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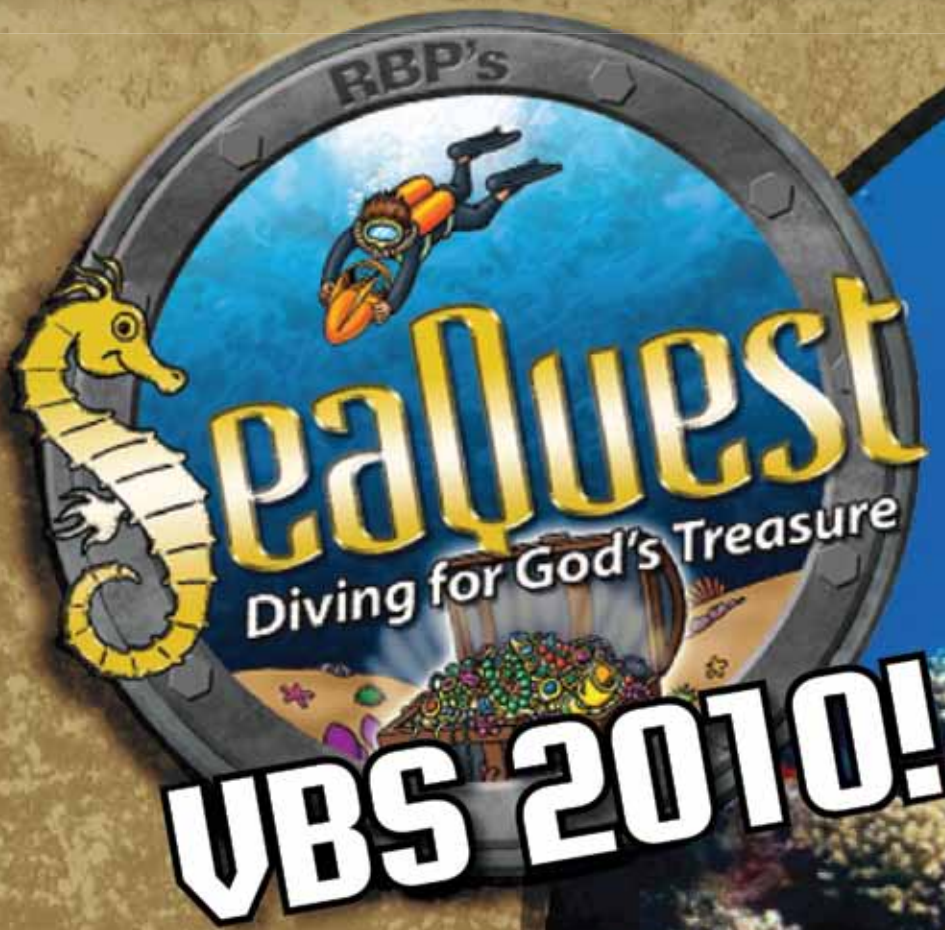
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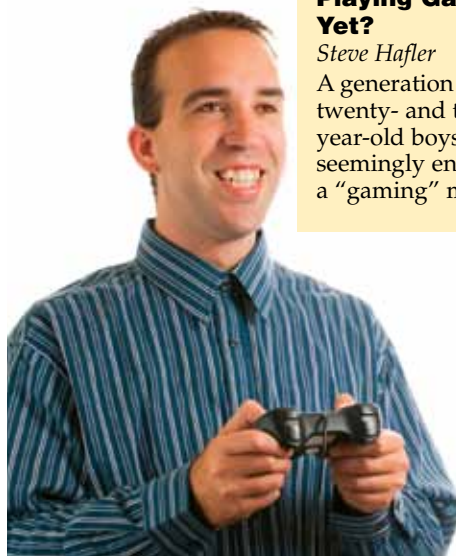
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Mail Bag

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You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.



The latest issue of *FrontLine* which we received yesterday was such a wonderful blessing. As I read through all of the articles by and about Chaplains I thought of how important this issue is in getting the word out about the Chaplaincy. I would love to have a bundle of the magazine to send to some pastors and churches I know that have had questions. Great job! It made me really glad to be a part of the FBFI Chaplaincy team.

*CH (CPT) Michael
P. Barnette*

*(Chaplain Barnette was
recently deployed to Iraq.)*

We greatly appreciated the article by

Chaplain Robert Spivey ("A Biblical Formula for Stress") in your most recent issue of *FrontLine* magazine. We are requesting permission to reprint this article in our upcoming issue of *Foundation* magazine. . . . Robert Spivey is currently a member of our church here in Fresno, CA (the local church headquarters of *Foundation* magazine and the Fundamental Evangelistic Association), and we greatly appreciate his ministry and the character and integrity with which he ministers at Lemoore NAS.

*Pastor Matt Costella
Fundamental
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Afraid to Obey God's Call

John C. Vaughn

Many years ago a young man came to see his pastor for counsel about his call to missions. He had told friends and family that God had called him to France and had sought the counsel of fellow church members who were on their way there. He was learning about French culture and history. In tears he explained that he was not sure that he was called to go to France. He was ashamed and afraid. He didn't know what to do. After prayer and discussion, he finally admitted, "I know I'm not called to France." When asked what had caused him to think that was God's will, he meekly answered, "I volunteered to go France because I was afraid God might call me to Africa."

This is a true story; I was the pastor. There is no need to tell you who he is, but I have his permission to share the story. He was genuinely afraid of Africa and the thought that God might make him go there. He grew up under the influence of ideas that are as foreign to young people today as Africa was to him. Racism was widespread in culture, schools, and churches. Public television, still in its early days, pandered to prejudice. Public schools were segregated. Fear of Africa as a mission field was fed by fear of African-Americans in general. Those of us who were children in the fifties and sixties well remember the awkwardness and confusion of those days.

On Saturdays we watched old Tarzan movies on black-and-white

TV. There, Africans were portrayed as childlike and superstitious, fit only for bearing the burdens of wealthy white people on safari. Frightening images of warring jungle tribes (from Saturday television) were in our minds when we were taught missionary stories on Sunday about the Mau-Mau uprising in Kenya or the horrors of civil war in what was still called the "Belgian Congo." We heard stories of martyrdom and the hardships of missionary families fleeing unspeakable violence.

Communist tyrant Nikita Krushchev had American children waking up with nightmares of mushroom clouds while elementary schools taught children how to crouch under their desks for safety (!) in the event of nuclear attack. My

friend was not the only young person who had grown up with political and racial fear. In feigned lightheartedness we joked, "Yeah, I'm afraid if I give my heart to the Lord, He'll make me go to Africa." As he unburdened his heart, we talked about three big fears of carnal young people in those days: waking up to an atom bomb lighting up the horizon, getting drafted and dying in Viet Nam, or getting sent to Africa. How did we respond to those fears? In the fifties we hid under our desks; in the sixties we joined the Air Force; in the seventies we surrendered to go to France even though we were not called.

Sinners fear God, not by respecting Him, but in the same way that Adam and Eve feared Him after the Fall. They hid from Him because they had not trusted His word, and their

disobedience left them in fear. When a painful trial comes, Christians sometimes ask, "Is God punishing me?" We hear much today in reaction to the pressure of fear-driven Christianity, but let's not forget the very real pain and fear that fostered it. The would-be missionary to France was genuinely afraid of Africa, but he soon realized that he had no reason to be afraid of the will of God. His fear was based on cultural concepts, but Biblical truth delivered him from his fear. He came to understand that the fear of what might happen to him was an unjustified fear of God for allowing it. He wasn't just saying "no" to Africa; he had been saying "no" to God.

Missionary Jimmy Rose tells the story of how he saw the presentation of a missionary to Brazil. In one picture he was sitting near a fire with nationals, eating a monkey. Bro. Rose was up all night vomiting and pleading with God not to send him to Brazil—not to make him eat a monkey. Finally, near dawn, he "ate the monkey." He told the Lord if God wanted him to go to Brazil and to eat a monkey, he would obey. He went to Brazil, spent his life there, led thousands to Christ, but never had to eat a monkey.

My other friend also told the Lord he would obey. He would go wherever the Lord called him to go—even to Africa. Because he was willing to go anywhere, God left him right where he was supposed to be, in his local church, praying for missionaries in Africa and being greatly used of God to build and lead a Bible Quiz ministry that has taught many young people thousands of Bible verses. Many of those young people are now in full-time ministry—some in Africa.

In feigned lightheartedness we joked, "Yeah, I'm afraid if I give my heart to the Lord, He'll make me go to Africa."

Striving for Theological Maturity in African Churches

Phil Hunt



From the picturesque thatch-roofed villages to the bustling metropolises, Africa is a study in contrasts. Africa is the continent where the number-one killer is still mosquito-born malaria,¹ yet it is also the place where the first heart-transplant² was successfully carried out. Twenty-first century Africa is dominated by Islam³ in the north and Christianity across the central and southern regions—yet African Traditional Religion⁴ remains the primary theological grid.

Challenge of Urbanization

Robert Moffat once told young David Livingstone, “In the north I have seen in the morning sun, the smoke of a thousand villages where no missionary has ever been.” That statement lit a fire in Livingstone; he would spend most of his adult life pushing across the southern and central regions of Africa with the gospel of Christ. In Livingstone’s Africa of the 1800s there were a few cities in coastal regions, but the majority of Africans lived in rural village settings.

Not so today. Africa is the most rapidly urbanizing continent in the world, and that rapid urbanization is producing great challenges to the social and cultural fabric of African society. Though traditional village life still characterizes a large segment of African society, it is steadily declining as people move from villages to towns and cities at a rate of 3.5% per year.⁵

Over one-third of sub-Saharan Africans currently live in urban areas, and in the next thirty years that figure may swell to over half the continent’s population.⁶ The United Nations Population Fund projects that sub-Saharan Africa’s urban population will double between 2000 and

2030. Of these people, the bulk of urban dwellers in Africa will reside in cities with a population of 200,000 or less.⁷

The face of Africa is changing before our very eyes! With urbanization comes the challenge of reaching new and rapidly growing cities with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Consider the urban challenges for the African church planter:

- First, Africans in urban settings quickly develop an appetite for material things.
- Second, urbanization results in the disintegration of the traditional African family structure. Urban pressures on the traditional African family are immense. Instead of the focus being on family relationships, the focus shifts to the demands of a job, and the family unit begins to break up. Traditional family connections and responsibilities begin to disintegrate.
- Third, with urbanization comes exposure to education, philosophies, and ideas from the western world. Urbanized Africans increasingly embrace a plurality of ideas relating to God. These ideas are often syncretized in one way or another with African Traditional Religious beliefs. Finally, over time urban communities in general buy into the idea that everything is relative, that there is no absolute truth.

Challenge of Strengthening Weak Existing Churches

Modern missiologists claim that Africa has the fastest growing church in the world. Yet a careful look at that claim gives cause for great concern.

Consider the findings of a recent study done among

250 church plants with the Baptist Union in South Africa:⁸

■ Over one-third of these churches are pastored by “remote control,” meaning the pastor does not stay locally with their church but either travels there on Sundays/weekends or visits only two Sundays or less per month.

■ Less than half of the pastors believe that preaching verse-by-verse through God’s Word is the best food for their flock. Over half say they would rather choose what to preach along more subjective guidelines or just preach evangelistically.

■ Only one-third of the pastors say they are sure the majority of congregants have a good understanding of the gospel.

■ Over half of these churches still do not have a capable pastor or leader who has received or is receiving adequate training (even if it is nonformal).

Sadly, here in Africa this is not an isolated problem. A leader in one of the older evangelical missions in Zambia shared with me that his denomination has 700 churches across Zambia, but only 33 of those churches have pastors (21%)⁹. Our own movement has far too often failed to produce reproducing indigenous African churches. It could be that the legacy of Fundamental missions in Africa will be church plants that are dependent, unproductive, and slowly dying off.

In his book *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa* African theologian Tite Tienou writes, “Africa has the fastest growing Church in the world; it may also have the fastest declining Church! Numerical growth far outpaces spiritual depth and maturity in African Christianity.”¹⁰ Tienou later wrote, “I consider the deepening and the nourishing of the faith of those who identify themselves as Christians [in Africa] to be of the utmost urgency.”¹¹

What Is the Answer?

One theory for developing strong indigenous churches in Africa is for the American church to financially support African missionary pastors for a minimal amount each month. The popular line of reasoning is that this will provide for the gospel to be preached and churches to be established across Africa. The sad reality is that many of these churches simply join the ranks of the theologically weak that already abundantly exist on the continent.

While in the short-term the gospel may be preached



and a church established, the majority of these churches become “terminal churches”¹² (Heb. 5:12). Their congregations never own the ministry, and the people become spectators instead of participants. All of the teaching and discipleship are left up to the missionary pastor. New converts are not expected to “teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). One church planter in Africa observed, “These churches are like seedless grapes—delightful to taste but without reproductive power. They are neutered churches, delightful and productive in their own imme-

diolate context but without the ability to be reproductive” (VanRheenan).

If the African church is to take up the mantle of planting reproducing churches in the cities, towns, and villages across Africa, a generation of theologically trained African leaders must be prepared for the task. “There is an increasing need, especially as the process of urbanization continues and standards of education rise, for Christian ministers to exercise in the teeming cities of the developing world a systematic expository preaching ministry, ‘to proclaim the Word . . . with all teaching.’”¹³

The training needed to prepare the next generation of leaders in Africa must take three forms: *formal*, *nonformal*, and *informal*. Formal training takes place in a structured

IF THE AFRICAN CHURCH IS TO TAKE UP THE MANTLE . . . A GENERATION OF THEOLOGICALLY TRAINED AFRICAN LEADERS MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE TASK.

classroom setting. Nonformal training is deliberately organized for the purpose of educating through experience. Informal training uses life activities as the basis for training in mentoring relationships. Among the rural people of Africa the majority of training is done through nonformal and informal methods. Though some formal training is carried out, the lack of access to books and materials and the often poor educational background of the people are barriers to formal training.

Our commitment to a church-planting movement must include strengthening existing churches by providing continuing training for the current generation of pastors leading these churches.

Second, we must commit to training the next generation of African pastors and missionaries by providing a rich

Word-saturated classroom experience with real-time ministry opportunities in the context of mentoring relationships. This is the educational and ministry goal of Central Africa Baptist College. Our burden is to prepare men for ministry across Africa who have a Biblical philosophy of pastoral ministry and New Testament passion for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. We desire to train men who will plant “germinal” churches across Africa—churches that will become reproducing fellowships of believers.

Africa yet needs missionaries who will pioneer and take the gospel to unreached areas, many of which exist in the lower portion of the 10/40 Window that runs through North Africa. But the long-term answer for Africa’s spiritual need is African missionary church-planters who have been equipped for the task, sent by African churches that sacrifice to carry the gospel to these needy regions.

If we are to see a truly indigenous church-planting movement across Africa, we must commit to the theological training of God-called African leaders.

Philip Hunt serves with his wife, Lori, and children in Zambia. Phil is the president of Central Africa Baptist College. He greatly desires to train the next generation of servant leaders to plant churches across Africa.

¹ Malaria: A Reemerging Disease in Africa. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol4no3/nchinda.htm>.

² Gateway, Cape. Chris Barnard Performs World’s First Heart Transplant. http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/pubs/public_info/C/99478.

³ Islamic Countries in Africa. http://www.islamproject.org/education/Africa_Mideast_etc.html.

⁴ African Traditional Religion. <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/>.

⁵ The Challenges of Urbanization in Africa. <http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:IvrE1Dpezo4J:www.housing.gov.za/amchud/Content/Presentations/THE%2520CHALLENGES%2520OF%2520URBANIZATION%2520AND%2520HUMAN%2520SETTLEMENTS%2520IN%2520AFRICA.pps+urbanization+afrika&cd=7&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=safari>.

⁶ Urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa. http://www.cfr.org/publication/14327/urbanization_in_subsaharan_africa.html.

⁷ State of the World Population. <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/>.

⁸ Tim Cantrell, “Launching Church Strengthening Movements in Africa.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Oct. 2006.

⁹ Personal interview with missionary leader of the Evangelical Church in Zambia, 2003.

¹⁰ Tite Tienou, *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa*. Issues in African Christian Theology. Nairobi, Kenya: East Africa Educational Publishers Ltd., 1998. Quoted in Cantrell, “Launching Church Strengthening Movements in Africa.”

¹¹ Tite Tienou, “The State of the Gospel in Africa.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 2001. 37(2):154–62, Quoted in Cantrell, “Launching Church Strengthening Movements in Africa.”

¹² Gailyn Van Rheenan, “Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies.” Zondervan, 1996, 148–49.

¹³ John Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*. 109. Quoted in lecture notes by Dr. Steve Hankins, Central Africa Baptist College, 2008.





