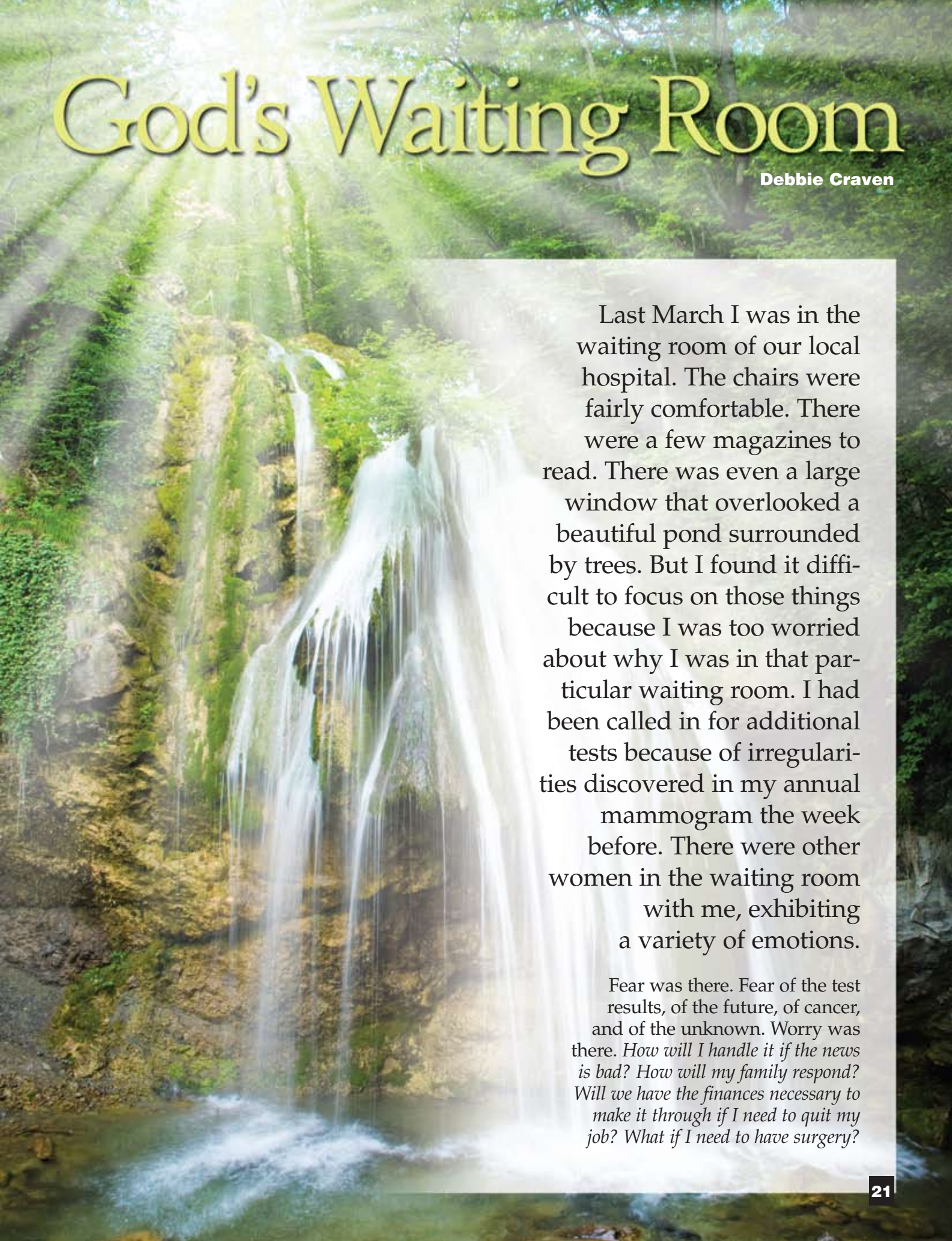
A Biblical Perspective

1. The Bible emphasizes the sovereignty of God (Matt. 10:29, 30), but gambling is based on chance.
2. The Bible tells us to produce gain by working (Eph. 4:28), while gambling encourages a "something for nothing" attitude.
3. The Bible warns about the sin of materialism (Matt. 6:24, 25), while gambling promotes it. One Greek word for covetousness is *epithumeo*, a compound of *epi* (upon) and *thumos* (passion). The mindset of gambling is to fix passion upon something which we can obtain by doing nothing. Greed and covetousness characterize gambling, whether it is a simple office bet on a sporting event or a visit to an extravagant all-night casino.
4. Gambling destroys families. It leads to neglect, deceit, and strained relationships. First Timothy 5:8 warns that a person who refuses to provide for his family is worse than an infidel.
5. Gambling can become a form of state-sponsored greed. Romans 13 teaches that the government is to be a minister of God. When government promotes gambling in any form, it subverts the moral fabric of society through greed and selfishness. ☞

Dr. Dave Barba, in full-time ministry for thirty-four years, planted Falls Baptist Church (Wisconsin), Trinity Baptist Church (Tennessee), and spent nine years in itinerant evangelism. He and his wife, Claudia, now assist church planters in the USA through the work of Press On! Ministries (www.ipresson.com).

God's Waiting Room

Debbie Craven



Last March I was in the waiting room of our local hospital. The chairs were fairly comfortable. There were a few magazines to read. There was even a large window that overlooked a beautiful pond surrounded by trees. But I found it difficult to focus on those things because I was too worried about why I was in that particular waiting room. I had been called in for additional tests because of irregularities discovered in my annual mammogram the week before. There were other women in the waiting room with me, exhibiting a variety of emotions.

Fear was there. Fear of the test results, of the future, of cancer, and of the unknown. Worry was there. *How will I handle it if the news is bad? How will my family respond? Will we have the finances necessary to make it through if I need to quit my job? What if I need to have surgery?*

I could see from the faces of those around me that impatience and boredom were also in the waiting room. *What's taking so long? Why isn't the schedule more organized? Whose idea was it anyway to schedule these regular mammograms?* Anger and resentment were there as well, evidenced by a response to the news that someone's tests had been lost and would have to be repeated. All in all, for a quiet waiting room where nothing was supposed to be happening, there were an awful lot of emotional gymnastics going on!

I thought of other waiting rooms that I had spent time in and how I had passed the time in those situations. Although reading the magazines is always an option, it has never been my personal choice because I don't want to leave without finishing the article. But then again, who would stay in the waiting room just to finish an article in an old magazine? I prefer to bring a book of my own to read or to do something productive to pass the time. If I have my daytimer, I can review my calendar, plan the next day's activities, look ahead to various projects, and begin planning the steps necessary to move toward completion. I have been known to pass the time doing pre-Christmas shopping, writing down gift ideas and suggestions for various family members. Because I keep the prayer requests from Sunday school in my daytimer, I can also productively use my time by praying for those requests as well as for my family. Sometimes I chat with others, knowing that they understand the tensions in the waiting room. All of the projects above help me to wait because they direct my focus away from self and onto others.

There are times in my life when I am not in a medical waiting room but find myself, instead, in God's waiting room. I have waited for direction regarding what I should study in college, for answers to prayer while on the mission field in Brazil, for God's timing in having a family, for our house to sell, and for some lessons that are too private to share with you because I am still in that special waiting room that God has designed for me. The same emotions that visit, uninvited but pushing themselves to the forefront, when I'm in a medical waiting room are unfortunately also present when I find myself in God's waiting room. Fear is there—fear of the unknown and fear that what God has planned for me may not be exactly what I had hoped or envisioned for my life. Worry comes more often than I would like to admit—worry about finances and how everything will work out in the end. Worry about jobs and work hours and children in college. Worry about the life choices that my children will make and whether I have done my best in training and preparing them for the future. Worry that this body will give out and that I will be a burden to my family.

