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You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.



Thank you for the recent issue (January/February) of *FrontLine*. May you stand for truth in this day of ever increasing compromise.

George Edwards

Dear Friends at *FrontLine*:

I just finished reading the *FrontLine* magazine Twentieth Anniversary edition. It was refreshing to see the connection made to past resolutions and articles related to current issues and especially the importance of Biblical separation. In a day where "change" means leaving the old paths to seek new ones that are less strident and more tolerant of sin, we do well to remember the battles fought in the past and the need to remain militant against apostasy and the work of Satan.

Thank you for putting together a refreshing issue.

*Pastor Tod Brainard
Grace Bible Church
Milton, Florida*

Dear Dr. Vaughn,
It has been quite a while since I wrote and told you how much I appreciate *FrontLine* magazine. I find it both informative and inspirational. I thank you for all that labor of love invested

by you and others in the bimonthly publishing of *FrontLine* magazine. May the Lord continue to use it around the world to encourage, to inspire, and to guide many of His dear children.

*Dr. Habib J. Khoury
Baptist Arabic*

*Ministries Incorporated
Fairport, NY*

Dear Friends,
The *FrontLine* magazine has been a wonderful magazine and a magazine that has been a great god-send into our home. I will miss the magazine very much and that is why I am asking you to drop my subscription effective with the renewal date.

My purpose in stopping the subscription is basically a one-fold reason. I have been diagnosed with cancer and with a short-term life expectancy (as you can see my penmanship is not good at all for which I apologized). I am currently living in an assisted living apartment but for how long, I do not know. Only the Lord knows. Thank you for such a good magazine and God's blessing be on you as you continue to publish excellent Christian literature.

Name Withheld

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

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

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The Church: The Pillar and Ground of the Truth

When *FrontLine* publishes articles pertaining to the local church, readers have the right to ask whose views are represented. The reader needs to look no further than to the magazine masthead immediately to the left. "As the journal of the FBFI, *FrontLine* magazine provides a forum for God's people to reverently express a conservative Christian perspective on pertinent issues. In an effort to keep readers informed, quotes and references to many different individuals and organizations will appear. This does not imply the endorsement of the magazine or its board." Thus, *FrontLine* tolerates edifying interpretations and applications of Biblical truth on which Fundamental Baptists disagree, but it protects the FBFI statement of faith. For that reason most of the articles in this issue were written by board members well informed on the FBFI statement of faith. However, that fact should not be construed to suggest that board members regulate the convictions of others.

In fulfilling its purpose *FrontLine* prints articles of interest to its readers. Occasionally, articles within a single issue will differ on interpretation and application of relevant Scripture. The recent issue of *FrontLine* titled "The Challenge of Islam" featured articles from subject matter experts and former missionaries to Muslim regions who wrote from informed perspectives. Nevertheless, they did not agree completely with each other. Some points of prophetic application were at odds with the position of the majority of the members of the FBFI. But a forum for God's people to reverently express a conservative Christian perspective on pertinent issues will include differing personal perspec-

tives. Similarly, speakers at FBFI meetings will approach their subjects from different perspectives. Yet, careful preachers qualify controversial statements accordingly, not presuming to speak for everyone.

Constitutionally, "the FBFI is a fellowship of individuals who agree without reservation with the Statement of Faith and purposes of the Fellowship." Regarding the local church, the common conviction of the individuals who make up the FBFI is as follows: "We believe that the local church is an autonomous body having the God-ordained right of self-government, free from the interference of any religious hierarchy, solely responsible to preserve its own internal integrity, maintain pure doctrine and practice, elect its own officers, ordain men to the ministry, settle its own internal affairs, and determine the method and extent of its cooperation with other churches." Therefore, this issue of *FrontLine* addresses the theme "The Church: The Pillar and Ground of the Truth." The articles featured here will be measured by their faithfulness to the common conviction stated above. Likewise, the FBFI Annual Fellowship on June 14-16, 2011, addresses the same theme. The messages presented there will be gauged by the same standard.