The Strategy of Multiplication

Throughout Kenya grows a flowering tree with striking orange-red blossoms appropriately named the “flame tree.” The flame tree is indigenous to Africa, where it easily grows to a height of fifty feet and produces many clusters of flowers on the tips of its branches. A flame tree in full blossom is a beautiful sight to behold. But more precious in the sight of our Lord Jesus Christ is the multitude of indigenous Fundamental Baptist churches springing up throughout Kenya and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

Indigenous churches must be planted in Africa and the rest of the world by a deliberate strategy of multiplication.

Planting the First Seed

Every tree begins as a seed planted in the soil. Although by nature the seeds of trees are scattered somewhat haphazardly, a church planter must be more deliberate in his choice for seed planting. The primary principle for a strategy of church multiplication is to plant a church where it is most likely to thrive and multiply. Like most of the developing world, Africa is experiencing not only large population growth but also rapid urbanization. Africans are moving into the cities of the continent by the millions each year. The city of our ministry, Nairobi, Kenya, has a population of about five million people. It is projected to grow to twenty million by 2020! Similarly, Lagos, Nigeria (18

million); Lusaka, Zambia (10 million), and Johannesburg, South Africa (metro area, 10.2 million) are fast growing cities ripe for church planting. Although Fundamental Baptist churches need to be planted in even the remotest villages, an effective strategy for multiplying churches is to plant them in urban areas.

Even more specifically, the three churches we have planted in Nairobi have all been in new growth areas on the northeastern edge of the city. Here large numbers of people each month are migrating from the countryside to the city looking for jobs. It is estimated that five hundred people a day arrive in Nairobi from the rural areas. These newcomers who have been recently transplanted from their homes are often looking for a place to worship and fellowship in the city.

“Win the cities and you will win the country” is not an empty cliché but a fact of life. Economically, socially, and even spiritually, cities dominate the life of their nations. The most likely place to multiply churches and have the greatest impact in Africa and around the developing world is in the cities.

Nurturing the Seedling

Once a church has been planted its growth needs to be nurtured to prepare it for multiplication. Church

multiplication must be a part of the “DNA” of a church from its beginning. Soon after we planted our first church in Nairobi we began to share with our members the vision for planting a daughter church. Thus church multiplication became part of our “genes.” It was the expectation of the congregation that in the not-too-distant future we would ask some of our families to form the nucleus of a new church. In fact, our second and third churches were planted in another neighborhood of Nairobi in just this manner as several families, including an assistant pastor and three deacons, became the seed of the congregations.

A vital key to church multiplication is the development of leadership. In our first church six men responded to God’s call to vocational church ministry. Only one man was needed to become the national pastor of the church, so five men were left with the potential to become planters of new churches. Our second and third churches began with three of these trained and seasoned men as church planters ministering under the missionary’s guidance. A simple formula explains our philosophy of leadership development:

1. *Train them.* We began a local church-based Bible institute and later a four-year Bible college to give these men thorough Bible and theological knowledge as well as practical ministry skills.
2. *Try them.* Men called to a church-planting ministry must be given the opportunity to be proven and to develop their God-given gifts in local church ministries. These future church planters must have a wide range of opportunities to preach, teach, engage in personal evangelism, organize, and oversee ministries.
3. *Trust them.* Eventually the missionary must allow these men to begin their own churches while he mentors, guides, encourages, and prays for them along the way. This is not an overnight process but requires years of investment in their lives. Christ Himself poured His heart and life for three-and-a-half years into the training of His twelve apostles. There will be potential failures along the way, just as one of the Lord’s fell by the wayside, but the end will be the development of leadership and the resulting multiplication of churches.

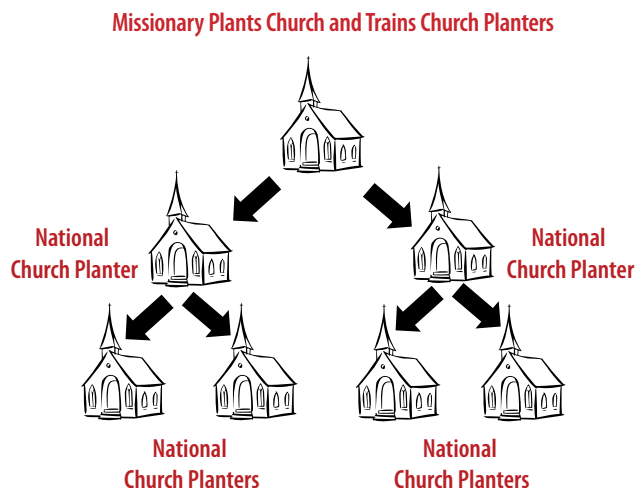
Multiplying the Fruit

A common approach to planting churches has been for the missionary to plant a church, eventually turning the leadership over to a trained national pastor. The missionary is then free to begin a second church, repeating the same process. Undoubtedly many Fundamental Baptist churches have been successfully planted around the world using this “church addition” method. This model of church planting can be visualized in the following manner:



In a missionary career of thirty years several churches could potentially be planted following this plan.

But a more effective plan for multiplying churches follows the pattern of 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” The “multiplication method” of church planting looks like this:



Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist, was awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Through her Green Belt Movement millions of trees have been planted in Kenya and other parts of Africa. Her simple model is “plant a tree to save a nation.” As Fundamental Baptists our motto should be “plant a church to save a nation.”

In 2009 Kenya reached a population of 40 million people. In the next twenty years that number is predicted to swell to 60 million. There are now a billion souls living in the continent of Africa who need to be evangelized and organized into congregations of Fundamental Baptist churches. Churches must be planted using a strategy of multiplication. Nothing less will get the job done.

Mike and Gail Mestler are missionaries to Nairobi, Kenya, with International Baptist Missions. They have served in Nairobi since 1993.

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The Same Commit Thou to Faithful Men

Josiah M. Wambua



The cliché “Christianity in Africa is many miles wide but only a few inches deep” is not new to most ears. Unfortunately, it still remains a reality to this day. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that believers are to pray so that the Lord of the harvest would call laborers into His harvest (Matt. 9:38). Once God calls laborers they need to be trained and equipped to do the work of the ministry. After all, our Lord took about three-and-a-half years training the twelve.

There is great wisdom in what Pastor Mike Sproul of Tri-City Baptist Church, Chandler, Arizona, used to say during my years of college training: “To do the work of the ministry without proper training is like trying to cut a eucalyptus tree with a butter knife—but proper training gives one a chain saw.”

In Kenya we need qualified workers to start and build Bible-believing Fundamental Baptist churches. Lack of trained church workers has hindered the effort of planting and building Bible-believing churches.

The Past

In the mid-1960s and early 1970s veteran missionary Edward Weaver took the lead in establishing independent Baptist churches in Kenya. He did a great work for the Lord and our country, for which I am ever grateful, as I am product of the Weaver ministry. Since then other missionaries have done a tremendous job of church planting both in major cities and in remote parts of the country.

Many of the churches planted, and especially the ones in cities such as Nairobi, still exist and are growing under the leadership of missionaries or national pastors who were trained by missionaries.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a frightening trend of losing some planted churches to liberal religious groups. The worst affected are those churches in the remote parts of the country. About forty percent of the churches started in remote parts of the country have closed due to lack of trained personnel. Many others in the rural parts of the country have maintained the name Baptist but have, over the years, compromised or joined liberal groups. Basically, this problem is attributable to lack of proper formal training of the national pastors who assumed leadership from the missionaries. Although most of these national pastors may not need seminary training, quality Bible-college training is vital.

In 2004 two veteran missionaries, Mike Mestler and Dr. Rick Simonsen, started Bible institute training for church workers in Nairobi, Kenya. These institutes mainly operated as ministries in the local churches they had planted.

In 2005 we started a ministry to the churches in the remote parts of the country. We visited and sensed such a great need for training among the local pastors. Three times a year we take our Bible institute to pastors and other church workers who cannot come to our new college in Nairobi due to cost or family limitations. Many pastors who have little education have been attending faithfully from more than seven churches. In August 2009 we had the first group of seventeen graduate with certificates in Bible.

However, the cost of bringing a national pastor to obtain Bible-college training in the United States is quite expensive. Existing Bible-believing colleges in Africa are few and far apart. There is a good Bible college in Zambia, Central Africa, established by missionaries, where some Kenyan students have attended in the recent past. Still, the cost involved makes it beyond the reach of most Kenyan pastors. There has been therefore a genuine need to provide affordable, Scriptural, formal training for pastors in Kenya.

Independent Baptist churches in Kenya need to maintain continuity and be indigenous—that is, self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. The need to train national pastors cannot be ignored.

The Present

Numerous independent Baptist churches were planted in Kenya in recent years. The cry of the current pastors now, whether missionary or national, is for someone with proper training to continue the work after them. Kenya still remains receptive to the gospel of our Lord. New converts and older believers need a shepherd to fill the pulpit but also to ground them against all the compromise of our day. A pastor can do that effectively only if he is well trained.

In 2009 Dr. Rick Simonsen, Brent Halstead, and Michael Rains under Baptist World Mission and Mike Mestler and myself under International Baptist Missions were led of the Lord to consolidate our efforts to facilitate college-level training for national pastors in Kenya. As pastors responsible for different local churches, we agreed that this could be achieved without compromising the independence of our local churches. We all are involved in teaching at the

Bible college. Occasionally we have adjunct professors come from the United States to teach modular courses.

The college is growing, and we have students from many independent Baptist churches in Nairobi and other parts of the country. More than half our student body consists of pastors who are already pastoring existing churches. What a blessing to equip servants for the Master!

The Future

We are looking forward to graduating our first students in November of 2010 with a Bible college degree. While there are still challenges to be overcome, we are persuaded that training servants for the Master will be a great help to the churches in Kenya.

Meanwhile, Kenya is becoming westernized rapidly. Some of our graduates will need more training to be better equipped to articulate the Word of God in a culture that is becoming more educated. We envision our Bible college being able to offer a master's degree. Plans for this program are under way, and we plan to initiate it in 2011, Lord permitting.

WE ARE STRONGER WHEN WE ARE TAUGHT, BUT WE ARE STRONGEST WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO TEACH.

If the Lord tarries, it will be a great privilege to see Independent College of Ministry continue and help churches become more self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating by training pastors and church workers for Bible-believing churches in Kenya.

Josiah M. Wambua serves as national pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Nairobi. Pastor Wambua holds two degrees from International Baptist College.



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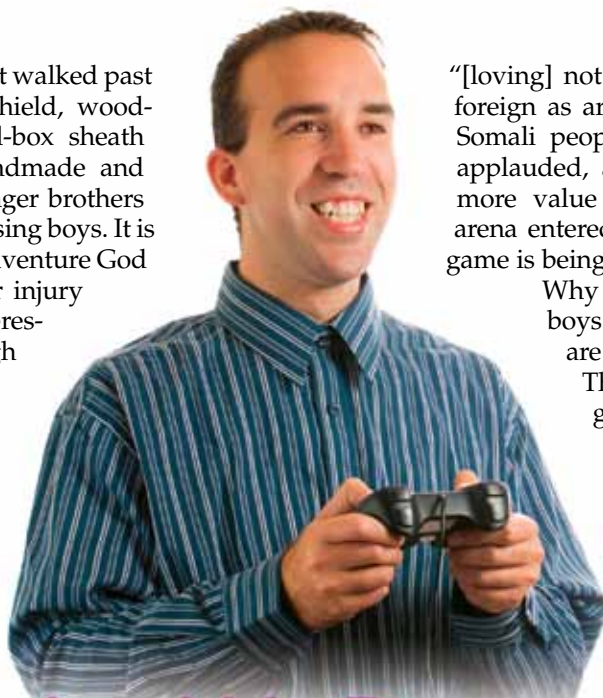
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My eleven-year-old son just walked past me with a cardboard shield, wooden sword, and a cereal-box sheath held together by string—all handmade and esteemed highly by his two younger brothers (the “enemy,” of course). I love raising boys. It is a daily reminder of the risk and adventure God has placed in a man’s heart. Our injury list from having three boys is impressive—three broken wrists, enough sutures to mend an elephant, a steel splinter in the eye, a two-inch thorn embedded deep into the foot, broken teeth from catapulted rocks and bicycle wrecks, countless cuts and scrapes, a toe caught in bike spokes resulting in natural nail removal, and many other bumps and bruises. We have been to the “theatre” (operating room) in Africa more than I care to remember—which is an adventure all by itself but never highlighted in tourist books. In spite of all this I have witnessed within the last several weeks sword battles, trampoline flips, jujitsu throws, airsoft campaigns, leaps over fences, climbs to the treetops, and improvised bicycle ramps. The three sisters have saved the kitty cats from their brothers on several occasions, and prisoners of war are still taken at random. All that said, our boys set an example of how we ought to live life to the fullest with every fiber of our being (even though discernment is obviously not yet a top-shelf item for them). I have great hope that my boys will use this same God-given risk-taking spirit by allowing God to transform it into a plan of action that stretches across Africa and to other unreached areas where people have never heard the name of Jesus.

Today’s older “boy” generation is passionate about Nascar, Xbox, fantasy football, action films, and PlayStation. Adult boys have a working knowledge of the electronic combat arsenal and have developed devastating strategies. If the round hands them a defeat, they meditate on how to improve their battle plan so as to humiliate their opponent in the next game. But the nagging reality is that few of these boys take their creativity and planning beyond the realm of role-playing fantasy. It is a disturbing revelation that our boys are struggling to become men. “Real-time strategy” continues to take the place of reality. True adventure is pawned for cardboard squares and plastic tokens. Artificial risk-taking is seen as commendable, while the idea of



Are We Done Playing Games Yet?

A Call for Boys to Grow Up and Go Forward

Steve Hafler

“[loving] not their lives unto the death” is as foreign as are the city of Mogadishu and the Somali people who live there. Spectating is applauded, and winning a high score holds more value than Christ Himself. The only arena entered is one in which a major league game is being played.

Why such cheap substitutes? These boys have not yet realized that they are spending their one life right now.

They have not realized that the greatest and most important thing in the world is the gospel—the

King of kings dying an excruciating and shameful death on a

wooden cross in the place of sinners. “I declare unto you

the *gospel* which I preached unto you. . . . For I delivered

unto you *first of all* that which I also received, how that

Christ died for our sins

. . . that he was buried,

and that he rose again the third day” (1 Cor.

15:1, 3, 4). The gospel

is still the most important thing: “I am ready

to preach the *gospel*. . . . I

am not ashamed of the *gospel*

of Christ” (Rom. 1:15,

16). Our boys are spending

their youthful strength on games while viewing the gospel as a dull agenda to waste life on—a generation of twenty- and thirty-year-old boys seemingly enslaved in a twelve-year-old gaming mindset. They possess no spiritual strategy to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to unreached people groups. They embrace no game plan to herald this message to those who have never heard. They boast about playing on a “heroic” level while sensing no shame living life on “novice.” Like little boys, well-meaning but lacking discernment, they wield the stick sword (video game controller) with great proficiency but still feel awkward and inauthentic handling the Sword of the Spirit. No faith, no forward motion, no risk, and in the end very little reward. “Make believe” both numbs the senses and steals the great joy in living the one life God has given us for His glory and pleasure. No wonder this is a restless, disillusioned, and aimless generation. Is it any surprise that the Lord’s Day is viewed as an interruption to what was otherwise a fairly good week? Their hearts tell them there is something better, but they just can’t seem to stop the game. Though called to be soldiers for Jesus Christ, they have become entangled in the pleasures of this world. They have become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, sins that are often connected to the same media platform on which their games are played. This may explain the abounding apathy to the Lord’s command

to preach the gospel to the remotest parts of the earth. The Biblical truths of spiritual warfare and the Great Commission have never been experienced beyond the sphere of their own personal struggles or the geography of their own front door.

Is this the example we want to leave for our sons and their generation? Is this the courage and bravery we want to instill in others? Are we living the example that the essence of life is about the cross of Jesus Christ and the fullness of life He came to give? Are we consumed with a Christ-centered mission, or is our lifestyle a message that says the best things in life are home media, fine food, vacation time, and a decent job? Is this the baton we pass to the next generation?

This is a call to the young men of this generation to consider going forward by faith and advancing the gospel to foreign lands and taking a worthy risk (Acts 15:26; 17:6; Rom. 16:4). This is a call to fathers to begin training the one or two boys who bear your name to live their one life for Jesus Christ. It is a call to men to mentor other boys who do not have a father's faith to observe and imitate. Men set the example by doing, by action, and by deployment, whereas boys relish games where they get a second life if the battle becomes too intense. Men go forward by faith, setting a living example before the little eyes who are watching. Read the Book of Acts with your children. Talk about the exploits of people in the Bible and throughout church history. Go on a short-term mission trip with your son to proclaim Christ in a difficult-access region, and journal together about the dangers, the fears, and the triumphs. Pray for one or two missionaries a week with your children so that they get to know that family personally and can see the work God is doing through their prayers.