Impatience likes to visit and gets frustrated that God has chosen to have me wait rather than giving me an immediate answer so that I can get on with my life as I have pic-

tured it. Complaining always feels like it has to come along with impatience—one is rarely found without the other. How childish I can be when complaining about God's timing and planning as if I know better than He. Anger and resentment have been there with me as well, especially when I "knew" (ha! ha!) that there was an easier, shorter, and happier path to reach a certain goal than the path that the Lord had placed me on.

But just as in the medical room when I remind myself that I have confidence in the doctor and that I'm there because I trust that he knows what is best for my medical condition, so I must place my trust and confidence in my all-knowing, all-powerful Heavenly Father who knows

BEING IN GOD'S WAITING ROOM IS NOT A PUNISHMENT; IT IS NOT A PLACE OF BOREDOM WHERE TIME IDLY PASSES BY; IT'S A PLACE OF PURPOSEFUL WORK WHILE WE WAIT FOR GOD'S RESULTS IN GOD'S TIMING.

what is best for my spiritual condition. (And how much easier it is to trust an omniscient God than a fallible physician!) I cannot choose *when* I will be in God's waiting room, but I can choose *how* I will use my time while I'm there, so that I can draw closer to the Lord and become more Christlike in my walk.

Instead of entertaining the negative emotions that typically invade the waiting room, I must work instead to build the character qualities that will help me to grow and be used for the Lord. What are these?

Trust must replace fear. Psalm 56:3 states, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." I find that keeping encouraging verses on 3 x 5 cards and tucking them into my purse provides opportunity for memorization and is a spiritually productive activity regardless of the type of waiting room I'm in.

In God's waiting room, peace must replace worry. Philippians 4:6, 7 encourages me to "be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let [my] requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [my heart and mind] through Christ Jesus." Bringing everything to the Father through prayer is His desire for me. Prayer for others takes the focus off myself and puts it on those around me. I believe that God sometimes places me in His waiting room that I might have the opportunity to learn what true peace is.

Patience needs to replace impatience. James 1:4 teaches the necessity of patience when it states, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Thanksgiving is the replacement for anger. Ephesians 5:20 reminds me to "[give] thanks always for all things

unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." If I am continually giving thanks for the many blessings that my Lord has given me, there is no room left for anger, and it has no choice but to leave the waiting room. To help me in my own waiting room at this time in my life I have begun a gratitude journal. I am documenting all the positive things that I am thankful for so that my focus will not be on the negative, which can lead to anger and hinder the growth God has planned for me.

Contentment must replace resentment. First Timothy 6:6 states, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." Resentment is much like covetousness. In both cases we compare ourselves to others and then get frustrated at the comparison. In the former we are upset because we don't have what others have or because we are afflicted with an ailment that another does not suffer with, and in the latter we just want what another person has. From possessions to medical conditions, Satan has a field day with our emotions by getting

us to compare ourselves with others and then envisioning ourselves coming out on the short end of the stick. Learning contentment is the solution, and the classroom is often God's waiting room.

Being in God's waiting room is not a punishment; it is not a place of boredom where time idly passes by; it's a place of purposeful work while we wait for God's results in God's timing. In the past I have spent much of my waiting time crying out for God to end the wait rather than working to learn His lessons and to draw closer to Him. But God has been teaching me, for He is never pleased when I am stagnant in my Christian walk. He will help me to be God-centered instead of self-centered and to cultivate and incorporate the character qualities necessary for growing in Christ while I find myself in His waiting room.

Debbie Craven was a missionary in Brazil for ten years. She now works as a physical therapist in Michigan.



Shalom Ministries Inc.

Reaching the Jewish World
New York and Beyond

- Brooklyn Headquartered
- Fundamental
- Local Church Focused
- Jewish Evangelism Training
- Feast Demonstrations
- Prophecy Conferences
- Summer Internships for Students



"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee..." (Isa. 26:3)

1421 Sheepshead Bay Road #300

Brooklyn, NY 11235

(718) 232-8233

Craig Hartman • Director

OUTREACH TRACTS

SOLIDLY BIBLICAL
OUTREACH FOCUSED

Outreach Tracts was born from the burden of Fundamental Evangelist Mitch Sidles to make available to witnessing Christians gospel tracts that are scripturally accurate and contain a concise and straightforward gospel message.

Tracts are available in a variety of titles and are produced in an attractive full-color design. Every tract includes a compassionate invitation for the reader to respond and contain clear follow-up instructions.

RECENT RELEASES . . .



FINALLY Good News . . .

Using an attention-getting approach to teaching scriptural truth this tract addresses such questions as: 1. You can know why you exist, 2. You can be happy, 3. You can be forgiven of all your sins now and forever, and more.



Heaven

A Bible message about Heaven in an easy-to-read format. This tract concludes with a call to the reader to ensure his own eternal life in Heaven and follow-up steps on how to grow in the Lord.

Pricing information and downloadable samples available at:
www.outreachtracts.com

Phone: **(720) 341-6440**
E-mail: **info@outreachtracts.com**

On Making Decisions

Christians ought to have some clear pattern to follow in making decisions, whether major or minor. We are constantly making choices. Many things we do out of habit, and establishing commendable habits is important in every life. Some, when they face an important decision, wonder, "What would a parent do?" A good question to ask is, "What would Jesus do?" We make some decisions quickly, without much thought. We may mull over pros and cons of some matters for days and never come to a solution. Too often we only mentally flip a coin. (Yes, that's a type of gambling.)

There are principles in the Word of God that a believer needs to keep in mind for every decision he makes each day. The first and most important principle is not really a decision open for discussion, and so, although it is primary, it does not involve any "process." **If Scripture says do it, do it; if Scripture forbids it, don't do it.** Many choices are just that clear cut. Should we ever lie? Ought we ever to steal? Should we spend time or money on lascivious living? Should we encourage a grieving brother? Our response to whatever God expects should not be just meeting "the letter of the law" but a joyful willingness to do His will.

Many moral issues and personal choices are that simple: obey God; do what the Scripture teaches. Should I be a witness to others? That is clearly commanded. Should I go as a missionary to Germany? Several choices and decisions are involved. For such nonmoral and unrevealed matters, a simple pattern seems helpful: **Ask, Search, Believe.** This ASB pattern for decision making should be easy to understand, easy to remember, and easy to put into practice. To repeat, it is not to be employed for anything that is clearly commanded or forbidden in God's authoritative instruction book (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Adam was given only one restriction: do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of the other trees and other fruits he saw day after day, he could freely choose. The number, the variety, the color, the taste—for all of those fruits Adam had full freedom of choice. Whatever he chose and for whatever reason he chose it, he was honoring God. Similarly, we today may freely choose to wear a green sweater or a blue one. We may prefer pie to cake.

Our choices, thus, are not always right vs. wrong, but good vs. better, acceptable vs. preferable. Making a "wrong" choice is not involved in nonmoral or nonrevealed decisions. Although many decisions are personal preferences within the scope of God's provision, they pertain to matters which we consider really important: Which college? Which job? Knee replacement? To a nursing home? For these decisions involving the outcome of

the choice, we desire to have guidance from One who knows us and who knows the future—that is, our Lord. Try it: ask, search, believe.

Ask. You have not because you ask not (James 4:2). A quick, unspoken prayer will do it. Ask God for guidance, for wisdom, for discernment (James 1:5). Clear your heart of personal preferences and be open to whichever choice will most honor Him. Ask God for a proper attitude (see 1 Tim. 6:17–19) while weighing which choice to make and in the full confidence of being guided by Him.

"Ask" does not take long. "**Search**" though, means, do not make a hasty or unfounded choice. You have asked for wisdom, now use the grey matter and expect God to guide you. You have the Holy Spirit residing within to guide you. He can lead you to Scripture verses or to important principles. He can call to your remembrance things you should weigh. In His Word God has given us all the guidance we need to make proper decisions; expect the Holy Spirit to impress those principles on your heart.