In addition, the FBFI is recognized by the Department of Defense as an ecclesiastical endorsing agency for chaplains. Through what has been called "the fellowship principle," FBFI supports local churches by endorsing competent, compatible men to serve as Fundamental Baptist chaplains. In the same way that mission boards serve local churches and missionaries, the FBFI endorsing agency serves local churches and chaplains. Just as

Fundamental Baptist missionaries remain under the aegis of their sending churches, Fundamental Baptist chaplains remain under the sponsorship and authority of their sending local churches. For pastors who desire a better understanding of the legal and Biblical legitimacy of the chaplaincy, we recommend you request to attend the applicable training sessions for FBFI chaplaincy overlapping the Annual Fellowship in June (contact info@fbfi.org).

In summary, FBFI is a fellowship of individuals who rally around a shared statement of faith. *FrontLine* is the journal of those individuals. First, through regional, national, and international meetings, the members of FBFI provide a "rallying point for Fundamental Baptists seeking personal revival and the opportunity to work with committed Bible believers in glorifying God through the uncompromising fulfillment of the Great Commission." Second, through *FrontLine*, FBFI members provide a "forum for God's people to reverently express conservative Christian perspectives on pertinent issues." Third, the members of FBFI provide an entry into the chaplaincy for Fundamental Baptists. Thus, informed decisions about FBFI membership will consider all three of these purposes.

Whose views are represented in this issue on the local church? They are the thoughtful convictions of knowledgeable men who understand and believe the doctrinal position of the FBFI regarding the local church. They are men who are loyal to and under the authority of Fundamental Baptist local churches. As Bible believers, they hold the unwavering position that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).



Twentieth Anniversary

A Certain Sound by Fred Moritz

(Originally published in *FrontLine* May/June 2010.)

We live in theologically confusing days. In less than two centuries the world witnessed the birth of theological liberalism and its replacement, neoliberalism. Neo-Orthodoxy arose in opposition to liberalism, but refused to return to true orthodoxy. Various theological positions have developed within that part of Christendom that is characterized by non-orthodox theology. Significant changes also took place in conservative theology in roughly that same time frame.

The Fundamentalist movement coalesced over a fifty-year period (from about 1870 to 1920) as a response to theological liberalism. The period from the 1920s to the 1950s witnessed the Modernist-Fundamentalist conflicts, both inside and outside of the mainline denominations. Then Harold John Ockenga led a movement of disaffected Fundamentalists in the formation of a new kind of evangelicalism after World War II. Ockenga and his followers took the term “New Evangelical” to identify themselves.

The New Evangelicals repudiated the Fundamentalist emphasis on Biblical separation from apostasy.¹ This repudiation of Biblical separation resulted in the New Evangelical twin strategies of infiltrating liberal denominations and ecumenical evangelism. Fifteen years after Ockenga’s statement, Kenneth Kantzer noted that this difference over separation became a “practical cleavage as to strategy” between the two groups.²

Over time most within the New Evangelical camp began to identify themselves simply as “Evangelicals.” In 1991 Kenneth Kantzer, himself an Evangelical, noted that there were many in the movement whom he could not vote to ordain.³ There were and are significant doctrinal and theological aberrations within the Evangelical camp: a rejection of inerrancy, open theism, evangelical feminism, gender neutrality in Bible translation, Charismatic theology, rejection of eternal retribution, and more.

Today there is a new group of leaders within the Evangelical movement who have distanced themselves from many of the liberalizing elements that developed in the New Evangelicalism. They mostly identify themselves as “Conservative Evangelicals.” Kevin Bauder has observed,

Conservative evangelicalism encompasses a diverse spectrum of Christian leaders. Representatives include John Piper, Mark Dever, John MacArthur, Charles Ryrie, Bruce Ware, Bryan Chapell, Wayne Grudem, D. A. Carson, Al Mohler, Tim Keller, John D. Hannah, Ed Welch, Ligon Duncan, Tom Nettles, C. J. Mahaney, Norman Geisler,

and R. C. Sproul. Conservative evangelical organizations include Together for the Gospel (T4G), the Gospel Coalition, the Master’s Seminary, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors, the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (at least in its better moments), and Ligonier Ministries. These individuals and organizations exhibit a remarkable range of differences, but they can be classed together because of their vigorous commitment to and defense of the gospel.⁴

The Fundamental Baptist movement has seen its own divisions and deviations as well. Perhaps the battle over Bible texts and translations, specifically the King James Version, with attendant debates over inspiration and preservation, is the most notable.