For years the church of Christ has prayed for the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to fields that are still white and ready to harvest. Are you the answer to their prayers? These white fields are not found next to amusement parks; they exist in harsh climates, in the middle of civil wars scarred by genocide, amidst poverty, and where debilitating diseases ravage villages. In many of these countries the fashion of the day is wearing a turban and observing Ramadan.

Carefully answer the questions put forward by Isaac Watts in the following hymn. Then ask God to give you the grace so that your life would mirror the resolve in the last stanza.

Am I a soldier of the cross? A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause, or
blush to speak His name?

Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
and sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?

Must I not stem the flood?

Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign—increase my courage, Lord!

I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by Thy Word.

Young man, in twenty years when you look back over your life, what will you regret not having done? Do not spend your one life "playing around." May God set apart the next generation of passionate young men for His glory and His mission of reconciling the world to Himself through the preaching of His Son to the ends of the earth! This is a call for those who have a spirit of gaming, of adventure, of strategy, of risk—to spend your life on something that matters for eternity.

Are you done playing games yet? Enjoy games as a pastime, not a lifestyle. One day soon those who have wasted their entire life "playing around" will hear the fearful words, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" (Luke 12:20). In essence, they will hear, "Game over."

Steve Hafler serves as a missionary under Gospel Fellowship Association Mission. He, his wife, Toni, and their children served in Kenya and now serve in Zambia, where they have been for five years. Steve is greatly burdened for the unreached parts of Africa.

New Testament Missions in Ghana



“Who am I?”

“Where did I come from?”

“Where am I going?”

Down through the ages cultures and individuals, including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus, have attempted to provide answers to these “wisdom” questions. These indispensable life questions are still worrisome to many people who have not read from or understood the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For people like me, though, these questions have ceased to be a source of worry because the answers have been provided. History will bear record that among men who claim to be prophets or teachers, there has not one risen who is greater than Jesus Christ. His impact on the world since His first advent is unprecedented and unparalleled. It is He who has dealt thoroughly and satisfactorily with these questions.

To the first question, He teaches that man has physical and spiritual components. The physical is perishable because it is made of dust, while the spiritual is imperishable because it is God’s breath.

He answers the second question by showing that mankind is not an accident but a deliberate creation of God.

To the third question He explains that mankind is on earth temporarily and that he is to return to God, his original Source, and to account for how he has spent his time on earth. He explains that since man is sinful, he

needs to return to God (or repent) in order to have God’s forgiveness. Since man on his own cannot simply decide to return to God—because he is under the shackles of sin and Satan—Someone stronger than sin and Satan has to rescue man (Acts 26:18). The only one stronger than sin and Satan is God. God therefore took the form of a man and came down to earth to deliver man from sin and Satan (Col. 2:11–15).

Jesus was and is God in the flesh. The Bible describes Him as “the express image” of the Invisible God (Heb. 1:3). In order to deliver man, Jesus had to pay the price for man’s sin. The price was His death on the cross (Heb. 2:14). Since He has paid the price, the only thing that needs to be done in order for a person to return to God is one’s willingness to acknowledge his sin and trust in the work Christ has done. Simply put, one needs to believe in Jesus as the Savior of his life. The miracle that happens immediately after the exercise of this faith in Christ is known only to those who have done it genuinely. The transformation that can follow is stunning.

My Testimony

As a personal testimony, I believed in Christ Jesus as my Savior in 1981 after my father explained to me my sinful, lost situation and the finished work of Christ for my salvation. He preached in the Sunday morning service and made it clear that even the pastor’s son would go to Hell unless

he acknowledged his sin and saw his need of a Savior. I realized then that my biological relationship to my preaching father would not deal with my sin nor give me favor with God. My father showed me how to have forgiveness from God by pointing me to Romans 10:9: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I trusted in Christ by confessing Him as the Savior of my soul, and peace has since reigned in my heart.

Later in life I met Janet, the lady who is now my wife. Her father was a Muslim and her mother a Catholic. I invited her to our high school prayer time. When she came, I explained to her her lost state and her need for a Savior. She prayed and accepted the Lord Jesus as her personal Savior. Even before we thought of marriage, both of us were zealous to let others know that salvation is of Christ Jesus. That started our road of missions. New Testament missions is the program Jesus set forth to bring salvation and meaning to all human beings on the earth: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

As a national pastor and a missionary to my own people in northern Ghana, I echo the Lord's command in Matthew 28:19 to "teach all nations" as we go into the world. New Testament missions works. I am a product of it. My father was faithful to New Testament missions as he led me to the Lord for salvation. My salvation was the outcome of missions right at home. However, prior to my salvation, there was a missionary from North America to the Waala people in northern Ghana. This missionary, William Carmichael, went to "the uttermost part of the earth" and reached out to a shepherd boy with the love of Christ. He led that shepherd boy to the Lord. The boy, who later became my father, had the passion to further missions in his home and community.

New Testament Missions

Missions is not only going overseas to evangelize; neither is it reaching only one's community. New Testament missions has the entire world in view. Christ portrays missions as starting from our closest geographical areas to the remote lands. The model is presented in Acts 1:8. The first disciples were to start missions right in Jerusalem, then spread the Word throughout Judea, then move to Samaria, and finally to the outer lands.

Like William Carmichael, thousands of men and women have left the American shores and other places around the world in the last two centuries, taking the gospel to different parts of Africa. Many of these were pioneer missionaries to their fields. In God's sovereignty, these pioneer missionaries brought souls to the Lord and started local assemblies. Later, other missionaries went and joined hands to disciple these believers and to help equip the local churches. With the passage of time, missionaries realized the need to establish Bible institutes or Bible schools to train nationals who had the call of God to preach to their own people. The movement of Bible institutes further developed missions in these early fields.

Today, many of these early fields, including Chad,

Central African Republic, Ghana, Liberia, and South Africa, have nationals who are in leadership positions as pastors and directors of Bible institutes. This begs the question whether North American missionaries, or missionaries from other parts of the world, are still needed in these early mission fields. Is Africa still a viable mission field?

Yes! There are still many unreached people groups all over Africa. These unreached people groups need pioneer missionaries, and God is still calling men and women from His church to go and reach out to them with the gospel that saves. Even in some of the early mission fields there are still hidden people groups who have not heard that Jesus saves. Therefore, African missions remains unchanged. All Christians—Americans, Asians, Europeans, Australians, and Africans—are to put concerted effort to go where the gospel has not reached.

The shift that is taking place in African missions today has to do with earlier mission fields that have come around full circle. On these fields, churches are established with mature national leadership. Missionaries from overseas are still needed on these fields. However, their focus would not have to be on pioneer works or pastoring local churches (though in some cases it may be necessary) but to be facilitators in the development of church ministries such as pastoral training, children's ministries, women's and youth ministries, Christian schools, and health-care ministries. The field of Wa, in northern Ghana, for instance, has thirty-three independent Baptist pastors, each of whom has a local church. The Wa field also has a Bible institute, a clinic, a literacy center, and now a Christian school.

With American missionaries aging and retiring on the Ghanaian field, the Wa field needs theological trainers and missionaries who are called to handle Christian education and other church-related ministries. A call still comes ringing over the restless waves to send the light to unreached Africans and to help strengthen the churches started there by pioneer missionaries. Baptist Bible Institute in Wa needs

NEW TESTAMENT MISSIONS WORKS. I AM A PRODUCT OF IT. MY FATHER WAS FAITHFUL TO NEW TESTAMENT MISSIONS AS HE LED ME TO THE LORD FOR SALVATION.

teachers with at least an MA in any ministerial degree. Times Baptist Academy needs an administrator, female or male.

Being in this one part of Africa, I call on my brothers and sisters in Christ in other places to come and help us. Your labor in Christ will never be in vain as you do service in His name!

Timothy Seidu and his family are missionaries with Baptist Mid-Missions serving in Wa, the capital city of the Upper West Region of Ghana. Timothy pastors Faith Fundamental Baptist Church and has planted Siiriyiri Baptist Fellowship Church and Nambera Baptist Fellowship Church, and he has another church-planting effort in Wichau. In addition to being the director of Baptist Bible Institute, Timothy preaches on the radio, oversees a Christian school (which he founded), and is chairman of the Fundamental Baptist Pastors' Fellowship.

An Interview with Timothy Seidu

Editor's Note: FrontLine asked Timothy Seidu to tell us more about what the Lord is doing in and through him in Ghana.

Tell us about your location, culture, and heritage.

I am located in the city of Wa, which is the capital city of the Upper West Region of Ghana. The native people of the city are called Waala, and the language is Waali. I am a Waala. There are other Waala people residing in towns and villages in the region. There are related tribal peoples who are living in the region. The Waala people are predominantly Islamic—the tribe is still more than 95% Muslim.

Tell us about your burden for church planting.

God saved me and has called me to preach to my kinsmen according to the flesh. As a result I have planted Faith Fundamental Baptist Church Wa. However, I am burdened to have other churches planted in other parts of the city as well as in other towns and villages in the Upper West Region. Hence, apart from Faith Fundamental Baptist Church, we have planted the Siiriyiri Baptist Fellowship and the Nambera Baptist Fellowship. And we have started another church-planting effort in Wichau.

In the Upper West Region we have a good number of Fundamental Baptist pastors. To be together and to be able to pray for one another, we meet once every month. I am the chairman of the pastors' fellowship. I chair at all the pastors' meetings and, together with the secretary and treasurer, I make a program for each month's meeting.

Once churches are started, they need competent men to shepherd them. As a result I take keen interest in training men to enter the ministry.

And you have a radio ministry too? How does that tie in with church planting?

Yes, the radio ministry is geared toward getting the Word to villages and towns so that the Lord will begin working on the hearts of men and women before we get to these places to start churches. That has worked well. From the radio outreach, people have been saved and are requesting churches to be started in their towns and villages.

I preach the gospel on radio every Tuesday night. I reach about 200,000 people each time, most of whom are Muslims. My main and targeted audience is my people.

I am praying for the necessary funds to have air time at the second radio station in Wa. This station broadcasts in English, and its audience wants me to deliver my radio messages also in English for their listening.

Tell us about Times Baptist Academy.

I am the founder of Times Baptist Academy, and I oversee the moral and academic aspects of it. We have six teachers.

For a long time, Baptist families in the Upper West Region have longed for a safe place to have their children

educated. Since there is no homeschooling in Ghana, Christian families have sent their children to Catholic, Muslim, or public schools. With our three boys getting ready to begin school, we prayed about the possibility of having our own school. When I mentioned it to families in our church that have little kids, it was clear that it was high time we started. I contacted education institutions and got information on how to start a Christian school. Our first year began on September 15, 2009.

We have kindergarten one and two and grade one. We now have sixty-six students; twenty-two are from Muslims homes. The Lord has turned the school into a great mission field.

I am also the director or president of the school. As the director, my duties among others are to recommend prospective teachers to the board of directors for consideration. I decide what textbooks the school should use every semester. I work with incoming students on their admission process. I chair staff meetings and inspect teachers' performance, and I oversee disciplinary issues.

Your father led you to the Lord. Is he still living?

No, six months after my salvation in 1981 the Lord took my daddy home. We were seven siblings, five boys and two girls. At that time most of our extended family members were Muslims.

Traditionally, my uncles were to take care of my mother and us. They told my mother she had to be married to one of my uncles and that we were to become Muslims in order to be taken care of. My two older brothers were frustrated by this proposition, and consequently they left the north and traveled to southern Ghana. Immediately I was the oldest son at home with my mother. My uncles put pressure on me to become a Muslim. By God's grace I was able to resist all that pressure. One thing was certain, that neither my mother nor we the siblings were to receive any support from my uncles. When I was fifteen, it became obvious that I could not continue schooling since I could not pay my tuition and support myself in school.

I approached one of my uncles, who was well-to-do, and pleaded with him to support me to continue my education. He again put the same condition before me. I decided to ask for farmland so that I could feed our family and support myself in school. Though it was unusual for a boy of my age to have his own farm, the Lord was with me, and He gave me wisdom and strength have a good and productive farm. Also, the Lord moved some of my friends to help me on the farm. For many years the Lord used the farm to feed our family and to see me through high school. In that way we were able to resist the pressure to become Muslims.

God used these and many other trials to get me closer to Him. I already had the burden to tell my people that salva-

tion was only in Christ. I saw in my father a genuine love for souls. I saw him go out and come in late as he sought to win souls. I was many times with him when he was confronted by imams, and I saw the love with which he explained the gospel to them. I knew of the trials and persecutions he went through. When the Lord suddenly took him home, I knew I was created to preach and to continue doing the work my father had left behind.

So how did the Lord direct your life after high school?

When I completed high school, I told my mother I wanted to go into the ministry. She knew I was the only one around her giving support to her, but she was glad to hear of my desire to preach. She gave me her blessing, but my uncles thought I was insane. I enrolled in Ghana Baptist Theological Institute down in southern Ghana. Upon my completion, I was recommended for Bob Jones University's World Fund and Timothy Scholarship. It was not long before I found myself at Bob Jones University.

Now I look back and see that God is very real and that He is as faithful

as He said He is. As far as I am concerned, where I am and what I am doing today are all superintended by God. He put the burden on my heart for my people. He provided food for us so that we would not have to be cajoled into being Muslims. He graciously opened the door for me to study at BJU. I can say that He has already done enough to tell me in bold print that I should not worry about my future. He has it in perfect control, and I believe He has the future of all His children in perfect control. Pray that I will always stay mindful of His will.



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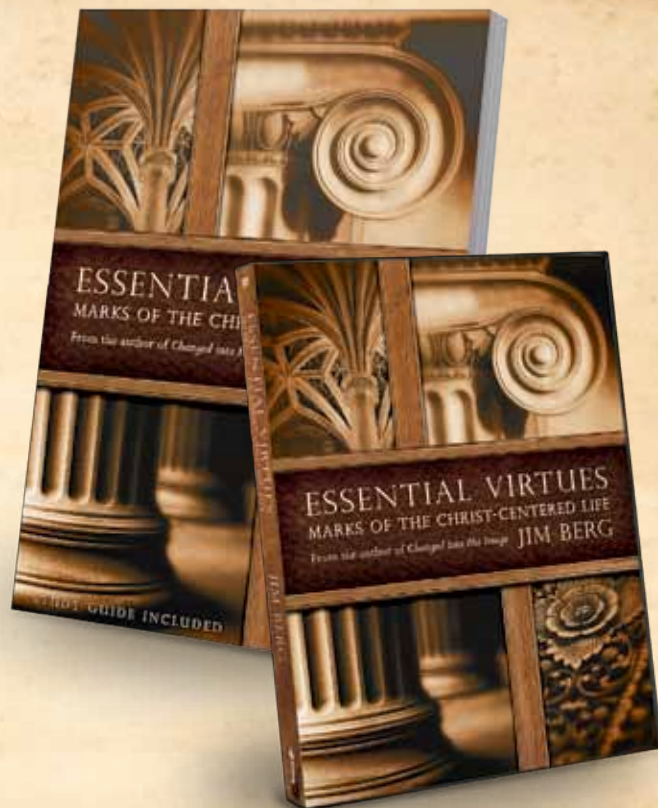
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480.245.7900

March 8–12, 2010
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Iglesia Bautista
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March 15–17, 2010
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April 2010
South Regional Fellowship
Due to the close scheduling of other nearby conferences, the South Regional Fellowship has been postponed pending discussion of a recurring annual date that is open for more participants.

April 19–20, 2010
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Faith Baptist Church
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Morgantown, WV 26508
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Annual Chaplain Training
Tri-City Baptist Church
6953 West 92nd Lane
Westminster, CO 80021
303.424.2287

June 15–17, 2010
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6953 W 92nd Lane
Westminster, CO 80021
303.424.2287

July 26–28, 2010
Alaska Regional Fellowship
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<http://home.earthlink.net/~akbeb/akbfbf.html>
akbfbf@earthlink.net

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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

"Heavenly Henry"

Personal and Pastoral Inspiration from the Life of Matthew Henry's Father, Philip Henry¹ (1631–96)

In the midst of decades of tumultuous political and religious events in seventeenth-century England, a man traveled through the tumult and became known to his friends as "Heavenly Henry." It could be said that he lived by the motto that he penned with his own hand: "He is no fool who parts with that which he cannot keep, when he is sure to be recompensed with that which he cannot lose."

In the early 1630s the paths of three boys merged for the first time in the corridors of Whitehall Palace in London. Two of the boys were Charles and James, the sons of King Charles I (the son of James I, who had authorized yet another translation of the Bible into English in the early seventeenth century). The third boy was the only son of an employee of the court. His father held prestigious but nonroyal titles: Keeper of the Orchard, and then, later, the more privileged position of Page of the Backstairs to the king's second son, James.²

The three boys played together often, both in the palace yards and in each others' homes, and as young boys are prone to do, they exchanged gifts and dreams. The two royal sons even promised their young playmate that he would have much "preferment . . . at court, as soon as he was fit for it."