Do the "smart" thing—God does not honor dumbness. Confer with godly advisors. Check with those most familiar with matters that are involved. Do not "put out fleece" or expect a lightning bolt. Carefully consider everything involved, and, as you face a deadline, make the best choice you can based on all you have considered.

Then trust that God has guided you in your decision. That's the B of our formula: Ask, Search, **Believe.** You asked God; now believe He heard and answered and guided you in your choice. Believe that the Holy Spirit directed in the wisdom employed in reaching your decision. Accept that God has provided the principles and the special wisdom needed. He has directed you to make the decision that will best glorify Him. Do not doubt. Do not replay the pros and cons over and over. You asked God to guide—why doubt that He has done so?

Does this mean that if we employ the ASB pattern every decision we make will be the "right" decision? Will we always profit financially? Will all problems always be cleared up? Any who expect that are missing one important phase of the process: the decision we make will "glorify God." Sometimes that may not mean "success" or "profit" as the world sees it, but in God's supreme plan for our spiritual maturity, it is that which will accomplish His best. We believe and accept that. We know that all that God wants for us is for our good. All that God allows to happen to us is for some eternal benefit. Till we see Him face to face, we just trust Him and rejoice in His grace and goodness.

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. He can be contacted at cbsvan@sbcglobal.net.

BUSES, CRAYONS & KEYBOARDS

These objects 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.**



Push the Button

Doris Fisher Harris

The seven-year-old twins were trying to be helpful. They had positioned themselves outside the University Dining Common. The boy was standing by the button that would automatically open the doors for wheelchairs and scooters. The girl was watching for someone they could help.

As I was coming toward the door the little girl shouted, "Push the button, here comes an old one!"

My friend, who had just had surgery, came sailing through on his scooter. We were both vastly amused. He came out, I went in, and they netted two old ones. "Push the button, here comes an old one!"

We've enjoyed many laughs over that, and the quote has become part of the family vernacular. I wonder what buttons are pushed in our thought processes when we see an "old one."

For some it is the IGNORE button. Young clerks and waiters often stand and chat and polish their nails as a senior customer waits. *If we ignore them, they'll go away. If we ignore them, I won't have to face up to my own mortality. I don't have to be reminded of disabilities, wrinkles, dimmed eyesight. I can pretend that they do not exist.* How very sad . . . not for the elderly but for you.

Any life that does not have friends of all ages is an empty life. Each of us needs children in our lives. We also need the elderly. We need their wisdom. We need their overview of history and world affairs. We need their perspective. We need their examples, and we need to be reminded of the passage of time.

For some it is the FEAR button. They are a bit afraid of the old. Sometimes they don't feel that they know how to carry on a conversation. They are fearful of

crutches, walkers, urine bags, and dim eyes. These are kind folk who just don't know what to do, so they just ignore their old relatives and friends. It's the feeling that many of us have at funerals—we just don't know what to say.

But many push the selfish ME FIRST button. *Nothing unpleasant for me. I only do what I like and what is fun for me, and visiting Aunt Peggy at the nursing home is no fun.* Maybe not for you but it surely is fun for her. Push the button of unselfishness.

What better use of time could we invest? Visit or contact someone who loves you. Love is such an amazing gift. How can we take it for granted? But we do.

"Push the button, here comes an old one!"

Push the button of MINISTRY. Can't visit? Send a card. Pick up the phone and call. Schedule a visit. Put it in your date book. Then keep your promise to yourself and do it. Once every three months? Once every two months? Once a month? Schedule it and do it. So many people are always "going to visit," but it never happens. Being remembered is such an important thing.

Am I being simplistic to mention "do unto others"? If the Lord allows you long life you may one day be the lonely old person who is delighted with every kindness shown. Do you really want to be treated as you treat the old folk in your life?

"Push the button, here comes an old one!"

Be sure you push the right button.

Doris Fisher Harris teaches in the Communications Department at Bob Jones University. She has been a freelance writer for many years and has marketed nearly seven hundred pieces.

International Baptist College



Bachelor of Arts in Church Music

www.ibconline.edu | 2150 E Southern Ave Tempe, AZ 85282 | (800) IBC-4858 | info@ibconline.edu

As we grow older, our bodies get shorter and our anecdotes longer.
—Robert Quillen

Age: The only thing that comes to us without effort.
—Unknown

Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be, The last of life, for which the first was made. —Robert Browning

Old age comes from God; old age leads on to God.
—Pierre Teilhard De Chardin

My, my, sixty-five! I guess this marks the first day of the rest of my life savings.
—H. Martin

Old age ought to be a brighter and a calmer and a more serene thing than early manhood.
—Frederick William Robertson

In the days of my youth I remembered my God! And He hath not forgotten my age.
—Robert Southey

God gave us memories that we might have roses in December.
—Sir James M. Barrie

Live your life and forget your age.
—Frank Bering

The evening of a well-spent life brings its lamps with it.
—Joseph Joubert

Wrinkled was not one of the things I wanted to be when I grew up.
—Unknown

Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart.
—Victor Hugo

Whenever a man's friends begin to compliment him about looking young, he may be sure that they think he is growing old.
—Washington Irving

The average life span of a woman is constantly increasing, thus enabling her to stay 29 much longer.
—Unknown

An octogenarian was told that a friend of his, aged seventy-five, had said that a man is at his best in his seventies; the octogenarian replied, "He will know better when he grows up."
—Henry Durbanville

Believe me, when you're my age, you just love hearing about alternative sources of energy.
—Ronald Reagan

You don't grow old; when you cease to grow, you are old.
—Charles Judson Herrick

The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.
—Paul the Apostle

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

International Baptist Missions

A Ministry of Tri-City Baptist Church ■ Dr. Michael D. Sproul, President ■ Dr. Dave Sproul, General Director

We emphasize
Evangelism
Church Planting
Baptist Beliefs
Family



Mike and Lisa Redick, Southeast Asia



Josiah Wambua, Kenya

IBM is currently supporting
31 missionaries
in **10 countries**
partnering with
more than **100**
national pastors.

www.tricityministries.org ■ 2150 E Southern Ave Tempe, AZ 85282 ■ (480) 967-8783 ■ ibm@tricityministries.org

National Report

Doug Wright

Pastor Rob Campbell and the people of Bethel Baptist Church in Sellersville, Pennsylvania, did a superb job of hosting this year's annual meeting. The facilities were immaculate and had been well prepared in every way. The program and people were equally prepared. The gracious church family offered their facility and staffed it with people and with everything that was needed to provide a great meeting. Each day sweet-spirited folks served at a table in the display area stocked with snacks and drinks.

Tuesday night during the service the leadership of Bethel Baptist displayed their preparedness in a special way. During the first service a thunderstorm took out the electricity to the building just as Dr. Sam Horn was about to begin preaching. The men at the church responded in an exemplary way. Undaunted by the lack of our normal conveniences, the ushers provided candlelight for the preacher and worked during the remainder of the service to assure that our exit would be equally as orderly. They had arranged additional lighting in the foyer area and stationed men along the back roads to point us in the right direction. As Dr. Vaughn noted the next morning, their response to the situation was exemplary.

I wish our critics could have been at the 2008 FBFI annual meeting. Those who claim that we are too "old fashioned" in our beliefs would not have been disappointed. The preachers clearly outlined the Biblical position of the FBFI on uncompromising fellowship, balanced

Biblical discernment, separatist Baptist Fundamentalism, and several other topics. Compromise is the ever-present enemy of those who serve the Lord. The mission statement of the FBFI declares that we will "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." Our resolve was strengthened by the preaching during our annual meeting.