Some of the divisions in the Christian world have transcended the previously cited movements. These issues include music, the “worship wars,” Covenant Theology and Calvinism, and a broader debate over Bible translation philosophy.

We certainly live in a day of theological confusion. Steering the ship of our churches and ministries through these treacherous waters presents a challenge to pastors and institutional leaders.

A ministerial student recently asked if it would be possible, in the midst of all this confusion, to articulate in a positive manner those things for which we stand. He seemed to be voicing Paul’s statement that the trumpet needs to give out a “certain sound.”

David Doran has offered some guidelines that seem helpful. In a recent post he led three successive paragraphs with these statements: “The real issue of our day is theological and ministerial agreement, not label or membership card in some club. . . . Fellowship means you share something and the more you share the stronger the fellowship. . . . Throw away the labels and ask these two questions: Of what are you in favor? To what are you opposed? Agreement on those two items will more likely produce workable partnerships and real fellowship.”⁵

One brief article cannot deal with all the issues, but it can at least enunciate some very basic Biblical truths for which the FBFI has always stood. We must give a “certain sound” on these issues.

Conservative Evangelicals

It is important to evaluate our Conservative Evangelical brethren. They are our brothers in the Lord, and at the same time they are a diverse

Remembrances

group within themselves. Phil Johnson, part of the MacArthur ministries, calls himself a "paleo-evangelical" and has given an incisive analysis and indictment of historic New Evangelicalism.⁶

Some actions of the Conservative Evangelicals look no different from the actions of the older New Evangelicals. Some of the leaders within the new grouping signed the Manhattan Declaration. The authors of this declaration, which primarily focuses on social concerns, strongly sought and obtained the support and signatures of numerous leaders within the Orthodox Church and Roman Catholicism. The declaration itself is political rather than theological, but it states in part,

We are Christians who have joined together across historic lines of ecclesial differences to affirm our right—and, more importantly, to embrace our obligation—to speak and act in defense of these truths. We pledge to each other, and to our fellow believers, that no power on earth, be it cultural or political, will intimidate us into silence or acquiescence. It is our duty to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in its fullness, both in season and out of season. May God help us not to fail in that duty.⁷

This statement is inconsistent at best. As leaders in the Together for the Gospel movement some of those signatories will defend the gospel against a gospel of works and sacramentalism. They will do so on the

basis of the authority of Scripture. Yet they signed a declaration that contradicted their own doctrinal affirmations, identifying their Orthodox and Catholic cosignatories as "Christians."

We speak kindly but on the basis of Biblical authority. The gospel is the message revealed by God. It is the message of salvation by grace without any work of man (Gal. 1:9–12; 2:16). Our Catholic and Orthodox friends affirm that salvation is by grace but that it is received by the sacraments. By the standard of the Scriptures, a sacramental gospel must be judged to be a false gospel.

When men who believe, affirm, preach, and unite together to defend the gospel sign a declaration that proclaims Catholics and Orthodox as "Christians," they betray the very gospel they affirm, and they negate the good they are attempting to accomplish. This kind of action is no different than the compromise we witnessed in the New Evangelical movement forty years ago.

Dr. Albert Mohler serves as president of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville. We applaud his accomplishments of ridding Southern Seminary of theological liberalism. Yet Mohler signed the Manhattan Declaration, chaired a Billy Graham evangelistic crusade in his city, cooperated with theological liberals in that effort, and he honored one of his liberal predecessors, Duke McCall, by naming a new building after him. Obedience to Scripture on one hand and disobedience on the other sends an "uncertain sound."

Continued on page 38

FBFI 2011 Resolution 11.1

Regarding the Southern Baptist Convention (submitted by John Vaughn)

The FBFI reaffirms its position on the Southern Baptist Convention as stated in resolution 01.06, noting that the error of the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" statement is now continued with the error of the "Manhattan Declaration":

Resolution 01.06: The FBFI expresses gratitude to God for changes in the Southern Baptist Convention nationally since 1979. We commend the reaffirmation of inerrancy, now a confessional requirement for its agencies—the seminaries, mission boards, and its publishing arm. Furthermore, we applaud the repudiation of homosexuality and the confessional commitment to a Biblical role for women.