The orchard-keeper's son was Philip Henry, the father of the renowned Bible commentator Matthew Henry (1662–1714). Dramatic turns of events over the next twenty years brought a significant reversal to those grand, royal, boyhood intentions. Instead of receiving much "preferment" at court, Philip, who became a

Nonconformist Puritan minister, would ultimately suffer the loss of his ministerial office and much of his freedom even to preach. In the meantime, though Philip was very much in personal sympathy with both the archbishop and the king, he did not share their theological positions or their views of the church. On the other hand, he was not favorably disposed to the heavy-handed treatment that eventually led to the beheading of both Archbishop Laud and the king.

When the English Civil War began in 1641, Philip's regular connection with the two young princes altered abruptly, as the royal sons were often surreptitiously relocated to ensure their safety. Philip, however, continued to live near the palace in the family home and to attend "the King's School" at Westminster. Providentially, this positioned him near enough to be able to attend some of the sessions of the Westminster Assembly (1643–49). Over the next five years, six months, and twenty-two days, the theologians of the Assembly held 1163 sessions, in part to formulate the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The Assembly attempted to define which of the many varied forms of Puritanism would survive, and years later Philip eventually embraced one of the Presbyterian varieties.

The Assembly's early weekday morning convocations (before 8:00 A.M.!) often found twelve-year-old Philip in attendance. Having received special permission to miss school, he often sat on the pulpit stairs to take notes on the sermons. Though the country all

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

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¹ Resources for Philip's life include a biography by his son, his own *Diaries and Letters*, the biographies of his daughters, a book of forty of his sermons (*Christ Is All in All*), and miscellaneous notes that show up in the biographies of contemporaries and other historical accounts of the period.

² A Page of the Backstairs is a senior courtier of the British Royal Household who personally attends to the Sovereign, the queen, or a member of the family.

around him was in political turmoil, Henry rejoiced in the unusually green pastures in which God allowed him to graze:

If ever any child . . . enjoyed line upon line, precept upon precept, I did. . . . My soul rejoiceth, and is glad at the remembrance of it; the word distilled as the dew, and dropt as the rain. I love, and loved the messengers of it; their very feet were beautiful to me. And, Lord, what a mercy was it . . . that then my lot should be where there was peace and quietness.

His mother died during these years, but her spiritual influence on her young son had been effectual. She reared him in the then-popular *Six Principles* catechism of William Perkins. A frequent refrain on her lips in her waning days captured the essence of her life and impressed itself on Philip: “My head is in heaven, and my heart is in heaven; it is but one step more, and I shall be there, too.”

Two years later, while preparing to receive the Lord’s Supper in nearby St. Margaret’s, the drawing work of God in Philip’s heart reached a climax. Philip testified,

There had been treaties before, between my soul and Jesus Christ, with some weak overtures towards him; but then, then, I think, it was, that the match was made, the knot tied: then I set myself, in the strength of divine grace, about the great work of self-examination, in order to repentance; and then I repented; that is, solemnly and seriously, with some poor meltings of soul. I confessed my sins before God, original and actual, judging and condemning myself for them, and casting away from me all my transgression, receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, as the Lord my Righteousness, and devoting and dedicating my whole self, absolutely and unreservedly, to his fear and service. . . . I received him indeed; and he became mine; I say, *Mine*.

Years later, Philip often expressed his gratitude for how God had spared him from the temptations accom-

“My head is in heaven, and my heart is in heaven; it is but one step more, and I shall be there, too.”

panying life at court “in the midst of which it is so very hard to maintain a good conscience and the power of religion.”

From late 1647 to 1652 Philip studied at Christ Church College, the largest in Oxford, benefiting from the preaching and teaching of prominent Puritans such as Edward Reynolds, John Owen, and Thomas Goodwin. He distinguished himself academically and spiritually. The further he progressed academically, however, the more “he employed his time mostly in searching the Scriptures, and collecting useful Scripture observations, which he made very familiar to him. . . . He got a Bible

interleaved, in which he wrote short notes up on texts of Scripture as they occurred. He would often say, ‘I read other books, that I may be the better able to understand the Scripture.’”

Philip Henry as Pastor

At age twenty-two Philip took his first pastorate in Worthenbury, Wales. The remote northern, rural setting provided a challenge for him with its reputation as “one of the most loose and profane places in all the country.” His congregation consisted mostly of poor tenants and farmers who “made the most of hungry little farms.” His congregation seldom exceeded eighty, and “though they were neither numerous nor learned, their minister felt they were sufficiently important to demand his utmost pains.” The souls of the poor “are as precious as the souls of the rich, and to be looked after accordingly,” he said. Others testified that Philip “had such high thoughts of his work, and the worth of souls, that he laid out himself with as much diligence and vigour here, as if he had the oversight of the greatest and most considerable parish in the country.”

Philip sought to make the truths of the Word of God knowable and memorable to his people. His lifelong practice of making helpful notes in his Bible conditioned his ministry—he aimed to digest and distill truth to them in such a way that it remained memorably and retrievably in their minds as they gave themselves to their grueling manual labor.

As the nurse puts the meat first into their own mouth, and chews it, and then feeds the child with it, so should ministers do by the word, preach it over beforehand to their own hearts; it loses none of the virtue thereby, but rather, probably, gains. As that which milk nourisheth most which comes warm from the breast, so that sermon which comes warm from a warm heart.

Here’s a representative sampling of some of the digested truths that he made accessible to his people:

They only are too busy that lose God in their business.

Work for God is its own wages.

He that stumbles and does not fall, gets ground by his stumble.

The worst sin, pride, comes out of our graces, and the best grace, which is humility, comes out of our sins.

It is better to suffer the greatest affliction, than to commit the least sin.

Prayer is the echo of a promise.

All is well that ends everlastingly well.

We should be troubled as much at unjust praises as at unjust slanders.

Three great dangers lurk for Christians—

To look for in themselves, what is to be had only in Another (i.e., righteousness)

To look for in the law, what is to be had only in the Gospel (i.e., mercy)

To look for that on earth, that is to be had only in heaven (i.e., perfection)

Three great challenges confront Christians—to believe things impossible to reason,—to hope against hope when the thing hoped for is deferred,—and to cleave to God as to a friend, when he appears against us as an enemy.

As much as Philip desired to teach effectively, he aimed to learn. One of his chief delights was to listen attentively to the preaching of other men. His journal abounds with evidence of his efforts to record the essence of what he heard and then with diligence to “improve” it in his life by close meditation and application. His son, Matthew, records that his “diligent improvement of the word preached contributed, more than any one thing, as a means to his great attainments in knowledge and grace.” Knowing his own and others’ tendency to listen too critically to others’ preaching, he often counseled his ministry brethren to “hear not as masters, but as scholars; not as censors, but as learners.”

Philip lived in the unusual era when he and nearly 2000 Puritan English ministers were ejected from their pulpits for refusing to conform to the liturgy and rituals of the Church of England. Subsequent laws often forbid or restricted their opportunities to preach. During such times he listened attentively and respectfully to Church of England ministers and worked diligently to profit from their preaching though “some hay and stubble were superadded.” Sometimes the task was more difficult than at others, but Philip persevered, thankful that he could “find honey in a carcass.”

Philip Henry as Father

Philip married at age twenty-eight, after having been in the ministry nearly seven years. He could not underestimate the importance of a man’s spiritual influence in his own home: “That we are really which we are relatively. It is not so much what we are at church, as what we are in our families.”

His spiritual duties at home began with his wife. He nurtured her spiritual growth, believing that it “is the great duty of yoke-fellows . . . to do all they can to help one another to heaven.” He also endeavored to keep a sense of the reality of God and Heaven before his five surviving children, and his primary vehicle was a family schedule that revolved around times of family devotions. “Constant family worship is so necessary to keep alive a sense of God and religion” in the hearts of family members. He compared homes that did not remember God together to those homes so prominent in London when the plague struck in 1665. Doors of homes with afflicted residents were marked with warnings. Using this analogy, he urged, “If the worship of God be not

within, write, ‘Lord have mercy on us’ on the door; for a plague, a curse, is there.” He viewed his family worship as a “hem” around each day that God used to keep the family from unraveling.

Intriguingly, he required his children to take notes on lessons he gave them, and eventually each had produced in his own hand “a copious commentary on the Bible, which they treasured up as a precious memorial of their happy early days, and their heavenly minded father.” His son Matthew’s notes formed the seed of his later commentary.

The family time gave him additional opportunity to nurture sprouts of faith in his children’s hearts. He looked patiently for “buds and blossoms,” though even those he watched carefully. “Buds and blossoms are not fruit, but they give hopes of fruit; and parents may, and should take hold of good beginnings of grace which they see in their children, by those to bind them so much the closer to, and lead them so much the faster in the way that is called holy.” Where he observed the beginnings of life, he did not hurry to pick before faith had ripened into fruit.

Enduring Trials with Peace and Gratitude

Throughout Philip’s life, though more and greater trials came, his faith only shined more brightly. Matthew remembers his father often saying, “Duty is ours; events are God’s.” Such a truth is timely when the “events” are afflictions, especially when the trials are sustained for two or three decades.

Philip desired never to “lose an affliction” but desired that God’s purpose in it for him or others might be fulfilled. He prayed that God would sanctify affliction in him, to do his soul good, that he would bear up under it with quietness, patience, and submissiveness, and learn to say that the affliction was good. He looked at personal trials and even the great trial through which the church was passing through the lens of Christ’s Headship—“If Christ be not only the head of the Church, but head over all things to the Church, we may be assured that all things shall be made to work together for good to it.”

He observed that some unwittingly brought trials upon themselves because of their mismanagement of differences with others. He loved to repeat a quaint story he learned from Martin Luther. “Two goats,” the story goes, “met up on a narrow bridge over a deep water; they could not go back, they durst not fight; after a short parley, one of them lay down, and let the other go over him, and no harm was done.” He would conclude with the moral of the story—“Be content for your person to be trod upon for the sake of peace. Your *person*,—not your *conscience*.” He lamented that so much was made of personal differences between ministry brethren: “It is not so much our difference of opinion that doth us the mischief (for we may as soon expect all the clocks in town to strike together, as to see all good people of a mind in every thing on this side of heaven;) but the management of that difference.”

The number, variety, and extent of the trials Philip encountered are staggering. He lost his mother when he was thirteen and his father when he was twenty. He later

lost his firstborn, a son, to measles at age six. Through political maneuvering within the Church of England, he saw his first congregation unceremoniously taken from him after eight years. He heard himself preached against as a causer of divisions. On his thirty-first birthday he was ejected from the Church of England, losing his income and earthly security only two years after being

When those opposed him prevailed and the cause of Christ appeared stymied, he prayed, “Blessed be God who has my enemies in a chain.” He prayed for those brethren with whom he differed because . . . they were related to him as fellow-members of Christ’s body.

married and a month before his second son, Matthew, was born. He suffered the loss of his preaching privileges for years at a time, and officials frequently suspicioned him as subversive to the government. He endured three imprisonments. The government attempted to humiliate him publicly. Many of his ministry brethren criticized him for not being as reactionary against the Crown and Church of England as they were. And he endured a weak physical constitution and deteriorating health as he lived to age sixty-five in an era when the average life expectancy for gentry was only forty to forty-five.

In trials God granted him the wisdom to pray for his persecutors and to look to the Lord for his security. When forced out of his church, he prayed, “Lord, if my work be done here, provide some other for this people, that may be more skillful, and more successful, and cut out work for me elsewhere.” When those opposed him prevailed and the cause of Christ appeared stymied, he prayed, “Blessed be God who has my enemies in a chain.” He prayed for those brethren with whom he differed because he remembered they were related to Jesus Christ and because they were related to him as fellow-members of Christ’s body. He viewed his imprisonments as blessings, asserting that “it is sweet being in any condition with a clear conscience.” On the day after his final imprisonment, he gathered his family to share the reasons he had found for which to give thanks:

That his imprisonment was for no cause: it is guilt that makes a prison. That it was his security in a dangerous time [an uprising had taken place outside while he was safe inside]. That he had good company in his sufferings, who prayed together, and read the scriptures together, and discoursed to their mutual edification. That he had health there; not sick, and in prison; that he was visited and prayed for

by his friends. That he was very cheerful and easy in his spirit, many a time asleep and quiet, when his adversaries were disturbed and unquiet. That his enlargement [freedom] was speedy and unsought for, and that it gave occasion to the magistrates who committed him, to give it under their hands, that they had nothing in particular to lay to his charge; and, especially, that it was without a snare, which was the thing he feared more than anything else.


When the government attempted to humiliate him in the eyes of the people by assigning him a role of collecting taxes for the government, he bore it patiently and with humble self-examination. “It is not a sin which they put upon us, but it is a cross, and a cross in our way, and, there, to be taken up and borne with patience. *When I had better work to do, I was wanting in my duty about it,* and now this is put upon me; the Lord is righteous” (emphasis mine).

He seriously prepared for death and actively prepared in life to die well, and he even prepared others around him for his death. He frequently concluded his letters to his children, “Your ever-loving, but not ever-living father.” Concerning death he remarked, “It is a serious thing to die, and to die is a work by itself.” While he was in good health, he treasured up frequent meditations on death and Heaven, and he found these meditations a sweet comfort in his dying days. He longed to die well and triumphantly, to put “into harbour with full-spread sails.”

Heaven at Last

God granted Philip the desire of his heart at age sixty-five and carried him home to Heaven. Philip’s whole life had been echo of his mother’s words, “My head is in heaven, and my heart is in heaven; it is but one step more, and I shall be there, too.” To him, the lure of death was the thrill of being in Heaven with Christ, and he found meditation on that as “a cordial to keep [one] from fainting under any trouble; . . . to put [him] forward in duty; . . . to restrain [him] from sin; and . . . to draw [his] affections upward.”

As part of his preparation for death, he compiled four manuscripts. Each of his adult daughters was to select one and then transcribe it by hand so that its contents could be “transcribed into their hearts and lives.” Sarah, the oldest, selected a manuscript full of notes from forty sermons Philip had prepared on his favorite Bible theme—Christ; specifically, *What Christ is made of God to True Believers in Forty Real Benefits* (based on Colossians 3:11, “Christ is all and in all”). A few weeks after her father’s death, Sarah read through the sermons carefully, feeding on the truths that had nourished her father’s spiritual life, and her journal entry for that day concluded:

Blessed be God for these sweet, wholesome truths to be food for my poor soul. He “being dead yet speaketh.” And what is it, he says, but that which his heart was always full of? Christ—Christ—Christ. Methinks I hear him still: Oh, make Christ your all! 

Bring . . . the Books

Filling up the Afflictions of Christ
by John Piper

Whether or not one agrees with all the theological positions of a particular Christian writer does not preclude receiving blessing and rich spiritual aid from his literary contributions. To some degree this is true of all orthodox Christian writers and of most books. Often the writings of someone with whom I may have some theological difference yield multiple truths on which we agree as well as an abundance of rich spiritual refreshment and help for my soul. This has certainly proven to be the case in my reading of John Piper's latest volume in his series *The Swans Are Not Silent*.

In this fifth volume of the series, Piper's main idea is that suffering or persecution is not just the result of gospel ministry; it is actually the divinely designed means by which that ministry is advanced.

Afflictions are not merely the result of missionary fruitfulness, but also the means. God has appointed our pain to be part of his powerful display of the glory of Christ. The worth of Jesus in the world shines more brightly in the lives of those who say by their sacrificial lives, "I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:8).


Piper develops this thesis in a short but profound introduction entitled "Tears of Blood to Bless the World." He introduces this concept by citing several examples from the New Testament Gospels (Matthew 10:16; Luke 21:17; John 15:20), but he establishes this concept by grounding it in the exegesis of Paul's statement in Colossians 1:24, where the apostle remarks that his suffering was filling up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, the church. Piper clarifies that Paul's suffering was not adding to the worth of Christ's suffering but rather extending the benefit of that suffering to those who would be saved.

Piper goes on to explain that the particular way God has ordained that this happens is through His church's suffering the same sort of persecution and afflictions that He experienced from those He came to save. Piper has chosen to illustrate his thesis by reflecting on the lives of William Tyndale, Adoniram Judson, and John Paton.

For example, Piper uses John Paton to illustrate that suffering is the God-ordained way for gospel progress. His brief overview of how the gospel arrived and conquered the more than eighty islands in the South Pacific that are called the New Hebrides is worth the price of the book. The very first missionaries to arrive on the islands were speared to death within minutes of landing on the shores. Years later John Paton said of their sacrifice, "Thus were the New Hebrides baptized with the blood of martyrs; and Christ thereby told the whole Christian world that

He claimed these islands as His own." Paton came to the islands with his wife, Mary, in 1858. He was thirty-three. Within a year, Mary and their infant son both died. He struggled on alone for four years without seeing any fruit.