On the other hand some of our brethren who claim that they will not fellowship with us because we "hold the right position, but with a wrong disposition" would have been greatly disappointed. The position of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International was clearly delineated in the preaching, but as importantly the disposition was also clearly displayed. One needs only to attend the national meetings to sense the heart of the preachers in this fellowship. A man expecting to hear a harsh message with steady personal attacks will have little ammunition in his belt after spending a few days with our brethren. One young man commented that this meeting did more to help him in his understanding of Fundamentalism than any meeting he had ever been to. The camaraderie and clarity of the message were refreshing.

The 2009 annual meeting is June 16–18 at Bethel Baptist Church in Schaumburg, Illinois. Set aside the time in your schedule. You might be surprised how profitable these meetings are.



The Lord's Pleasures for His People

Jerry Sivnksty

In Psalm 16:11 the psalmist declares, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." The pleasures that this verse refers to are different from the pleasures of this world. The pleasures of the world and the flesh are fake and shallow. They never satisfy but always bring guilt and shame to those who yield to their enticements. Proverbs 14:13 states, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Not only do the pleasures of the flesh produce heaviness, but they also lead to poverty. Proverbs 21:17 says, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man." I knew a bachelor in South Carolina whose parents left him several thousand acres of land. However, in their will they made a stipulation that he could never sell the house he lived in. They did this because they knew he was a drunkard and would sell all the land to buy liquor—which is exactly what he did. One cold morning the neighbors found this man frozen to death in his house. Proverbs 23:21 solemnly warns, "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty."

I have observed that seeking the world's pleasures always involves taking something from the outside in order to satisfy a desire on the inside. Many years ago Dr. Charles Britt had me for a week of meetings in Memphis, Tennessee. One day he said, "Jerry, I know you speak to a lot of teenagers at youth camps. Would you like to visit Graceland, where Elvis Presley lived? I think you could tell teens across the country about the tragedy of his life." Well, it was quite an eye-opening experience for me. When I walked into Elvis's house at Graceland, I noticed mirrors everywhere. I asked the guide why there were so many mirrors, and he replied, "Elvis liked to look at himself." I saw his collection of handguns, his expensive cars, and his lavish entertainment room—he had everything you could imagine. He was a living idol; if he walked into a store, fans would tear his clothes off of him, so he had to have bodyguards around him whenever he went out in public. The guide said that Elvis started taking drugs to perform, other drugs to help him sleep, and more drugs just to help him get through the day. As we were walking through the house, I started to enter a bathroom. The guide told me I wasn't allowed to go in there; when I asked why, he answered, "Because that is where Elvis Presley died." He fell off the toilet and died due to

an overdose of drugs. The king of rock music died on his throne! Remember, seeking the pleasures of this world involves taking something from the outside in order to satisfy a desire on the inside.

But just the opposite is true for the child of God. And unlike the fleeting pleasures of this world, the Christian can enjoy the pleasures of God both in this life and in the next. In this life, pleasure for the Christian is an internal peace and joy that come as a direct result of doing the will of God. Many years ago, Dr. Wendell Heller and I went to India for three weeks and preached all over the southern part of that country. I was overwhelmed by the masses of people and cattle there. In half the land space of America, India has more than a billion people and a billion cattle. Because the Hindus worship the cow and will not kill it for food, we ate their standard of rice and curry for all three weeks. I got sick and lost fifteen pounds; when I went back home to America, I outlawed rice from our home for a whole year! In one town of India where we were holding a revival, so many people got saved that an independent Baptist church was established. My heart was thrilled by what took place during that trip! Even though I was so sick and weak, it was worth it all to see the Lord work so wonderfully; I thought my heart was going to burst with joy at the result He gave. Pleasure is an internal peace and joy that come as a result of doing the will of God.

The second aspect of the pleasures of God concerns eternity. In his *Treasury of David*, C. H. Spurgeon wrote, "The soul that is once landed at the heavenly shore is past all storms. The glorified soul shall be forever bathing itself in the rivers of pleasure. This is what makes heaven to be heaven; we shall be with the Lord." When I was a little boy, my mother would bake homemade cakes. After she poured the cake batter into the pans to bake, she would let my two brothers and me eat the leftover batter in the bowl. We would shove each other out of the way trying to get a mouthful of batter—it was just a foretaste of our mom's coming cake. We as God's people are getting just a little foretaste of God's coming eternal pleasures. I trust you will know His pleasure now as you serve Him and anticipate His eternal pleasures waiting for you in Heaven!

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

LIVING LIFE IN THE SHADOW

Personal Note: Recent events have conspired to push this topic to the forefront of my life, so if I don't write this column now I probably never will. Our family recently buried what the NT teaches us to think of as the temporary "tent" of both my mother and my father who, though they had been separated by 200 miles for the last 30 years, passed away within 8 days and fifteen minutes of each other. Though their stories are very different, both came to know Christ and were ready spiritually. Both were experiencing increasing health issues and were physically ready as well. In my mother's case, sixteen years of Alzheimer's disease concluded with sixteen days of taking no food or water. Two weeks watching someone slowly pass away in your own home gives you a lot of time to reflect on life and death. The unique privilege of personally bathing and preparing the body for burial, laying it in a hand-crafted pine casket, and burying it in a forest while birds sang (like she always wanted) gave further opportunity for contemplation and closure. This column, then, is not the stuff of academic sterility but personal experience.

As fallen and sinful beings, our habitual way of thinking and speaking is naturally at odds with reality as God expresses it. When confronted with Scriptural assertions that seem to conflict with the evidence of sight and experience, our tendency is to tweak its terminology and adjust its embarrassing overstatements so that it fits more comfortably with our perception of reality. We need to learn instead to readjust how we interpret the evidence and express ourselves, so that it mirrors God's depiction of reality.

Do Christians Die?

Let's begin by sampling the teachings of Jesus recorded in John. (The following verses reflect my own translation.)

The one hearing My word and believing the one who sent Me has eternal life and comes not into judgment but has crossed over out of death into life (5:24).

Jesus describes Himself as the bread that comes down out of Heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. . . . if anyone would eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. . . . This is the bread that came down from Heaven, not like [your] fathers ate and died—the one eating this bread lives forever (6:50, 51, 58).

On another occasion Jesus solemnly affirmed, *If anyone should keep My word, he should not see death ever (8:51).*

Jesus introduced a new way of describing a believer whose spirit had departed his body. Knowing that Lazarus had passed away in His purposeful absence (11:5, 6), he said to His disciples, *Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going to waken him (11:11).* John explains

that the disciples misunderstood what Jesus meant by sleep (11:12, 13), so that Jesus had to put it in terms that they would plainly understand: *Lazarus died (11:14).* But Jesus' description of choice for Lazarus' condition was not "death" but "sleep."

Jesus assured Martha in the most absolute language possible, *The one believing in Me, even though he may have died, will live; and all who are living and believing in Me will not die ever. Are you believing this? (John 11:25, 26).*

Jesus' question continues to challenge us today: *Do you believe this?* Or do you rationalize His language as a well-meant metaphor designed to comfort us, but you fall back on your sight and experience as the final arbiter of reality? We should understand New Testament references to believers who are "dead" or who have "died" as either occasional accommodations to our flawed human perspective (like Jesus in John 11:14), or as references to their physical, bodily existence only. Jesus stated the reality repeatedly and unambiguously—believers do not and will not ever die. Pastor and reformer Rowland Taylor fully grasped this when, five days before he was burned at the stake by Roman Catholic loyalists in 1555, he wrote to his family and friends, "Count me not dead, for I shall certainly live and never die" (J. C. Ryle, *Five English Reformers*, p. 83).

What Is Resurrection?

James—in proving a critical theological point about salvation—stressed that "the body without the spirit is dead" (2:26). Is that not an unequivocal statement of the universal reality of death, even for the believer? Yes, but note his wording: it is the *body* that is dead—and the body only—because it is without the spirit. The Biblical doctrine of resurrection, by definition, has nothing to do with the spirit. Only the body is resurrected, because only the body dies. Spirits do not await resurrection. Spirits are not resurrected because spirits never die; they are immediately transported. As foundational and distinctive as the doctrine of resurrection is to Christianity, the regularity with which it is misunderstood and misrepresented (especially at funerals) is remarkable.