In 1862, after living in constant danger for his life, he was driven off the island by the natives. He remarried in 1864 and returned to the nearby island of Aniwa. He and Margaret labored there for fifteen years until the entire island had been reached for Christ. This accomplishment did not come without suffering. In 1873 he suffered the loss of almost all his earthly possessions when the ship belonging to his mission sank during a storm. That same year he and Margaret lost a child, and both of them suffered serious, prolonged illness. On top of this were the years of danger and opposition from almost every conceivable corner, including his own supporting churches in Scotland! Some of the most moving parts of this story are Paton's letters home in which he describes his own thinking and responses to the horrific circumstances he faced on an almost daily basis. One such letter came at the end of his life and contained this amazing statement: "Let me record my immovable conviction that this is the noblest service in which any human being can spend or be spent; and that, if God gave me back my life to be lived over again, I would without one quiver of hesitation lay it on the altar to Christ, that He might use it as before in similar ministries of love, especially amongst those who have never yet heard the Name of Jesus."

The accounts of William Tyndale and Adoniram Judson are equally moving and challenging. My heart was deeply stirred as I read this book, and I was reminded of the cost of spreading the gospel to the nations. I was convicted by how little I have suffered and how much I have complained at the slightest inconvenience. How easily I shrink back from the thought of any hardship or sacrifice! No wonder the gospel is so little advanced by my life and in my ministry. No wonder there is so little power and so little passion visible in my life. I count my own life dear in all the wrong ways and for all the wrong reasons. It was painfully refreshing to be reminded of the gospel's claim on my life and to be challenged to throw my life away for things that really matter. May your reading of Piper's book do the same for you! 

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

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There are many perilous diseases in our world which, if left unchecked, could destroy our bodies. For instance, we have heard about the dangers of the H1N1 virus every day for many months. However, more serious than any physical disease are spiritual corruptions, and one of the worst soul sicknesses is a refusal to forgive fellow sinners. When offenses come, rather than seeking God's help, some permit bitter hatred of others to rest in their hearts. Unfortunately, many of those with resentful spirits believe themselves to be strong Christians. Each time I deal with those mired in the murky waters of unforgiveness, I am struck anew by the grotesque ugliness of this particular sin.

Of course, each person has a *unique* case. He regularly rehearses his compelling *reasons* for unforgiveness—harsh words, failed promises, disappointing results. The offense becomes heightened further when the offender refuses to seek forgiveness.

What does the God of forgiveness think about this? Jesus, as our great spiritual surgeon, warns these miserable, unforgiving souls with the strongest of language.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matt. 6:14, 15; cf. Matt. 7:2; 18:35; and Mark 11:25).

Notice four truths about Jesus' strong warning to those who refuse to forgive others. First, according to Christ's own words, *not forgiving others is the most serious of offenses against the Lord*. Taken at face value, the teaching of Matthew 6:14 and 15 is simple: God's forgiveness is conditioned on one's willingness to forgive others. Yet our minds reply: "Certainly that is not what He means!" We are simply shocked by Christ's use of such uniquely strong language. Why does our Lord single out this particular offense? It seems clear that our lack of forgiveness is especially repulsive to our Lord.

Second, from Jesus' warning in this passage we see that *not forgiving others calls into question one's own forgiveness from the Lord*. We know that Jesus is not teaching that salvation is achieved or kept through meritorious acts (cf. Titus 3:5, 6; Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 3:20–24). Rather, Jesus' words should be viewed in the same vein as Paul's: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5). Genuine children of God forgive others; this forgiveness is a key mark of their new nature. As Leon Morris writes, "It is not that the act of forgiveness merits an eternal reward, but rather it is evidence that the grace of God is at work in the forgiving person and that that same grace will bring him

forgiveness in due course" (*The Gospel According to Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992, p. 148). Thus, not forgiving others reveals an unrenewed will. To disobey the Lord in this area reveals a rebellious heart of unbelief.

Third, the passage teaches that *not forgiving others reveals a proud ignorance of one's personal sinfulness, coupled with a diminished sense of needing God's grace*. Jesus is probing one's personal belief system, particularly about sin and grace. In Matthew 18:21–35 Jesus responds to Peter's inquiry about the required latitude of forgiving others. Jesus makes the matter crystal clear through His parable on the unforgiving servant. Purely by grace, the king forgave his slave the thousand talents owed him. When he would have been just to exact the last coin, he graciously and completely freed the debtor. In light of such a display of grace, the reader is then offended when this same forgiven debtor refuses to show the slightest measure of grace to another. Likewise, true believers, who have experienced such great forgiveness by God's grace, should naturally show a corresponding grace to their fellow sinner.

Every time a believer fails to forgive someone, he contradicts the very heart of the gospel of free pardon through Christ. J. C. Ryle writes that "such a frame of mind is mere . . . hypocrisy. It is worse than hypocrisy. . . . We must not expect to be forgiven, if we cannot forgive" (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007, p. 58). Pride leads us to neglect thoughts of our own sinfulness while being consumed by the slightest infraction of others. Yet the gospel shines clearly: "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

Finally, according to Matthew 6:14, 15, *not forgiving others indicates a stubborn unwillingness to be personally governed by the Lord*. When someone sins against us, we often feel that his action gives us the right to decide how to respond. Many imply that God's commands to forgive others apply only to "some other case" but not their own. In reality, God has already established how we must respond to those who sin against us—with a gracious, forgiving attitude. In this way, God's Word frees the believer from the shackles of bitterness and the hurtful actions of others.

In summary, the Bible teaches that a professing believer who refuses to forgive others should examine whether he has been genuinely saved by God's grace. Believers who struggle with unforgiveness should focus on their own personal wickedness, the freeness of God's grace to them, and the divine instructions that govern one's response to personal offenses. ☞

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

On February 12, 2010, the Olympic cauldron will be lit in Vancouver, British Columbia, to mark the opening of the Winter Olympics. July 27, 2012, will mark the beginning of the Summer Olympics in London, England. The preparation and excitement leading up to these occasions are phenomenal. Both events have websites that are jam-packed with interesting information, and you can even sign up for daily updates to ensure that you are “in the know” regarding the medal-count. Of course, the most stringent and demanding preparation of these Olympic Games is accomplished by those participating in the various competitions. The training regimen of the average Olympic contestant is a disciplined system that encompasses every aspect of the Olympian’s life. Passionate adherence to the regimen is what makes a great participant.

The Christian life is metaphorically described as an Olympic event—specifically, a race. The writer of Hebrews utilizes this picture to encourage and exhort his readers to reach the finish line. He begins his encouragement in chapter 12 with the word “wherefore,” which is an inferential conjunction that connects the listing of the “Heroes of the Faith” in chapter 11 with “so great a cloud of witnesses” in chapter 12:1. Dr. Earl Nutz wrote, “The cloud of witnesses represents overwhelming evidence of those who formerly ran the race. The writer refers to them in order to encourage the Hebrew saints who are currently in the race—a race which they did not completely understand” (*Biblical Viewpoint*, “Focus on Hebrews,” part II, vol. XXV, Bob Jones University, 1991, 42). Another writer comments, “The scene is a great coliseum. The occasion is a foot race, a distance event. The contestants include the author and the members of his flock and, by mutual faith, us. The cloud of witnesses that fills the stadium are the great spiritual athletes of the past, Hall of Faith members—every one a Gold Medal winner. They are not *live* witnesses of the event, but ‘witnesses’ by the fact that their past lives bear witness to monumental, persevering faith that, like Abel’s faith, ‘still speaks, even though he is dead’” (R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews*, vol. 2, Crossway Books, 1993, 158). In high school, I ran on the junior varsity track team, and I can remember that there was nothing quite as motivating as having the varsity team, who had just won their particular meets, cheering and watching as I competed. The writer of Hebrews is using the varsity team—the “Heroes of the Faith”—to encourage us, the junior varsity team, to run our races.

After encouraging his readers with the thought of past saints acting as spectators of their races, the writer of Hebrews exhorts them with imperatives in verse 1. He writes, “Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us.” I once heard Bob Jones III, referring to this command, say, “Imagine getting

ready to run a race and in one hand you had a gallon of water and in the other hand, you had a gallon of whiskey.” He said, “The whiskey represents sin and the water represents hindrances that may not be sinful in themselves, but would hinder you in running your race.” Robert Gromacki wrote, “The readers had to actively remove from themselves ‘every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset.’

Athletes could not run with excessive clothing or heavy shoes. In like manner, the believers had to shed the sin of unbelief and the encumbrances of self-pity and depression” (*Stand Bold in Grace*, Kress Christian Publications, 2002, 199).

“Not all hindrances or weights are sin, however,” Kent Hughes adds. “In fact, what is a hindrance to you may not be a hindrance in any way to someone else. A hindrance is something, otherwise good, that weighs you down spiritually. It could be a friendship, an association, an event, a place, a habit, an entertainment, an honor. But if this otherwise good thing drags you down, you must strip it away” (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, 159). Regarding the laying aside of sin, C. Jerdan writes, “This is the essential burden. It ‘easily besets us,’ i.e. cleaves to us, wraps itself around us like a cloak, clings to us as a parasitical plant to a tree. It is sin in general which the apostle characterizes as ‘easily besetting.’ The adjective in the original does not refer to the particular sins, whatever these may be, to which individuals are most prone; although, of course, in taking home the exhortation to the conscience, this thought will naturally be suggested. The writer probably had in his mind just now (indeed, he never forgets it throughout this letter) the sin of apostasy—the danger to which the Hebrew Christians were exposed of drifting back to Judaism, and thus of ‘falling away from the living God’ (ch.iii.12)” (*The Pulpit Commentary*, vol. XXI, Hendrickson Publishers, 364).

Once the extra weight has been properly dealt with, there’s only one thing left to do. Run! So the writer of Hebrews continues in verse 1, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” According to A. T. Robertson, “let us run” (*trechomen*) is a “present active volitive subjunctive of *trecho*, ‘let us keep on running’” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol.V, Baker Book House, 433). “The command stresses persistent, daily running. Christianity is not a spectator sport; it involves active participation. The length of the run directly corresponds to the years between conversion and death. The race is therefore more like a marathon than a dash” (Gromacki, *Stand Bold in Grace*, 198). Running the race is a 24/7 activity. It is a consistent exercise in the life of a believer.

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


Charles Spurgeon

The writer has exhorted his readers to “keep on running” and to do it with *patience*. In our contemporary society, we generally consider ourselves patient if we can wait without getting fidgety or losing our temper. We pat ourselves on the back for not becoming anxious over a longer-than-normal red light or for not growing irritated with our doctor who is late for an appointment. The word translated “patience” (*hupomones*) refers to “the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings” (Joseph Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Baker Book, 1977, 644). It refers to the determination to finish in spite of pressures. It is a virtue that is gained through tribulation as Paul wrote in Romans 5:3: “knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” James said the same thing when he wrote, “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:3). Running with patience is running with the ability to bear up under the pressures encountered along the course and finishing whether the terrain is mountainous, rocky, thick with brush, or full of potholes.

The story of Bill Broadhurst is widely known and recorded in several books, magazines, and devotionals. In 1971 Bill underwent surgery for a brain aneurism that left him paralyzed on his left side. Ten years later in July of 1981, Bill stood at the starting line of the Pepsi Challenge 10,000-meter race held in Omaha. When the starting gun went off, the other 1200 or so runners took off, leaving Bill far behind them. With great effort and determination, Bill plodded along the course sweating profusely and experiencing a piercing pain in his ankle. Many of the other runners completed the race in thirty minutes, but it took Bill two hours and twenty minutes. The winner of that race, a marathoner by the name of Bill Rodgers, waited for Mr. Broadhurst to cross the finish line and when he did, he gave his medal to Bill Broadhurst. Why was Bill Broadhurst’s

finish so grand? Because he ran with painstaking endurance. William Barclay describes this perseverance as “that determination, unhesitating and unrelenting, unhurrying and yet undelaying, which goes steadily on, and which refuses to be deflected. Obstacles will not daunt it; delays will not depress it; discouragements will not take its hope away. It will halt neither for discouragement from within nor for opposition from without” (*The Letter to the Hebrews*, Westminster, 1957, 196).

The writer of Hebrews makes it clear in verse 1 that the course of the race that he is encouraging his readers to run does not originate with the runner. Gromacki states that, “the course of the race is predetermined by God” (*Stand Bold in Grace*, 198). Hughes adds, “We each have a specific course mapped out for us, and the course for each runner is unique. Some are relatively straight, some are all turns, some seem all uphill, some are a flat hiking path. All are long, but some are longer. But the glory is, each of us (no exceptions) can finish the race ‘marked out for us.’ I may not be able to run your course, and you may find mine impossible, but I can finish my race and you yours” (*Hebrews*, vol. 2, 160).

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). 

Mike Jones pastors Cornerstone Baptist Church in Oakdale, Connecticut.

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God's Grace in the Face of Limitations

Counseling Those with Physical Needs in Africa

Have you ever experienced deep pain? Have you ever sat beside someone who through sobs shares deep pain in an effort to get help? God's Word is true. We *can* find grace and peace through the knowledge of God (2 Pet. 1:2, 3) no matter what the pain. Life still may not be easy, but it is worth living when lived in the reality of who God is.

Over years of ministry and as God continues to teach me, my heart has grown with a burden to share with those in difficult need the truth that grace and peace does come through knowing Christ. The purpose of this article is to help the reader better understand two issues relevant to Africa which usually come with their share of pain. The two issues are counseling those affected by HIV/AIDS and counseling those affected by special needs or disabilities.

Since the goal of counseling is sanctification, it is impossible to counsel someone Biblically unless he knows Christ as Savior. If a person comes for counsel and does not know Christ as his Savior, it is a perfect opportunity for evangelism. If the person is discouraged because of difficulties in his life, he should be confronted with the question of his relationship with God. Knowing God impacts every area of our life and brings sweet rest in the midst of daily life or deep trouble.

HIV/AIDS

When someone is diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS, it is a traumatic jolt to his life. His perspective on everything changes. The hope of a long life is gone. If the person is married, there is the question of whether the spouse is also HIV/AIDS positive. If there are children, there is the question as to whether any of them are infected or if any children in the future will be infected. If the person is not married, there is a question as to whether getting married is

even a possibility. Then there is a greater need for a nutritious diet. (But what if there isn't money for such a diet?) There is the need to be educated about physical health and medication. And the list goes on. Unless the person diagnosed has spent much time in knowing God, his thinking about this turn of events could easily lead to discouragement or even depression.

Take a scenario. Let's say that you are pastoring a church in Zambia and a certain member in your church has recently been sick, accompanied by a significant amount of weight loss.¹ This member goes to the hospital for tests and comes to you a few days later devastated because he was found to be HIV/AIDS positive. You may already know this person's testimony of faith in Christ, and upon confirming his testimony, you start dealing with what is going in his heart. In situations where a Christian finds out that he is HIV/AIDS positive, there may be sin in the believer's life that needs to be confessed.² Often in such a case

the believer was immoral prior to salvation.

Probably the most difficult part of the believer's heart to deal with is his sense of loss from the diagnosis. He may feel he was given a death sentence. What a joy to be able to remind him about the truths of our God. As believers, God has already removed the death sentence from us (Rom. 8:1). God does forgive sin (1 John 1:9). God has a good plan for our lives (Jer. 29:11, 12). Though we are responsible for our choices (Rom. 14:12), we cannot mess up God's plan for our lives (Isa. 14:27). God has ordained believers for good works (Eph. 2:10) and wants us to comfort others with the comfort He gives us (2 Cor. 1:3, 4). The believer must spend much time in meditation on these truths about God.

The diagnosis does not mean that there is no hope for life. God can use this health limitation and its effects for

Continued on page 32



Joy Washer

FBFI Leaders Working

Peter Maruyama and David Innes

One wonders whether Dr. David Livingston would recognize the portions of Africa he reopened with the gospel in the mid 1800s. Africa is certainly not the homogeneous population that we may have envisioned based on the missionary slides from our childhood. Yes, there are mud huts, snakes, and wild creatures to be sure. But there are also bustling cities, universities, and the arts. But the greatest advancement of all is that God is working there. He is calling a people after His Name. The challenges and advancements are different in the different nations. Some of our brethren are facing Muslim extremism; others are facing ravaging poverty; others are battling an AIDS epidemic that touches seven of ten; others fear the violent and self-serving whims of heartless dictators; but all the believers face these problems through the power and presence of their Savior. The following are just two snippets of how God is working through faithful Fundamental Baptist men on the African continent.