At the same time, it is a mistake to assume that, because your spirit is the real "you," your body or what happens to it is inconsequential. The human spirit is not all-important, nor the body unimportant—contrary to the kinds of Greek philosophies that confronted Paul in Athens and the proponents thereof who openly mocked him when he spoke "of the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 17:32). The

OF DEATH—A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DYING

NT describes the body as the tent of the spirit, but it is not a disposable tent. God attaches enormous importance to the human body that He fashioned when He made man in His own image; so much so, that He repeatedly assures us that He will raise the body from the dust of the earth from which it was first formed and to which it returns at its death.

1 Corinthians 15

The Bible's most extensive discussion of resurrection is located in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul's habitual reference to the "dead" almost makes us suspect that we have overstated our case. But Paul has picked up on Jesus' expression; he teaches that by virtue of Jesus' bodily resurrection, "Christ . . . [has] become the firstfruits [of resurrection] of *them that slept*" (15:20; cf. 11:30). He does so again when he affirms that "we shall not all sleep" (15:51). The intervening explanation makes it clear that what is "dead" and "resurrected" is the *body* (15:35–49 contains ten references to "body").

What Paul teaches in this passage (15:50–53), then, is that some will be physically alive ("we shall not all sleep") at the transformation into our glorified *bodies*, while "the dead [bodies]" of those who *have* fallen asleep will likewise be transformed at the moment of resurrection. In either case, at that moment "we shall all be changed." Who will experience that transformation first? Or will it be a simultaneous experience for those who are alive and those who are "asleep"? Paul answers that question in 1 Thessalonians 4.

1 Thessalonians 4

The facts about the rapture and the resurrection are not supposed to be obscure or mysterious; Paul plainly states that he does not want Christians to be ignorant about these matters (4:13a). Then, once again, he refers to believers who have passed away as being "asleep" (4:13b) and teaches that the dead in Christ who are "asleep" will be transformed first, followed by the transformation of those who "are alive and remain" to the coming of the Lord (4:15–17). Paul's language in 4:14 is curious. What fact or assurance both alleviates our ignorance and prevents us from the kind of hopeless sorrow that characterizes the world's experience of death (4:13)? Here it is: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, even so also God will bring with Him those who were laid to sleep through Jesus" (4:14, literal).

Both "the dead in Christ" and those who are "asleep" describe believers who have passed away, but from the earthbound and human perspective. Their bodies, being

now without their spirits, are "dead"; yet, in reality, those bodies are only temporarily "asleep" because those bodies will be awakened, raised, and gloriously transformed into incorruptible *bodies* that are reunited in an eternal union with the spirits that once dwelt in them as a man lives temporarily in a tent.

The resurrection and glorification of our bodies is a *future confidence* unique to the Christian, and one of the distinctives of Biblical Christianity. But the *present confidence*, equally unique to the Christian, is that every believer whose body dies (or falls asleep) is immediately "present [at home] with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6, 8).

Conclusion

The word "cemetery" comes from a Latin word originally derived from a Greek noun meaning a *sleeping chamber* (a *bedroom* or *dormitory*). It is a noun form rooted in the very verb Jesus and Paul use throughout the NT to describe Christians who enjoy the immediate presence of God while their bodies "sleep" in anticipation of future resurrection.

Obviously, believers' bodies expire and pass away like anyone else's. That is part of the fallen human condition. Scripture takes us far deeper than the physical body. Scripture forces upon us the penetrating reality that every person is born dead. In Ephesians, Paul addresses believers as "you . . . who were dead in trespasses and sins" (2:1) because we were "alienated from the life of God" (4:18). "But God," he continues, ". . . even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (2:4, 5).

We are born and "live" dead in sin even while our bodies are alive. We are made alive at the new birth, never to die. If we can, being spiritually dead, inhabit living bodies, it should not be surprising or objectionable to insist that we, in fact and reality, do not die even if and when our bodies do.

For the unbeliever, physical death is the ultimate kiss of death, sealing one in eternal spiritual death. Though the unbeliever's body is raised, it is a "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29) unto a "second death" (Rev. 20:6, 14). For the believer, physical death is "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23)—the portal through which the soul passes into the very presence of God. While the spirit is "with the Lord," the body sleeps in anticipation of its resurrection and refashioning like Jesus' body of glory (Phil. 3:21), fitting us for our full entrance into our eternal inheritance of life (Rom. 8).

EDEN MANOR
Affordable Living in a
Caring Christian Atmosphere



*Especially designed for seniors 55 or over
and full time or retired Christian workers*

3405 W. 32nd Ave • Denver, CO 80211
303-455-6533 • manor@betheden.org
www.betheden.org

(a ministry of Beth Eden Baptist Church)

The
**Shepherd's
Bethel**



www.shepherdsbethel.org

Serving Independent
Fundamental Missionaries with
Fully Furnished Homes for
Deputation and Furlough

P.O. Box 37
West Baden Springs, IN 47469
Phone: 812-936-9648
shepbeth@shepherdsbethel.org
Michael Weiss - Director



FREE VACATION PACKAGES
available for Full Time Christian Workers

**Traveling?
Vacationing?
Moving?**

**Where will you attend
church?**



Check the internet!
www.findchurch.com

**The Traveler's
Church Finder**
The traveler's church finder.

Find a church by:
I-Highway, and/or State, and/or City,
and/or Pastor's Name.

Included are times of services, directions
to the church, and other information.



Pastor, you may submit an online
application to list your church. Code: FL

Grace Dental Mission, Inc.

☎ 978-454-6710
office@gracedentalmission.org
www.gracedentalmission.org

Engaging medical personnel in
short/long term missions service

Enabling church planting efforts
in adverse fields of service

BAPTIST HOME MISSIONS
Founded in 1969

**Church
Planting in
North
America**

- Planting New Baptist Churches
- Rescue of Churches in Decline
- Inner-City Church Planting

For more information contact:
Baptist Home Missions
P.O. Box 176 • Efland, NC 27243
704-433-4001
baptisthomemissions@juno.com
www.baptisthomemissions.org

**STANDING FAST
IN THE FAITH**



BAPTIST WORLD MISSION
PLANTING CHURCHES WORLDWIDE

P.O. Box 2149 • Decatur, AL 35602-2149
256.353.2221
www.baptistworldmission.org

No Sound Doctrine

Brian McLaren is known quantity in the emerging church movement. In a recent ChristianityToday.com interview, McLaren revealed his perspective on the new Christian era as “more about the Christian way of life than it is about a rigid and polemicized systems of belief.” In that same interview McLaren also believes that the future of Christianity will also require Christians to “join humbly and charitably with people of other faiths—Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, secularists and others—in pursuit of peace, environmental stewardship,” and other things that “matter greatly to the heart of God.”

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Church/Default.aspx?id=197306>.

Abducted Children

A Pakistani court has awarded the custody of two children, Saba Masih (13) and Aneela Masih (10) to their alleged kidnappers. The basis for this court ruling, said Judge Main Saeem Sardar, is that the children had converted to Islam, a move that invalidated their Christian parents’ right of guardianship.

Saba told the court that she and her sister had been inspired by Islam and had run away. She had stated her age to be seventeen and changed her name to Fatma Bibi and married (which could be done without parental consent only after

age sixteen). The children’s parents were not permitted to give evidence regarding their children’s true ages, nor were they allowed to talk with their daughters.

Christians make up less than two percent of Pakistan’s 168 million citizens. This makes Christian children a largely unprotected minority. Though charges have been filed regarding the kidnapping of these two girls, the police refused to believe the parents. No formal investigation ever left the doors of the police station.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianfreedom.org/cfi-news/1-latest-news/267-pakistanicourtgrantscustodyofgirlstokidnappers.html>.