Zimbabwe

Pastor Gideon Njovu was instrumental in starting over thirty churches in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia. His son Friday has taken over the leadership and the ministry that his father left when he passed away over a year ago. Dr. Johnny Daniels (pastor of Calvary Baptist Bible Tabernacle, Puerto Rico, and an FBFI board member) and Dr. Rod Bell visited Zimbabwe for the purpose of conference ministry there. Many traveled several hours one way to hear these men open God's Word at this conference. One man, his wife, and a three-month-old child traveled two hundred miles by bicycle to the meeting. The women were able to sleep on the floor of the church while the men found a spot outside to sleep. God used these meetings to press upon His men the need to start a Bible-training school there for those who want training for the ministry. During that conference over sixty young people made public commitments to God's calling on their life and their willingness to prepare for the ministry. Calvary Baptist Bible College of Carolina, Puerto Rico, has two graduates who have been in Zimbabwe (a former British colony in South Africa) for five years and two others who have graduated and will hopefully be returning this year to serve in the Bible college. Bibles and printed material are at a premium. With an average income of thirty dollars a month coupled with ninety percent unemployment, the picture may appear bleak. But God is at work.



with African Leaders



Ghana

Further up the western coast is the nation of Ghana. Ghana is bordered by Togo to its east, Burkina Faso to its north, and Cote D'Ivoire on its west. Ghana is a Christianized nation with a population of about 22 million people. But that "Christian" community is dominated mostly by Charismatic, orthodox, and mushroom congregations. Fundamental Baptists are a small minority.

In 2007 the first Fundamental Baptist Conference was held in the capital city, Accra. The theme for the conference was "Linking the Continents with a New Vision with the Old-Time Gospel." The meeting was sponsored by the Association of Fundamental Baptist Churches (AFBC) and hosted by Faith Independent Baptist Church. The AFBC is a fellowship of independent Baptist believers that covers thirty African nations. The following is an excerpt from the report:

The key conference topics covered by various speakers were "World Missions and Christian Growth" by Dr. Peter I. Maruyama of Narashino Baptist Church in Japan; "What Is Fundamentalism?" by Dr. David Innes (pastor of Hamilton Square Baptist Church, CA, and FBFI board member) and "Christian vs. Contemporary Music" by Dr. Ron White. Rev. Seth Adjei Mohenu, host pastor of the conference, delivered the keynote message on the conference theme. He pastors the Faith Independent Baptist Church in Accra. Other topics addressed were "Christianity and the Legal Framework in Ghana" by Rev. Bob Nyarkotey; "Vision and Mission of the Fundamental Baptist Churches in Ghana" by Pastor Stephen Viollente; "Training Young Men to Reach the Lost World with the Old-Time Gospel: The Challenges" by Rev. Timothy Seidu; "Building Strong Fellowship Ties" by Pastor Holdbrook; and "The Youth and the World Systems" by Rev. Abraham Narkom.

Attendance averaged over 100 or more for the eight-day meetings and reached 300 during the evening services. Over thirty-five full-time pastors from Fundamental Baptist churches and about forty students from different Bible-training institutions attended the conference.

The gospel is alive and well. May God continue to prosper His church, raising up Fundamental Baptist churches throughout the African continent for His glory. Yes, a people after His Name, of every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Dr. Peter Maruyama, FBFI regional director for the Pacific Rim, and Dr. David Innes, FBFI executive board member, contributed to this article.

Our Guest

In this dispensation the presence of the Holy Spirit in each individual may be lacking, present, or preeminent. No one has the indwelling of the Spirit prior to conversion. He is as an outsider knocking to be heard. When we personally accept the Lord as Redeemer, the great transaction is the forgiveness of our sins and the formation of a new spiritual life within. Along with this, however, comes invariably the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, establishing an abiding residence in the heart of each believer. If there's a new life, there's a new "Guest." Our submission to that Guest may be nominal or may be total. Total submission is called being filled with the Spirit.

Judging whether the Holy Spirit is a resident Guest is evidenced by gaining assurance of eternal life. Evidences of Bible reading, worship, prayer, witnessing, etc., which are part of spiritual growth, should also be taken as indications of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for all who are saved have this heavenly Guest. Some incorrectly would judge the presence of the Spirit by certain characteristics of the filling of the Spirit. All believers are indwelt; all believers should be Spirit filled. God's command to believers is, "Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:18-20).

We should not confuse the various works of the Holy Spirit. (I don't think that offends Him so much as it deprives us of proper appreciation of His various works.) The nature of His filling seems to have remained the same throughout history. Jesus made clear that His indwelling would soon be different. Prior to Pentecost the Holy Spirit was "with" God's people; following Pentecost the Holy Spirit has indwelt believers (John 14:17). He was through the OT period only a "visiting" Guest; now He is in us to stay.

Not all believers in this dispensation, however, are filled with the Holy Spirit, even though He abides in each one. Residence indicates an intimate presence; filling indicates control by God.

Some features mentioned in Scripture as resulting from filling of the Spirit were to emphasize the message of God's special revelation being revealed at that time and are no longer characteristic of being filled with the Spirit today—such as speaking with or hearing in other languages (Acts 2:4). The Bible clearly lists characteristic fruits of the Spirit for this dispensation: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance" (Gal. 5:22, 23). These ought to be increasingly evident in the lives of those in whom the Holy Spirit is resident. They will permeate the speech and

actions of one being used in ministry and service.

Two special works of the Holy Spirit are important when considering the need of sinful man: convicting and drawing. The Holy Spirit endeavors to *convict* the lost through the witness of God's handiwork in nature and through His Word. He endeavors to *draw* a sinner from trust in self and powers of nature to personal submission unto Jesus as Lord. The illuminating work of the Holy Spirit is also involved at this stage, although we generally think of that as primarily for the redeemed. The providential, personal guidance of the Holy Spirit likewise pertains to His ministry to the lost, although we also think of that work as primarily for us as His chosen. Lost or saved, no man is ignored by the Holy Spirit. Saved and surrendered, a man is pliable putty in the hands of the Master.

Generalizations can be helpful, but ought not to be pressed too far. God the Father is customarily thought of as supreme, far removed, above and beyond this physical universe as well as totally, equally present throughout creation. The tasks of objective redemption of lost mankind were assigned to and carried out completely and satisfactorily by the incarnate Son, eternal God come in the flesh. He now sits at the right hand of Glory on high, awaiting the day of full redemption, as well as residing spiritually in each member of His body here on earth, a living Lord within each believer.

Various subjective contacts with lost men and with redeemed humanity have been particularly assigned to the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. He works and pleads with the lost to turn to the Lord in repentance and confession. He comes to indwell each believer who submits to this divine redemption. He unites each believer in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Substitute (Spirit baptism). He gives spiritual enlightenment and growth. He guides in Christian service. He comforts in times of need. He never exalts Himself but always the Father and the Son. Men often get the credit for what He does, but He does not refrain from working nor does He insist on getting the credit.

How does our resident Guest encourage and help us? We know not how to pray as we ought. He can remind us. He can direct us. What choices should we make? He can guide between right and wrong. He can give wisdom. What will be the best for the future? He can see what lies ahead and can lead us to make right decisions. We are to remain sensitive to His voice and not grieve Him.

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The Challenges and Blessings of Change

Jeannette Joyner

After we had ministered in Kenya for twenty years God redirected Timothy and me to Uganda in July 2005. It was not easy for me to make this change, but God used different circumstances to confirm to us that this was His will. The first reason affected other missionaries as well—the Kenyan government sought tax from missionaries, an issue which still has not been resolved with the Ministry of Finance. Another reason we felt God was moving us was that we were “comfortable.” We needed to step aside and let those we had trained step in—that’s what we had prepared them for. Though there were a few difficulties in one of our churches at first, it was a growing experience for the people, and both churches are continuing under national leadership. The Lord also used a message from Genesis 19 to confirm this decision. The angel asked Lot, “Hast thou here any besides?” There are others in Africa who need the gospel! We began to do research and learned there were more Fundamental Baptist missionaries in Kenya than in all the other East African countries put together—Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. God was moving us in an exciting way to reach more people with the gospel!

Though there are many similarities between African countries, there are also many differences. English is one of the official languages in both Kenya and Uganda, but the people communicate with each other in the “local” language. The Swahili we learned in Kenya is spoken in some parts of Uganda, but our area in Entebbe uses Luganda—a language that is marked by changes in pitch and duration. We’ve learned that the history of Uganda during the era of Idi Amin and the conflicts under Obote greatly affected the educational level of the country and their religious foundation. When people are fleeing for their lives and seeking survival in the ravages of war, schools and churches are not developed. Thus the reading ability of the people and their basic Bible knowledge are much lower. Statistics show that forty percent of Uganda’s religious makeup is animism, and even in recent months there have been reports of child sacrifice and ritual killings. The family unit in Uganda is much weaker than in Kenya, with many more polygamous homes, creating a great deal of jealousy, envy, and strife. There are also many more single-parent homes. In our small congregation of about forty we have five single moms. These factors naturally created changes in our approach to ministry.

Other changes we faced were the weather—we are practically on the equator in Uganda. The medical care in the country is also at a lower level than Kenya’s. Because Uganda is a landlocked country, things are also more

expensive due to transport costs. In the first year my Bible, which I had had for twenty four years, was stolen from the car, and I even had to get used to a new Bible.

Yet all of us experience changes. Some have recently lost their spouse or another loved one, bringing major changes. Many are facing changes due to health problems. In the current economic situation, levels of income often change due to a job loss. Completing university and entering a new career bring about many changes.

What is our attitude in all of these changes? I think I’m more like Peter in Acts 10—God was sending him to a Gentile, and Peter responded “Not so, Lord: for I have never. . . .” **CHANGE!** How often I was just like Peter, reluctant and a “slow learner,” because verse 17 tells us he “doubted in himself” even though the Lord had shown him three times what He wanted him to do (v. 16). In verses 19 and 20 the Spirit speaks to him, telling him to “go with them, *doubting nothing*.” This caused me to think of others in the Bible who experienced change and how I could learn from them also.

We should *not* be like

- Sarah, who tried to manipulate her own way (Gen. 16)
- the children of Israel, who rebelled in their hearts and murmured (Num. 14:9–27)
- Jonah, who got angry and tried running away from God (Jon. 1:2, 3).

Rather we *should* be like

- Mary, who accepted God according to His Word (Luke 1:38)
- Joseph, who realized God meant his circumstances for good (Gen. 50:20)
- Joshua, who recognized God was with him (Num. 14:9)
- Job, who knew God was purifying him (Job 23:10)
- Habakkuk, who rejoiced in the God of his salvation (Hab. 3:17, 18)
- Paul, who yielded himself as an instrument of righteousness (Rom. 6:13) and learned to be content in whatever state he was in, depending on God’s strength in all of the changes he faced (Phil. 4:11–13).

I’m sure God has more changes ahead for us as we continue to minister in Uganda, but we are learning to have a Biblical response to these changes—and we’re learning how to pray for others who are facing changes too!

Jeannette Joyner serves in Uganda with her husband, Tim, under Open Door Baptist Missions.

A Rotten Bone or a Crown?

Sandy Washer

October in Zambia, Central Africa, is the hottest time of year. One day at that time of year we were called to our back door to talk to a man who had hobbled to our place on crutches. He appeared to be in his early twenties. He had worn-out shoes, not-so-nice clothes, and one very badly swollen leg wrapped with old bandages in effort to keep flies off of his wound. But no covering could hide the stench coming from that wound. When he uncovered it, we saw a deep, unhealed gash on his lower leg. The infection was severe, all the way to his bone. He had no choice but to live with the smell, which was hard for us to take even for a few minutes. We tried not to reveal our distaste and difficulty with the temporary odor. But he constantly felt the inconvenience and embarrassment of the wound.

He wearily sat down in the seat we offered. We gave him a drink and asked what had happened to cause his condition. He said he had been in a minibus that was traveling too fast when a front tire blew, causing the driver to lose control. He alone was left to tell about it. It had happened the year before, and the leg had not healed due to lack of proper care and necessary medicines. Infection had gone into the bone, causing chronic osteomyelitis. On the day of the accident, his whole life changed. He could no longer work a job effectively. He would never walk normally again. His ability to care for himself and his needs was a constant challenge. He often heard comments or saw facial expressions that made him aware of the discomfort his presence caused, that brought him shame, hurt, yes, and even anger. We helped him as best we could physically and spiritually, as he was a person eternity-bound.

The situation, upon reflection, reminded me of Proverbs 12:4: "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones." I could see the effects of the accident. We could smell the rottenness of that wound. The shame that came to that man was constantly with him and would be his for the rest of

his life. It affected not only his job, his day-to-day living, and his total outlook on life—it also affected his reception by others. I saw that day what an effect a rotten bone had on a man—the same effect that a wife can have on her husband.

On the other hand, if a woman is a crown to her husband, he is like a king in his own kingdom. A virtuous wife, a woman of excellence, is the added touch of grace and beauty to his appearance. He will not be ashamed to be escorted by her in public nor to be with her in private. She also makes his kingdom a place of welcome and comfort, a place he wants to be and enjoys coming back to. A virtuous wife brings contentment and helps him face all other areas of life, knowing she is there praying, helping as she can, encouraging, and caring. He trusts her to make decisions that will not bring dishonor to him nor bring him deliberate harm.

So how can I be a crown and not a shame to my husband? As I thought on this, the Scripture that came to mind was, "Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). That verse is loaded with admonition to consistently guard my heart, allowing God to be the Keeper of me through being the Keeper of my heart (Matt. 6:21). The things I say come from the heart (Matt. 12:34b) as do the things I love, hate, and choose to spend my time doing. If God controls my heart, my thoughts will be controlled by Him (2 Cor. 10:5). But, you know, really, if I am honoring and not shaming my God, I know I will then be an honor to my husband. The control of the heart by my God is a moment-by-moment choice for me to make. It is the inner will given to God that then affects my outer self, bringing honor to my God and to my husband.

The question for my heart is, "Am I a like a rotten bone or crown to my husband today?"

Sandy Fields Washer and her husband, Terry, currently serve as missionaries in Kenya. They both grew up as MKs in different parts of Africa and have been missionaries themselves in Africa since 1983.

If God has accepted my service, then my life is charmed till my work is done.
—David Livingstone, Africa

I want to hear more about saving souls than saving money.
—James Hannington, Uganda

Well, Mr. Bingham, I would rather have had [my son] Walter go out to the Sudan, and die there, all alone, than have him home today disobeying the Lord.
—Mrs. Gowans

I renounce Satan to follow Jesus. . . . I will not sacrifice to the demons again! —Evangelist Wandaro, Ethiopia

From the moment I fell in love with Christ, everything else was secondary to one thing—becoming a missionary. . . . I want people to be passionately in love with Jesus, so that nothing else counts.
—Dr. Helen Roseveare

The future of Africa is not in the hands of secular politicians, economists, developers, or financial institutions (with all of their good intentions), but in your hands as a woman or man of God and of prayer.
—Tokunboh Adeyemo, Nigeria

We have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset in which to win them.
—Robert Moffat, Africa

The English evangelicals who abolished the slave trade, all left their mark on earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with heaven. —C. S. Lewis

Tell your king that I purchased the road to [Uganda] with my death!—James Hannington, missionary martyr

Not all fields are reaped with the sickle. Some crops must be handpicked.
—Amy Carmichael

We need you to teach the new believers. See how many there are now, but they are untaught!

—Wandaro, when the missionaries were allowed to return to Wolayto, Ethiopia

I never made a sacrifice. We ought not to talk of sacrifice when we remember the great sacrifice that He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us.
—David Livingstone

I have never had what you may term a "call"; my desire started at conversion.
—Tokunboh Adeyemo

I am not [at present] reaping the harvest; I can scarcely claim to be [even] sowing the seed; I am hardly ploughing the soil; but I am gathering out the stones. That, too, is missionary work; let it be supported, by loving sympathy and fervent prayer.
—Robert Bruce, Iran

If missions fail, the rest of us will have to shut up shop.
—David Lloyd-George

The price of power is weakness.—Lilias Trotter, Algeria

On a clear morning the smoke of a thousand villages could be seen where the name of Christ had never been heard.
—Robert Moffat, Africa

Without Christ, not one step; with Him, anywhere!
—David Livingstone

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

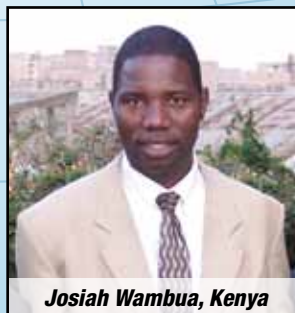
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Regional Report

Doug Wright

Southern California Regional FBFI Meeting

Ron Smith

Talk about “springs in the desert”! The desert is the Mojave and the “springs” were Bruce McAllister and John Hutcheson, who encouraged and challenged us all. Most of the pastors in attendance received the foundation of the ministerial training under the tutelage of Dr. McAllister. Some, such as Randy Fox and Dale Seaman, were classmates of his back in Cleveland, Tennessee! What a blessing his messages were as he focused on 2 Corinthians. Mrs. McAllister fielded some questions and encouraged the church planters to consider the way we task our wives in our various ministries. Ouch! *All* of our wives would have been on “amen”ing ground. John Hutcheson of Frontline Missions presented a challenge regarding the 10/40 Window and encouraged us to think of sixty-one percent of the population of the world.