New Christian-Muslim Statement

On Thursday, July 31, 2008, over 140 conference participants gathered at Yale University for a “Loving God and Neighbor” meeting. The purpose was to investigate ways that Christians and Muslims could work together to address world poverty, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, future wars, and religious freedom. The result was a cooperative statement that indicates further collaborative efforts are ahead.

Among the document signers are Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, and Geoff Turner, international director of the World Evangelical Alliance.

The document expresses

respect for each other’s faiths and a commitment to the unity and absoluteness of God. Each commits not to desecrate the other’s religious sites and to permit freedom of religious beliefs. The statement also affirms that dialogue is not a departure from the faith and that each side should maintain its faith’s distinctiveness.

Also alarming is the statement that each side would commit a week each year to preach to their congregations the good aspects found in the other’s faith.

This conference is the first in a series of conferences yet to come that are designed to “promote peace and understanding between the Abrahamic faiths.”

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080803/christian-muslim-statement-among-first-fruits-of-common-word-gathering.htm>.

Mass Arrests at Pro-Life Demonstration

Many pro-life demonstrators were arrested without formal charge in Bel Air, Maryland, in August of this year. The group stood on public property and moved at the request of police only to be arrested later. The following day the charge was revealed as loitering, failure to obey a lawful order, and disorderly conduct. All adult participants arrested spent the night incarcerated. Minor children were released shortly after being taken into custody. The group is considering a legal challenge to “civil rights

violations.”

This article can be referenced at <http://christiannewswire.com/news/186327360.html>.

California on Homeschooling

In the last edition of *FrontLine*, Californian homeschooling woes were articulated. The California 2nd District Court of Appeals had ruled that a homeschooling parent must possess teaching credentials in order to homeschool his children. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger promised to promote legislation to combat the 2nd District Court’s ruling. In a rare but welcome move the state Appellate Court ruled in early August to reverse the previous court’s decision. The laws in question usually exempt homeschooling but are intended to address private schools that in the eyes of the state are promoting substandard education. Legislation in thirty other states exempts homeschooling families.

This ruling does, however, issue the caveat that the rights of parents who homeschool can be overridden if the child is in danger.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-homeschool9-2008aug09,0,2128476,print.story>.

America on Marriage

In a recent USA Today/Gallup poll of 1007 adults, 49 percent of those surveyed believe that cohabitation prior to marriage will

reduce the chance of divorce later. Thirteen percent said cohabitation would have no influence. Seven percent had no opinion. Only 31 percent believe that cohabitating would increase the risk of the marriage's termination through divorce. The logic: Cohabitation helps you know the other person better before you say "I do."

The facts, however, say just the opposite. A 2006 study that has been published in the journal *Demography* states that one-half of all unions formed after prior cohabitation fail within one year. Ninety percent fail within five years.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2008/aug/08080106.html>.

No More Fidelity and Chastity

The July 12/19 issue of *World* magazine reported on the June biennial assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) meeting held in San Jose, California, where 54 percent of the delegates present voted to abolish church law that required all clergy and lay leadership to "live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness."

This revision would be a change to the constitutional provisions of the denomination. Hence this revision would require the approval of a majority of the denomination's 173 presbyteries over the course of the coming year. Concerning it and other leftward leaning revisions, one liberal caucus rejoiced the assembly had agreed to "open the door to the gifts and callings of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer members."

This article can be referenced at *World Magazine*, July 12, 19, 2008, *Presbyterians vote against fidelity and chastity*.

NOTABLE QUOTES

To be in Christ therefore, in the full import of the word, must certainly mean something more than a bare outward profession, or being called after his name. For, as this same apostle tells us, "All are not Israelites that are of Israel," so when applied to Christianity, all are not real Christians that are nominally such. Nay, this is so far from being the case, that our blessed Lord himself informs us, that many who have prophesied or preached in his name, and in his name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works, shall notwithstanding be dismissed at the last day, with "depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity."—George Whitfield

Honour your parents both in your thoughts, and speeches, and behaviour. Think not dishonourably or contemptuously of them in your hearts. Speak not dishonourably, rudely, unreverently, or saucily, either to them or of them. Behave not yourselves rudely and unreverently before them. Yea, though your parents be never so poor in the world, or weak of understanding, yea, though they were ungodly, you must honour them notwithstanding all this; though you cannot honour them as rich, or wise, or godly, you must honour them as your parents.—Richard Baxter

If any of you think that you have a perfect child, you will find yourselves grievously mistaken—the time will come when you will discover that evil is lurking there as it is in you, the father, or in you, the mother—and it will only need a suitable opportunity to display itself! It will scarcely need fostering by ill companions—but even in a godly household where the atmosphere of piety abounds—sin will grow up in the child as naturally as weeds grow in a garden that is left to itself.—C. H. Spurgeon

It is under the shadow of the imperfections of the Church that wicked men find shelter from the scorching heat of their conscience. If they can detect a minister in sin. If they can discover a deacon or an elder indulging in iniquity. If they can quote a justification for sin from the lips of a Church member, how content and pleased the wicked are! They did, as it were, but walk in their transgressions before—but when they find a church member in the same path, then they run greedily in the way of iniquity.—C. H. Spurgeon

John Piper Interview

A recent YouTube interview between John Piper and Adrian Warnock is available for online viewing. It regards John Piper's ministry with the New World Alive conference in Wales. When asked why he and other Americans continue to come to this particular conference, Piper responded with an affinity for the common cause which in his words surrounded "the penal substitution as being precious beyond words."

His broader purpose for his involvement was stated as: "I thought it had, up to this point, a kind of unifying effect because I'm contaminated with charismatic influence and I'm reformed to the core—like I say I'm a seven-point Calvinist—that sort of thing. And so that's an unusual combination. So I've been to the Leister Conference with the Banner of Truth books, I've been to the Brighton Conference with what, Newfrontiers? And I've been to FIEC, and I've been here now, and that seems to be broad. So evidently my role is to function as a kind of voice that can attract a broad array of evangelicals. So that's the bigger reason. I like serving that purpose, so if I can serve that purpose, I'll come over. I didn't know that, but I'm told that, and I'm pleased to help draw exegetically serious, Bible, gospel people, whether charismatic or not, together. I think that's a wonderful calling."

This article can be referenced at <http://adrianwarnock.com/2008/06/interview-john-piper-on-new-word-alive.htm>.

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.

Expanding in Ethnic Evangelism

Pearson Johnson

In the last *Global Focus* we looked at the need for expanding our ethnic evangelism as Fundamental Baptist churches and at some ways we can develop our focus on the opportunities around us. In this article we will present some ways our church has practically moved forward in reaching our diverse community with the gospel.

First of all, you must know your community. There is an abundance of demographic information available online for your region.¹ Some organizations also provide a custom study of your area, which includes growth trends, ethnic analyses, socioeconomic statistics, etc. If you truly believe that you are God's church in one particular location, then knowing your community will help you know who you need to reach. If your church is older, your community has likely changed and your evangelistic opportunities have broadened.

Second, provide evangelistic material in other languages for your church. Once you know the various ethnic groups present in your community, order materials in the languages spoken around you.² Bibles are available in most languages. Most evangelism and discipleship works are available in Spanish and other languages. Make these resources available to your church members.

Third, reach out to international students at the local university. We were shocked to realize there were thousands of students from unreached mission fields studying at a university less than ten miles from our church. When we offered to get involved with them, we were warmly accepted. Since then, we have started a campus ministry, and the Lord has blessed with many opportunities. The possibilities for ministry and outreach abound as God burdens church members for international students!