The humility and graciousness of our speakers was a great example. I am encouraged as I type these words! The fellowship was sweet, and the foosball table kept pretty busy. Make plans to be with us next year!

Northern California Regional Report

Pastor Brent Snow

Cornerstone Baptist Church of Pleasant Hill hosted the Northern California meeting. The theme was *Evangelistic Strategies for the Local Church*. Dr. Bruce McAllister was an encouraging keynote speaker.

The well-attended conference was an encouragement to all. On Thursday evening several churches combined choirs’ sang “This Is My Word.” Pastor Jeremy Law led an inspiring music ministry for the conference. Pastor Randall Shanks, his family, and other believers formed a small orchestra to accompany the congregational singing. This may sound routine unless you minister in California. Come West!

Dr. David Innes, Dr. John Mincy, Pastor Tim Sneed, and host Pastor Brent Snow preached messages on evangelistic methods in the New Testament. Workshop speakers included John Hutcheson, Jim Oesterwind, Brent Snow, and Tim Knauf. A special word of appreciation goes to believers of Heritage Baptist, Hamilton Square Baptist, and the lay ministers of Cornerstone Baptist church for their selfless service.

Central (South) Regional Fellowship

Pastor Richard Butts

The Central (South) Regional Fellowship was hosted by Westside Baptist Church (WBC) in Katy, Texas, on October 22 and 23, 2009. Over forty pastors and church leaders attended the two-day meeting. The theme was *Standing True in Shifting Times*. The four speakers were Rev. Richard D. Butts (pastor of WBC), Dr. John Vaughn (presi-

dent of FBFI), Mike Herbster (evangelist and director of Southland Christian Camp), and Larry Koontz (director of Neighborhood Bible Time). The WBC ladies prepared two great meals—a “Mexican Buffet” and a “Filipino Feast”!

The preaching was strong, and the spirit of the meeting was excellent. Mike Herbster brought outstanding messages on Christian music. Larry Koontz challenged us regarding how to win the young people of this age. Pastor Butts brought a message on how to pastor a diverse/multicultural church, and Dr. Vaughn gave the balance in holding the line on doctrine and practical ministry. You may listen to these messages on WBC’s website (www.mywestside.org), or you can order a CD for \$15 plus post-age. Plans are underway for a repeat meeting in 2010.

Central (North) Regional Fellowship

Pastor Arin Hess

The Central Region (North) division of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship met in Norfolk, Nebraska, at Community Bible Church on October 19 and 20. Dr. John Vaughn, president of FBFI, was the keynote speaker. Pastor Larry Carr (a product of the Community Bible ministry), who now pastors at Emmanuel Independent Baptist Church in Clay Center, Kansas, shared speaking responsibilities. The meeting was attended by more than twenty-five pastors and spouses, some families, and on Monday and Tuesday evening several church members also enjoyed the fellowship. The ladies of Community Bible hosted receptions both evenings and a meal for the fellowship attendees on Tuesday noon. No conference payment was required, and the meeting was fully funded by freewill offerings. Evangelist Ken Lynch provided special music for each service, playing his violin, Clavinova, and musical/crystal glasses.

Our hearts were challenged and encouraged. Pastor George Heusinger, founder of Community Bible Church, was also recognized for establishing the church fifty years ago and standing true to the faith.

Wyoming

Pastor Ted York

The Wyoming State Meeting was held on October 12 and 13. This was our seventh meeting at Green River Bible Baptist Church in Green River, Wyoming, with Pastor Ted York as our host. Guest speakers included Dr. John Vaughn, Rev. Bob Landis (Make a Timothy Today), and Rev. Ron Van Hee (pastor emeritus of Grace Baptist Church, Rock Springs, Wyoming). With thirty in attendance, pastors and missionaries traveled hundreds of miles to attend and enjoyed a great time of fellowship, fun, and special music.

Lord willing, next year’s meeting will be in Cheyenne, Wyoming, at Homestead Baptist Church with Randy Gregory as the host pastor.

The Blessings of Spiritual Detours

In Genesis 37 we have the account of the life Joseph. Talk about detours in the life of an individual—he is the prime example! First Corinthians 10:11 says, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” Perhaps there is someone reading this article who is going through a difficult time. Maybe you feel that there has been a spiritual detour in your life you had not been anticipating. It is my desire to show through the life of Joseph that detours are designed by the Lord for our spiritual development.

First, Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers. Their response is recorded in Genesis 37:5: “And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.” Later, Joseph was asked by his father to go and see how his brothers were doing in Dothan. When he got there, his brothers wanted to kill him but ended up selling him to the Ishmeelites. Later he was sold again to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh’s. Potiphar liked Joseph and put him in charge of all that he had, as Genesis 39:4 records. But then Potiphar’s wife tried to entice Joseph to have an affair with her. Joseph refused and told her in Genesis 39:9, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” But this wicked woman went to her husband and falsely accused Joseph. Enraged, Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison.

While there, Joseph interpreted dreams that the butler and the baker told him they had had. Joseph told the butler that in three days he would be restored to his position. He also told the baker that in three days he would be hanged. Everything came to pass exactly as Joseph had said in Genesis 40:21, 22. Joseph asked a favor of the butler in 40:14: “But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house.” But did the butler do this favor for Joseph? No! Verse 23 says, “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.”

Here we see from the Scriptures these different detours in Joseph’s life. Why would the Lord allow

him to experience such setbacks? The answer is that the Lord put him through all these circumstances to prepare him for greater usefulness in the future. The fire is necessary to remove the dross and impurities in metal so it will be stronger in its final state. Joseph was now ready for the Lord to do great things through him.

Pharaoh had a dream, and all the magicians of Egypt and wise men could not interpret it. Pharaoh’s butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. Joseph was summoned from prison to stand before Pharaoh and interpret the dream. Joseph told exactly what the Lord said would happen during the next fourteen years and that a terrible famine would come upon Egypt. Pharaoh then elevated Joseph to the second highest position in the kingdom. The famine did come, just as Joseph had said. His brothers came to Egypt to buy corn; Joseph revealed himself to them, and they were stunned at his high position. They went back and brought their father, Jacob, and the rest of their family to Egypt where they were under the care and provision of Joseph. They were upset with themselves, but Joseph said in Genesis 50:20, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” What a tremendous testimony of a man who accepted the detours from God!

In like fashion, many of God’s children may not understand what He is doing in their lives. When we cannot trace the hand of God in our lives, we had better learn to trust His hand. John Bunyan was in prison for thirteen years. During that time he wrote *Pilgrim’s Progress*, which has blessed the lives of thousands. May we all consider that detours will develop us if we accept them from the Lord. If we do not accept detours from the Lord, they will distract and discourage us. Psalm 66:12 says, “Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.”

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Written and Compiled by Dr. Layton Talbert

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN:

First John is a favorite book with many Christians. It is a storehouse of rich truths memorably stated. John thought and wrote in universal and absolute categories (light and darkness, truth and lies, life and death). He is arguably the most philosophical of the NT writers. The description “Solomon of the NT” may not be amiss for this closest inner-circle companion of the Greater-than-Solomon. John seems to echo Christ’s language and concepts more clearly and mirror His character and spirit more consistently than any other NT writer. John’s sweeping, black-and-white worldview is deeply rooted in profound theology—the nature and attributes of God, the nature and extent of the atonement, the interface between soteriology and sanctification, the mystery and necessity of the hypostatic union. But deep theology is always intensely practical, and it is the spiritual clarity and earthy applicability of John’s exhortations that have endeared this epistle to so many readers. The reader may sail serenely across the surface of this epistle, but these are deep waters indeed.

Occasion of 1 John

The concerns that prompted John to write quickly become evident. False teachers had emerged from the church (2:19). Like 2 Peter, 1 John mixes negative warnings with positive exhortations that will counteract the influences of the errors the writer exposes and serve as indicators of genuine faith by which they may assess themselves and others.

John pauses to make four express statements of purpose (“I am writing these things . . .”). Rather than regarding all four purpose statements as reasons he is writing the whole epistle, each statement seems linked to its immediate context as the punctuation mark at the end of four successive sections of the letter:

- 1:1–3 is intended to minister truth that will heighten the joy of their Christian experience (1:4).
- 1:5–2:2 is intended to give reasons they should not sin (2:1).
- 2:3–2:27 is intended to educate and protect them against the deceptions of false teachers (2:26).
- 2:28–5:12 is intended to give believers means to evaluate and be assured of the genuineness of their salvation (5:13).

The final statement in 5:13 is so encompassing that it may summarize his purpose for the epistle as a whole. Commentator Daniel Akin notes that whereas John’s Gospel displays “an evangelistic purpose” for why people *should* believe, 1 John is intended “to provide avenues of

assurance” for those who *have* believed.

One of the major errors John addresses has to do with the doctrine of the person of Christ, specifically the doctrine of the incarnation. The incarnation is a two-sided coin: it is equally important to hold both that Jesus was *God* in human flesh and that Jesus was *God in human flesh*. The most pervasive modern Christological heresy is a denial of Jesus’ deity, but the earliest detectable Christological heresy was a denial of the genuine *humanity* of Christ. Docetism (from the Greek word *dokēō*, “to appear”) is the teaching that Christ only *appeared* to be human. This incarnational error has serious fallout for the identity of Jesus and the efficacy of His death and was one of the teachings that prompted John to write this first epistle. (This is clearest in 4:2, 3; cf. 2 John 7.) It explains why John opened the epistle with such an explicit description of the flesh-and-blood humanity of Jesus to which the apostles were personal witnesses (1:1–3).

Satan attacks truth not always by direct assault but sometimes by magnifying a complementary truth out of proportion. It is possible to emphasize Christ’s deity in a way, or to such an *exclusive* degree, that it diminishes his genuine humanity. His deity and His humanity must never obscure or eclipse each other.

Structure and Content

First John is notoriously difficult to outline, “largely because John takes up a number of themes and keeps returning to them in slightly different connections” (Carson, Moo, Morris, *Introduction to the NT*, 445). Daniel Wallace offers an intriguing illustration: “The construction of this book is analogous to someone throwing four or five stones into a pond within close proximity of each other: after a short time the ripples from one stone overlap with the ripples from another so that all lines become blurred. As such, it is next to impossible to outline that style of argument in a linear fashion.” Hiebert, in fact, observes that John’s thought moves in cycles rather than linear development. John’s spiraling concentricity can be illustrated this way:

- A¹ 1:1–4—Affirming the Incarnation as the Basis of Christian Fellowship
- B¹ 1:5–2:6—Practicing Righteousness, Not Sin
- C¹ 2:7–17—Loving the Brethren, Not the World
- A² 2:18–27—Affirming the Incarnation as the Basis for Assessing Antichrists
- B² 2:28–3:10—Practicing Righteousness Revisited
- C² 3:10–24—Loving the Brethren Revisited
- A³ 4:1–6—Affirming the Incarnation as the Basis for Assessing False Prophets

1 John—Marks of an Authentic Christian Faith and Experience

C³ 4:7–5:2—Loving the Brethren Revisited

B³ 5:3—Practicing Righteousness Revisited

Over these concentric and overlapping thematic spirals, a threefold progression may be noted:

Profession versus Practice (1:5–2:17)

Note the repeated juxtaposition between “if we say” / “he who says” and actual practice (1:6, 7, 8, 9, 10; 2:4, 5, 6, 9–11).

- Fellowship with God = walking in light not darkness (1:5–2:2)
- Knowing God = obeying His commandments (2:3–6)
- Loving God = loving the brethren (2:7–11) and not loving the world (2:15–17)

Assessing Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy (2:18–4:6)

The Bible consistently links orthodoxy (right doctrine) and orthopraxy (right practice). The former necessarily produces the latter; the absence of the latter makes the former suspect (2:4; 4:20). This section has a chiasmic structure, with two issues of orthopraxy sandwiched between guidelines for identifying antichristic influences.

- Guidelines for assessing “antichristic” influences (2:18–27).
 - Orthopraxy—the practice of righteousness (2:28–3:10)
 - Orthopraxy—the practice of brotherly love (3:10–23)
- Guidelines for assessing “antichristic” influences (4:1–6).

Marks of Assurance: Loving, Obeying, Believing (4:7–5:21)

John introduced the importance of loving God and the brethren (2:5, 10, 15), then came back to it in more detail (3:10–18, 23). But 4:7–5:3 contains over thirty references to love in 17 verses.

- The mark of knowing God is loving believers (4:7, 8).
- The mark of loving God (or believers) is obeying God (5:2, 3).

Themes in 1 John

Marks of authentic Christian faith and experience. First John is designed to furnish proofs of authenticity by which one can recognize the presence or absence of genuine faith, whether for the sake of identifying antichrists and false prophets or confirming one’s own confidence and assurance. (For this latter theme see 2:28; 3:19, 21; 4:17; 5:14.) The major evidence is a belief in Christ as God come in human flesh that works itself out in personal righteousness and sacrificial love for God and others. These three elements of authentic Christian faith can be categorized under the two major headings already mentioned:

■ *Orthodoxy*—Personal belief in right doctrine of Christ is central to authentic Christianity (2:18–23; 4:1–3, 15; 5:1, 5–10, 20).

■ *Orthopraxy*—Right doctrine produces right practice, manifested in two primary areas.

- *Relation to God*—Genuine love for God issues in characteristic righteousness and obedience (1:5–10; 2:3–6; 2:28–3:10; 5:2, 3, 16–18). Obedience is not just what you do; it is what you are. Doing righteousness doesn’t make one righteous; it proves one righteous (3:7). Genuine righteousness operates from the inside out.
- *Relation to Believers*—Genuine love for the brethren issues in self-sacrificial service and obedience to God as it relates to them (2:7–11; 3:10–18; 4:7–5:3).

Persevering is abiding. “Abiding” (22x in 1 John) is simply John’s word for “perseverance.” “Abiding” is not an extraordinary spiritual or mystical state of communion with God. The word simply means “remaining”; it is the opposite of abandoning and is the demonstration of authentic Christian experience. Whoever is “abiding” in the Father and/or the Son has the same marks of Christian authenticity:

■ *Orthodoxy*—4:15

■ *Orthopraxy*

- Habitual righteousness and obedience—2:6; 3:6
- Characteristic love for the brethren—2:10; 4:12, 16 (cf. 3:14, 15, 17)

The clearest indication that “abiding” is John’s word for perseverance in contrast to abandonment is 2:19—the abandonment of some who used to be attached to the Christian community, who “if they had [genuinely] been of us, they would have *remained* with us”—but they didn’t, so they weren’t.

Simplicity of John’s Message

An excerpt from Andrew Bonar’s classic *Diary and Life* illustrates the practicality of John’s theology that focuses on the simplicity of trusting, and being, in Christ. Bonar was a young minister of twenty-eight at the time.

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 1838—Visiting the girl Elizabeth Mackenzie, who has been in depression of mind arising from having fallen back after knowing the truth, I was glad to witness an instance of the power of the truth to clear the mind. . . . When I began to speak of Christ directly as a source of joy, she said that she thought she had been trusting too much for comfort

Continued on next page

His glory and as part of His good plan. There are believers in Africa who know the sweet joy of resting in their God and using their prognosis to minister to many others who are in the same situation.

Special Needs

HIV/AIDS is a disease common in Africa which causes physical limitations. Another common category of limitations is disabilities or special needs.

There are still some places in Africa where having a disability is interpreted as a curse upon the individual. The families of those with mental disabilities, in particular, often feel ashamed to have such a child. They assume—or others have told them—that someone placed a curse on them or that God cursed them for some sin in their lives. A physical therapist friend of mine in Zambia told me of a family who let their mentally disabled child out of the house only if he had a paper bag covering his head.

Educators and medical personnel in Africa, among others, know that disabilities are generally the result of a genetic disorder, sickness, traumatic accident, or some other physical cause. Many in the villages or compounds have not had the opportunity to learn about the origin of disabilities. Individuals who have disabilities or the family members of those with disabilities may tend to become discouraged and wonder why God made them that way. God tells us in His Word that He is still in charge even when someone is born with disabilities. In response to Moses' belief that he was not able to speak well enough to Pharaoh, God says, "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" (Exod. 4:11). God assumes responsibility for disabilities. He plans them. Psalm 139:13–15 states, "For thou hast possessed [formed] my reins [inward parts]: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth

right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought [intricately woven] in the lowest parts of the earth."