Fourth, invite interns to spend a summer with you. If you are not sure you have the time to pursue opportunities or even to investigate them, contact a Christian college and offer to host an intern or two for the summer. By providing housing and a small stipend, you can host an intern burdened for cross-cultural ministry. It is a win-win for you and them, as they can dedicate their summer to reaching out to those they are burdened for, and you can

guide their outreach, research, and ministry opportunities to help move your church forward. We have had what we call "Global-Local Interns" as well as single ladies who have come and lived in our Muslim community for the summer. These interns have been a tremendous blessing to our church.

Fifth, translate your events and services for first-generation immigrants and internationals. We purchased a set of headsets that can be worn anywhere in the auditorium while someone translates the sermons in the sound booth. This is very helpful for first-generation immigrants and internationals whose English is limited but whose children can fully participate in the English ministries of the church. For outreach events we have provided translation in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian, and noted this on advertisements. It is difficult for these families to cross language barriers. Make sure they know they are welcome at your church.

Finally, seek to plant churches in diverse areas beyond your reach. The best hope for many lost people is a renewed church-planting effort in urban ethnic areas. Much of our church planting is focused on growing suburban areas. However, changing urban populations provide immense opportunities for church planting and missions work in our country. By planting churches, we can penetrate areas that Fundamental Baptists have long since abandoned.

We certainly have more work to do in our community, but we are thankful that God has been at work to open our eyes to see the opportunities here. We pray God will do a work among all of our Fundamental Baptist churches for His glory among all peoples.

Pearson Johnson is the Pastor of Missions and Evangelism at Inter-City Baptist Church near Detroit, Michigan. If you have questions or comments, please contact him at pjohnson@intercity.org.

¹ See the Jan/Feb 2006 *FrontLine Global Focus* by David Shumate for helpful information on demographic research.

² See www.majestic-media.com for "God's Bridge to Eternal Life" in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and other languages.

Church Directory

Tri-City Baptist Ministries

Touching and Reaching People for Eternity

**Tri-City Baptist Church
Tri-City Christian Academy
International Baptist College
International Baptist Missions**

Dr. Michael D. Sproul
Senior Pastor

2150 E Southern Ave
Tempe, AZ 85282
480.838.5430
info@tricityministries.org

www.tricityministries.org

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Bradley Smith

200 N. Roselle Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194
(847) 885-3230 • www.bethelministries.org

Faith BAPTIST CHURCH

500 West Lee Road • Taylors, SC 29687
(864) 322-0700 • FAX (864) 322-0838
www.fbctaylors.org • info@fbctaylors.org



Dr. John C. Vaughn
Pastor Emeritus

COLONIAL HILLS Baptist Church

8140 Union Chapel Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46240
(317) 253-5597
www.colonialhillsministry.org



BOB TAYLOR
Pastor

Bethel Baptist Church

truth changing lives

754 E. Rockhill Rd
Sellersville, PA 18960
215-536-9200

www.bethelbc.org

Rob Campbell, Senior Pastor
Sermons available online



FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

833 15th Avenue
Longmont, Colorado 80501
303-776-5655 • Fax 303-776-5723
church@fbelongmont.org
www.fbelongmont.org

Pastor Rick Cross

Upper Cross Roads BAPTIST CHURCH

2717 Greene Road, Baldwin, Maryland 21013
(410) 557-6963 • FAX (410) 557-7285
www.ucrbaptist.org • ucrbaptist@ucrbaptist.org

All services interpreted for the hearing impaired



Dr. Robert A. Condict

Christ is the Answer for the Crossroads of Life

Heritage Baptist Church

Antioch, California

Home of Heritage Baptist Academy (K-12)

www.heritageantioch.com • (925) 757-5242
Dr. John Mincy, Pastor Jim Oosterwind, Associate

The Church With A Servant's Heart



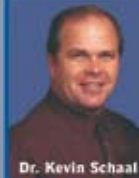
Dr. David Innes, Pastor



HAMILTON SQUARE BAPTIST CHURCH

A Welcoming and Transforming Church Since 1881

1212 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 • hamiltonsquare.net • 415.673.8586



Dr. Kevin Schaal

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Northwest Valley BAPTIST CHURCH

in the Phoenix Metro Area
623-581-3115

4030 W. Yorkshire Dr. Glendale, AZ www.nwvalleybaptist.org



Bible Baptist Church

1237 Paoli Pike
West Chester, PA 19380
(610) 692-4492

Home of West Chester Christian School

www.bbcwc.com



Pastor Mike Ascher

Service Times:
Sunday School 9:15 A.M.
Morning Worship 10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 P.M.

Praise God for His grace at work in Falls Baptist Church! Our church, academy, Bible college, and seminary are united in the goal to produce Spirit-filled leaders impacting the world with the good news of life in Christ Jesus. When you visit, you will always receive a warm welcome and the ministry of the Word through godly music and Bible preaching.



Pastor Wayne Van Gelderen

Falls Baptist Church

1469 W12703 Appleton Ave.
Menomonie Falls, WI 53051
www.fallsbaptist.org
262.251.7051



Soldiering On through Setbacks

Marshall Fant

Joining the Army was supposed to be simple—filling out the forms was the only confusing part. But as we learn from Job, life sometimes takes confusing turns without warning. Believing that the Lord called me to serve Him as a United States Army Chaplain, I applied to become a chaplain candidate, never expecting how the Lord would use the process to try me, confuse me, and draw me closer to Himself.

Since high school, I have felt a burden—a calling—to serve my country. Even before I was called to preach, I enrolled in Air Force ROTC (Det. 770) at Clemson University. Then, after transferring to BJU to complete my degree in Bible, I began to explore the possibility of serving as an Army chaplain. My family rejoiced when the FBFI Commission on Chaplains approved me as a candidate in February 2007 during the spring semester of my senior year. It seemed to my fiancée (now my wife!) and me that this was God's will. Every arrow pointed toward the Army.

In my FBFI application process I wrote that "the men of our Armed Forces greatly need moral direction. Many have come to the Army searching for answers, wondering what will happen if they become the next casualty of war. Many brave soldiers are fearful for their future, having no confidence in their soul's eternal destiny. They need loving companionship, wise counsel, and strong guidance in the Word of God so that they may know God, face the future in faith, and better serve their country." I still believe that the United

States Armed Forces are home to an open mission field with countless young men and women confronting the realities of death and God. My heart's desire is to reach them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But during final exam week, I received a phone call from the Chaplain Recruiter informing me that my condition prevented me from entering the chaplaincy. I didn't say anything but "okay." She reiterated, "Do you understand, sir? You will not be allowed to be a chaplain." Stunned, I simply answered, "Yes." I hung up the phone wondering, "What happened? What now?"

The health forms I had filled out months before included a question about allergies or reactions to any kind of insect sting. My response had to be given in a small box, "yes," or "no." While working at the Wilds Christian Camp as a counselor, I had been stung by bees on two occasions. Both times I had experienced minor swelling, so I checked "yes" and explained in the "comments" section below. I simply told the truth; it was, after all, just a couple of bee stings. Or so I thought.

The Army often "waives" some manageable physical conditions—nearsightedness, asthma, and even shellfish allergies. I thought my condition would be no different, but so far, I've had no success. Regarding my future chaplaincy, I am, somewhat like Hamlet, left to ponder, "Two bees, or not to be?" I know the Lord could simply heal me of this allergy, and there is a treatment (immunotherapy) that could prevent an allergic reaction

in the future, but it is costly and not covered by my health insurance.

If you regularly pray for chaplains, and I sincerely hope you do, I ask that you also pray for those of us who really want to become chaplains. When a young man is called to the ministry, there is a long road of preparation before he is ordained or called to a church. Over the past two years I have felt the highs and lows of that preparation. I know for certain that the grace of God and the prayers of my parents, friends, and family have kept my focus on the goodness and love of my God. More setbacks may come, as they come to everyone. We need your prayer support and encouragement to become chaplains as certainly as we will need your support when we become chaplains. Our hopes are still high that if God so wills, He will resolve this setback. But even if God should not allow me to become an Army chaplain, would you pray we would be faithful as we seek to reach military families wherever we meet them in the future?