We may naturally ask, "But what is God's purpose in having some born with disabilities?" God gives us insight in that area as well in John 9: "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (vv. 1–3). God's purpose is to glorify Himself through the life of the individual. Was it a mistake that my grandmother came down with dengue fever while she was in her first trimester of pregnancy with my dad? No, God was in complete control when Dad was born with cerebral palsy as a result of Grandma's high fever. God planned for Dad to always have physical limitations, but God uses him as he compassionately reaches out to those in need in Kenya where he ministers.

Issues like HIV/AIDS and disabilities usually bring heartache to the one(s) affected, particularly at the time of diagnosis. Counselors need much compassion as they teach and give hope through the truths about God. God's grace and peace are available for any situation as we spend much time in knowing Him (2 Pet. 1:2, 3).

Joy Washer grew up in Africa and has degrees in special education and Biblical counseling. She currently is the assistant to the John C. Vaughn Evangelistic Association, Inc. In the future she plans to return to Zambia with her husband-to-be in order to serve at Central Africa Baptist College.

¹ Loss of weight is a typical sign of HIV/AIDS.

² HIV/AIDS is usually transmitted sexually and most often is the result of immorality; however, it is possible to contract it other ways such as through a contaminated blood transfusion.

[i.e., for her assurance] to her evidences. I then read part of 1 Jn. 2:1–2, dwelling much upon our being sinners even after coming to Christ, and that our comfort came from knowing our justification complete, not from our holiness. While conversing about this she said, "Oh, I see now, I see it! I have been looking much into myself." Afterwards she again said the like, and two or three times repeated, "I see it! I see it! I should always look to Christ." She then remarked that she had often found great joy while hearing Christ preached, but it went away. I showed her that this was because all the time of hearing she had been thinking of Christ, and not of herself. Again she said, "I see it now," and there was great peace upon her countenance and a smile of joy. I never before really understood how fully the gospel is "glad tidings of great joy."

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Barna Divorce Study

The Barna Research Group polled people from the United States ages eighteen and older from January 2007 until January 2008. While the numbers did not tell a story that different than what has been accepted as normal, the reality of those numbers is still alarming.

One out of three married adults has personally been involved in a divorce. Since only one in five never gets married, this means that one out of every four adults has experienced the pain and tragedy of divorce.

Barna also segmented the statistics into meaningful people groups. The highest divorce rate (39%) was among those termed "downscaled" (combined annual income under \$75,000). The next highest divorce rate was seen among those who describe themselves as "liberal": 37%.

The lowest divorce rate belongs to Asians (at 20%), followed by the "upscaled" (combined annual income over \$75,000).

There are two particular groups of interest. The first is the "born-again Christian," "people who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior." This group did not differ from the national average at 33%.

Barna defines Evangelical Christians as those who say "their faith is very important in their life today; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists; believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect Deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent upon church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church attended." Their divorce statistics were measured at 26%.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released>.

Call of Note

In a November 6 WorldNetDaily article, columnist Joel Richardson writes of an interview he had with Adnan Oktar, an outspoken Turkish Muslim cleric. It seems Oktar has been meeting with prominent Jewish rabbis (representatives of the recently reconstituted Sanhedrin), seeking to unite over a common goal: the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount.

The following statement

was issued on a Jewish website:

"Out of a sense of collective responsibility for world peace and for all humanity, we have found it timely to call to the world and exclaim that there is a way out for all peoples. It is etched in a call to all humanity: We are all the sons of one father, the descendants of Adam, and all humanity is but a single family. Peace among nations will be achieved through building the House of G-d, where all peoples will serve as foreseen by King Solomon in his prayers at the dedication of the First Holy Temple. Come let us love and respect one another, and love and honor and hold our heavenly Father in awe. Let us establish a house of prayer in His name in order to worship and serve Him together, for the sake of His great compassion. He surely does not want the blood of His creations spilled, but prefers love and peace among all mankind. We pray to the Almighty Creator, that you harken to our Call. Together—each according to his or her ability—we shall work towards the building of the House of Prayer for All Nations on the Temple Mount in peace and mutual understanding."

Oktar believes the Temple could be built in a year.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=106055>.

ELCA: The Bible Is Not Final Authority?

Bishop Mark Hanson spoke to a group gathered in Chicago at a town-hall-type meeting in such a way that led reporters to believe he spoke against Biblical authority. Though he later stated that he was only communicating the views of others, his stated views have become the mainstream position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). He stated, "The understanding we have of homosexuality today does not seem to be reflected at all in the context of the biblical writers." The ELCA's conclusion is that the church ought to consider modern views of homosexuality as more relevant than that of Scripture. In his own words Hanson said, "God is still speaking to us."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.one.newsnow.com/Church/Default.aspx?id=802094>.

Dishonesty among Our Youth

The Josephson Institute for Youth Ethics produces a study every two years on ethical trends of America's youth. The 2008 report can viewed at [www://charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/2008/index.html](http://www.charactercounts.org/programs/reportcard/2008/index.html). Columnist Mark Gregston has written a stimulating column based on this report. Since the report's inception two years prior, lying, cheating, and stealing have been on the rise. Gregston writes, "Forty-two percent of those

surveyed said they lied recently for financial gain. Sixty-four percent said they cheated on a test during the past year, and 38% had cheated more than once. Eighty-three percent said they had recently lied to their parents about something significant.

“Concerning theft, 33% of the boys and 25% of the girls in the survey admitted to shoplifting in the past 12 months. Twenty-four percent said they had stolen something from a relative or parent in the same time period, and 20% had stolen something from a friend. Perhaps the most telling bit of data was that 93% said they are ‘satisfied with their personal ethics and character.’”

Gregston attributes the rise in teen dishonesty to our culture’s glorification of dishonest figures in sports, politics, and reality TV. The anonymity of the Internet and high academic expectations all seem to bait the trap.

This article can be referenced at www.christianpost.com/blogs/parenting/2009/12/the-rising-tide-of-teen-dishonesty-04/index.html.

Changes in Russia

Two pastors have been fined in Russia for holding a service in public. The charges were linked with a requirement to acquire permission for public demonstrations. However, Russian law presently exempts religious services. Todd Nettleton, a spokesman for Voice of the Martyrs, was uncertain whether or not this official action signaled more to come. The fine was equivalent to seventy-five US dollars. As of this writing, the pastors have not indicated whether they will appeal their charges.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.persecu->

NOTABLE QUOTES

I am no longer my own, but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt, rank me with whom Thou wilt, put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for Thee or laid aside for Thee, exalted for Thee or brought low for Thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal.—John Wesley

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, stated that we are blessed if we suffer for righteousness’ sake. But no blessing is promised to the unwise leader who is his own worst enemy. Carnal, self-generated controversy is neither admirable nor desirable. It only creates a roadblock on the journey to worthy accomplishments, a hazard that could be avoided through wiser leadership choices under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.—Larry Michael

If we would save our hearers from the wrath to come, we must realize that they are our brothers. We must have sympathy with them, and anxiety about them; in a word, passion and compassion. May God grant these to us!—C. H. Spurgeon

Don’t worry that you are not recognized, but strive to be worthy of recognition.—Abraham Lincoln

Let us remember that we are the servants in our Lord’s house. “Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Let us be willing to be door-mats at our Master’s entrance-hall. Let us not seek honour for ourselves, but put honour upon the weaker vessels by our care for them. . . . In our Lord’s Church, let the poor, the feeble, the distressed have the place of honour, and let us who are strong bear their infirmities. He is highest who makes himself lowest; he is greatest who makes himself less than the least.—C. H. Spurgeon

Acovetous person lives as if the world were made altogether for him, and not he for the world.—unknown Puritan preacher

Ministers are not teachers in the sense in which Christ is a teacher. They are not masters in a way in which Christ is a Master. They are his representatives, they do not take his place, nor possess his power. There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, God’s Son—Charles Edward Jefferson

[tion.com/pdfs/newsroom/193_russia.pdf](http://www.onenewsnow.com/pdfs/newsroom/193_russia.pdf)

Parents’ Rights

In another nationally scrutinized case regarding parents’ rights, the Montana Supreme Court has ruled against one parent’s rights in favor of a more politically correct alternative. Barbara Maniaci adopted two children as a single woman. During that time she was in a lesbian relationship. Her “partner” did not adopt the children with her. Now that Barbara has left the homosexual lifestyle to enter a heterosexual marriage, her former roommate has sued her for parent’s rights—and now has won. This decision clearly abandons the primacy of parent’s rights in favor of new bench-styled legislation.

This article can be referenced at www.onenewsnow.com/Legal/Default.aspx?id=719520.

UN Flag on Temple Mount

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged in a public speech on Jerusalem Day (May 21, 2009) that the Israeli flag will continue to fly over the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. The comments came in response to public statements made by Jordan’s King Abdullah II that President Obama suggested to him the UN flag be flown over the Western Wall and all of Jerusalem’s holy sites.

This article can be referenced at www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/131506.

Compiled by Robert Conduct, FBFI 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.

Seeking Common Ground or Forging Ahead by Faith?

The search for common ground with those we seek to evangelize is fraught with many dangers. We have sought to understand both the nature of the problem in seeking common ground, as well as the nature of those we seek to reach with the gospel. (See Sept./Oct. 2009 *Global Focus*.) In this issue, we want to focus on how the Scripture encourages us to approach unbelievers with the gospel. Compared to many missiological methods and theories of contextualization, the Bible gives a relatively simple and straightforward methodology when it comes to gospel witnessing.

We have to begin with the right assumptions. We have already determined that there are certain truths that we can start with, based on what the Bible says about mankind. All men know that they are created by a great God and that they are accountable to Him. All men, because of their depravity, suppress that truth. Many altogether deny it and set up other forms of idolatrous worship in the place of the true God. All men know they have sinned against the God who created them. Though they will creatively excuse themselves, all know they will one day face judgment for their sin.

As we considered previously, Romans 1:19, 20 explains that people know the truth, consciously reject it, and so are without excuse. In addition, 2 Corinthians 4:4 shows us that there is another power involved. It states, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Not only do men reject the truth because of their sin, but they are blinded toward the gospel's truth by Satan's work.

What is the Bible's answer to the opposition of the sinner and of Satan himself to the message of salvation? The answer lies in 2 Corinthians 4. Paul gives us a series of teachings that should guide our gospel witness. He teaches us that our witness should be filled with faith. We must believe that when the gospel is plainly presented in dependence on God's power, it can transform sinners and overcome Satan!

First, because of the change the gospel has brought to our lives, we must "faint not." We determine from the outset that we will present the gospel without becoming discouraged, knowing that the same God who saved us can save anyone! It is not our responsibility to save others. It is only our duty to faithfully and earnestly proclaim the message. In faith, we must leave the results in God's merciful and just hands.

Second, we must speak the truth plainly, without changing the gospel in a way we think will make it more acceptable. Paul uses strong words in verse 2, such as "handling the Word of God deceitfully," to describe those who do not speak the entire truth of the gospel. Many preachers and missionaries promote a gospel that avoids talking about sin

and repentance or right and wrong, since that is odious to modern hearers and considered intolerant in a culture of religious diversity. Some preach a gospel that allows hearers to remain in their false religious systems. Paul is clear that this type of approach is not faithful to the true gospel and is certainly not faith-filled.

Paul's third instruction is to confront the conscience of unbelievers by clearly speaking or "manifesting" the truth, knowing God is watching us do so (v. 2b). This is one place where our assumptions make a difference. We know, based on the truth of God's Word, that their conscience will bear witness to the truth of our message.

This kind of straightforward gospel witness takes a great deal of boldness. Sometimes we are tempted to think effective evangelists can only be those who are naturally outgoing and thick-skinned. Sometimes we think people are effective only if they have a stirring, emotional testimony. His fourth point teaches us that, rather than promoting ourselves, we must focus on promoting Jesus Christ as Lord and affirm the fact that we are simply servants delivering our Lord's message. Evangelistic boldness does not find its source in us but in the message itself. Evangelism is not about the messenger but wholly about the God of the message!

What if the hearer seems particularly sinful, hardened, or opposed to the gospel? Paul reminds us next that the powerful God who caused the light of Christ to break into the darkness of our hearts can do the same in the heart of anyone to whom we are witnessing (v. 6). There are no shades of darkness—no levels of spiritual deadness. All, alike, are darkened and dead. Similarly, any person can be enlightened and enlivened.

Finally, he tells us that God works through simple "earthen vessel" messengers so that His surpassing power will be displayed in the saving of sinners (v. 7). We may be weak, afflicted, persecuted, and opposed, but this only contributes to the radiance of the glory of God when we faithfully speak the gospel message and see lives changed!

Rather than searching for common ground, we must forge ahead in faith. We must believe what the Bible says about the sinner. We must believe what it says about the gospel. We must believe what it says about us as the messenger. Paul concludes by saying in verse 13, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." Let's forge ahead in faith for the glory of God!

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

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Chaplain News

Bob Ellis

In referring to the Lord, the writer of Hebrews says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Many years before the time of Christ, the prophet Samuel understood this great truth. He states in 1 Samuel 12:22, "For the LORD will not forsake his people." Samuel also understood another great privilege and responsibility we have toward those in Christ. He continues in verse 23, "God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you." As you pray for many others, add to your list the godly Chaplains endorsed by the FBFI. As this issue of *FrontLine* goes to press, four FBFI Chaplains are in Iraq or Afghanistan.

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Dr. Bob Ellis is the National Field Representative for the FBFI Commission on Chaplains. He and his wife, Sylvia, travel extensively, promoting the FBFI chaplaincy ministry in Fundamental Christian colleges and seminaries. He is also available to speak in churches and can be reached at 850.261.6647.

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You Can Go Where God Calls You to Go; You Can Do What God Calls You to Do

Becky Vaughn

Recently the Lord allowed me to give a testimony to a church youth group in the Northwest. I was a bit nervous and hindered by a sudden muscle spasm, but my topic reminded me of the source of strength that I needed to trust. I was there to tell the young people, "You can go where God calls you to go; you can do what God calls you to do." At times, everyone thinks of excuses for why we cannot or will not do what God has called us to do. When Joy and Kristie Washer invited me to go with them to Zambia in 2004, I sat there in my wheelchair wondering how that could ever be possible. Then I realized that their father, Terry, had been serving the Lord in Africa from a wheelchair for years.

So, I went—for six weeks. A team of missionary nurses from BJU had a six-week itinerary there, so my travel schedule had to fit theirs. I was able to go because others helped me go. While I was there, I wrote lessons for children and taught Bible classes. I gave my testimony to ladies and had a number of exciting adventures, including a brief abduction! While I was giving my testimony, a man grabbed my wheelchair and started pushing it with me in it. He was harmless, but the Zambian lady who was leading the meeting quickly "rescued" me.

In Africa I learned that young ladies there have the same fears and needs as young ladies in America. They are not distracted so much by current fads, but they do want to have friends, to have hope, to be safe, and to be loved. Recently, as I showed my slides to the young people in Oregon, I could tell that they had these same needs. After I showed some pictures of Africa, I included a few of my trip to Israel in 2006, explaining how I was able to see all the sites our group visited



and do most of the things they did, like squeezing through the Temple Tunnel, riding the cable car to the top of Masada, and even riding a camel.

My favorite part of that trip was the visit to the Garden Tomb. It looks like Christ's tomb must have looked. There, in that peaceful garden in the middle of the noisy and turbulent city of Jerusalem, I spent time thinking seriously about how the resurrection of Christ is the only thing that brings real peace to our hearts and how His return is the

only thing that will bring peace to the world.

In Galatians 6:5 God tells us that we have to bear our own burdens. Even though I am in a wheelchair, I can go where God calls me to go, be it Africa or Israel or anywhere He puts me. But I could not go unless others helped me bear my burden, as it says in Galatians 6:2. Missionaries are able to go to their appointed fields because God supports them through the prayers and giving of others. All Christians are either to be going or helping others to go. We can also do what God calls us to do. He will never call us to do what He will not enable us to do.

I have a dear friend from Germany who has worked with disabled children in Bethlehem. She would return there by faith if she could get permission, but she is serving God faithfully back in Germany. The lives of those of us who know we need help, and of those who help us, sometimes illustrate God's help in ways that otherwise might be missed. If we have willing hearts, God will put us where we are supposed to be and use us where He puts us.

Next Christmas my father and I hope to make another trip to Israel and are working with others to adapt this trip for other disabled people. One of our goals is to help them gain the confidence that with God's help (through the help of others) they can go where God calls them to go and do what God calls them to do. And so can you.

Becky Vaughn is a graduate student in Counseling at Bob Jones University. The author of two popular gospel tracts, Becky speaks to young people and ladies' groups as the Lord allows. For more pictures of Becky, see http://johncvaughn.com/photo_albums.

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