Marshall Fant is an FBFI chaplain candidate. He attends Bob Jones Memorial Seminary.

Editor's Note: We requested that Marshall Fant write this article because he exemplifies the heart and character that the FBFI seeks in its chaplains. Would you pray with us that the Lord would open this door, and if He wills, that He would provide the necessary funds for immunotherapy so that Brother Fant will be able to pursue this ministry opportunity further?

Your Source For...



Bulletins



Banners



Brochures & Tracts



Websites

Harvest Media has been serving the design needs of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship for the past 17 years. We are passionate about helping Fundamental churches look their best and reach their communities for Christ. Call us today to talk about what we can do for your ministry.

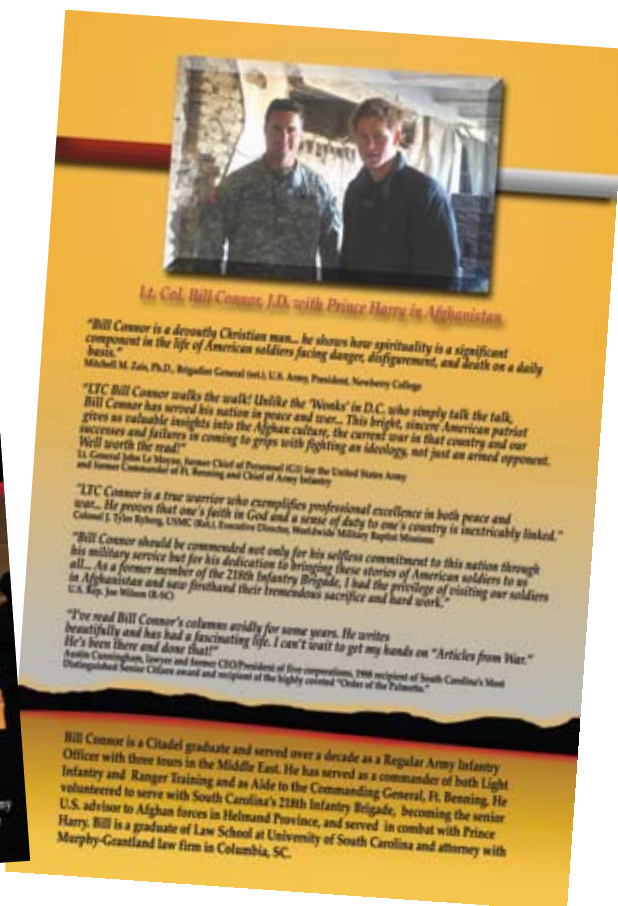
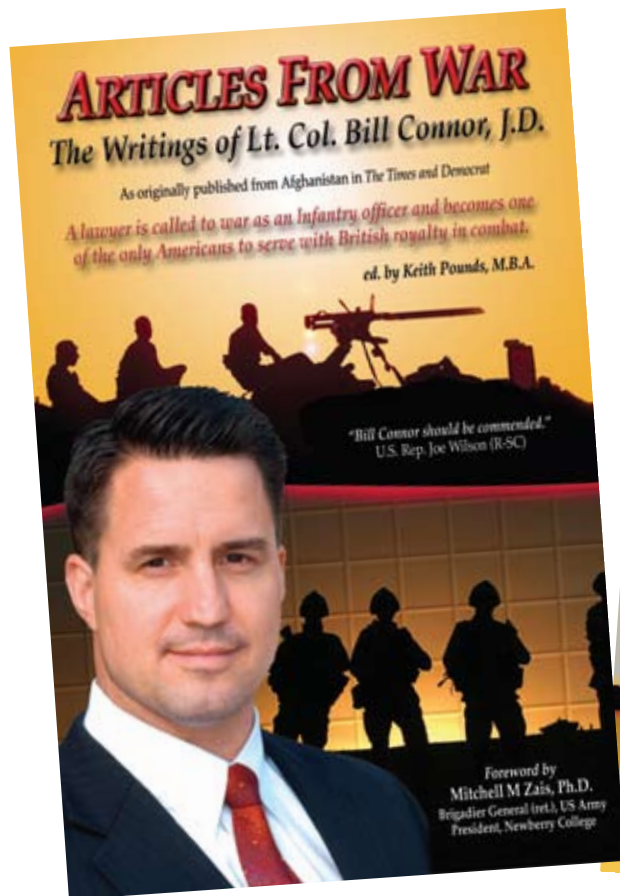
HarvestMedia 

 (877) 352-4345 (toll free)

 harvestmedia.com

Behind the Lines

Rob Johnson



If you are tired of the mainstream media's take on how the Global War on Terror is progressing and would appreciate the perspective of an unashamed "born-again" Christian who shared that perspective from behind the lines, literally, you should read the recently released book entitled *Articles from War*. In it, South Carolina lawyer-turned-infantry officer Lt. Col. Bill Connor details his compelling story as the senior American advisor in the Helmand province of Afghanistan during a recent period of resurgent Taliban activity.

Originally published as a chronological series of short articles for South Carolina's *Times and Democrat* newspaper, Connor's work retains a rough, unrefined style that can be distracting unless the reader remembers the circumstances in which each article was dispatched. The goal in preserving the original content is to expose the reader to the initial thoughts and emotions of a man enduring the stresses of a combat environment. Several

sections were written either prior to or after his return from Afghanistan, and provide commentary on a number of fundamental and peripheral issues facing America and her military today. The first two appendices ("Defeating Enemy Ideology in the War on Terror" and "The 'Global War on Terror' Should Be Called by Its Proper Name: 'The War with Radical Islam'") are especially noteworthy and deserve serious consideration.

Articles from War will expose you to the wide array of trials our Christian service members are experiencing and will offer ways to best support them and their families during this long war. It puts forward a perspective that flies in the face of most current liberal war pieces, which depict America's struggle against radical Islam as pointless, misguided, or hopeless. The book dispels many exaggerated or deceitful media claims routinely heard about Islam. According to Lt. Col. Connor's firsthand experience, our military members are not only winning on the battlefield, but

they are gaining the hearts and minds of the people through selfless and heroic service. There are many interesting reports, from the author's account of his personal dealings with England's Prince Harry and a persecuted Afghan Christian to his harrowing experience with close-quarters combat. At times intriguing, this senior Infantry Officer's story was not written for profit but as a witness to the truth. It is an easy-to-read and refreshing Christian perspective on the nature and importance of America's current conflict.

Rob Johnson currently serves as a Battalion Chaplain with the 2nd Marine Division, located at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Articles from War was released by Infinity Publishing on August 22. It is available on www.buybooksontheweb.com for \$12.95 (search the author's name). All proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to Christian schools in South Carolina.



Outstandingly Christian Education

- **Developing** the whole person—mind, body, soul and spirit
- **More than 100** undergraduate and more than 70 graduate programs
- **Reputation** for academic excellence with classes taught from a biblical worldview
- **Bible-based** chapel programs and opportunities for spiritual growth
- **Highly** qualified, caring faculty
- **Fine arts** tradition that stands out among Christian colleges
- **Recreational** and competitive sports
- **Safe,** beautiful, gated campus with comfortable residence halls
- **Proven** track record of job placement for graduates



BOB JONES University

Academic excellence with a biblical worldview

800-BJ-AND-ME • www.bju.edu • Greenville SC 29614

BJU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, or national or ethnic origin. ©2008 Bob Jones University U TCP0408

FrontLine Magazine

500 West Lee Road

Taylors, SC 29687

*A publication of the Fundamental Baptist
Fellowship International*

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 823
Greenville, SC