However, we exhort our brethren to continue reformation by opposing the ecumenism of Billy Graham and the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." We also urge the perseverance at the state and local levels, purging the theological and moral decay. And, where purging is not possible, we urge Southern Baptists to withdraw and rebuild, showing fidelity to the Scripture. Until Southern Baptists fully recognize and repudiate the destruction of neo-Evangelicalism [repudiate the destructive New Evangelical philosophy espoused by Billy Graham, Carl Henry, Harold Ockenga, and others] that has weakened their churches and seminaries, the Scriptural response of Fundamental Baptists must continue to be separation.



Ecclesiastical Separation and the Defense of the Gospel

An Earnest Appeal to the Leaders of T4G



Not long after the birth of modern Evangelicalism in the late 1940s and early 1950s, some of its leaders and institutions began casting off their doctrinal moorings and drifting away from orthodoxy. This doctrinal drift has been well documented within the movement itself,¹ and it ultimately reached the point where church historian Alister McGrath could speak of “convergences” between Evangelicalism and post-liberalism.² In recent years groups of conservative Evangelicals have sought to oppose this theological dilution and its attendant evils. Four preachers from that group—Mark Dever, Ligon Duncan, C. J. Mahaney, and Albert Mohler—formed Together for the Gospel (T4G). The preamble to the organization’s doctrinal statement proclaims,

We are convinced that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been misrepresented, misunderstood, and marginalized in many churches and among many who claim the name of Christ. Compromise of the Gospel has led to the preaching of false gospels, the seduction of many minds and movements, and the weakening of the church’s Gospel witness.³

Along with likeminded organizations, T4G has purposed to stand for the gospel by proclaiming and promoting the essential truths of the Christian faith and by opposing the denigration of those essential truths in the contemporary church. T4G seeks to accomplish its mission through biennial conferences, through its website, and through facilitating local networks of pastors.

It is heartening to see Christian leaders take a stand for sound doctrine. Looking at the publicly available T4G materials, there is much value both in their affirmation of Christian truth and in their critique of the modern church. There is a fatal flaw in T4G’s approach, however. Although T4G calls Christians to stand for the gospel, it fails to call them to separate from those who deny the gospel. In this failure T4G is both disobeying the Bible and sabotaging its own mission. Because of the public leadership and influence

that have been afforded to T4G among theological conservatives, and because of the centrality to contending for the faith, it is imperative that the leaders of T4G carefully examine and publicly articulate the Biblical position on ecclesiastical separation and consistently seek to put it into practice.

The (Non) Position of T4G on Separation

For purposes of this discussion the term “ecclesiastical separation” refers to the practice of refusing to grant religious recognition and support to teachers and ministers who deny basic Christian doctrine.⁴ Several official statements of T4G indicate an awareness of the importance of believers’ associations. These statements include an affirmation of the importance of church discipline (Article XIV), a call for likeminded Evangelicals to work together in defense of the gospel, and the denial that “loyalty to any denomination or fellowship of churches can take precedence over the claims of truth and faithfulness to the Gospel” (Article XV). Nevertheless, there is no explicit treatment of the proper response to teachers and organizations that deny gospel truth.

There are other indications that T4G does not make an issue of separation. One sees a variety of views represented among the participants and leaders. For example, R. C. Sproul gave an address at the 2010 conference in which he discussed the historical problem of the syncretism of theology with various modern philosophical ideas. He introduced his message by reading 2 Corinthians 6:11–18. In his brief remarks on the passage, Sproul disavowed what he characterized as radical separatism:

I’m afraid that so often the text that I have just read to you is used as a justification for radical apartheid, radical separation even to what we would call the secondary level where people retreat from any kind of interaction with the world or with other groups of believers. But I don’t think that that was the intent of the Apostle, to give a credo for radical separatism.

Rather, Sproul claims that what Paul treats in the passage is doctrinal compromise.⁵

John Piper is another example of a regular contributor to T4G who has been critical of separation. A disagreement arose when it was announced that Rick Warren would speak at the Desiring God Conference in 2010. Some criticized Piper as acting contrary to the declaration and defense of the true gospel. He publicly defended his decision, concluding his remarks by explaining his policy not to attack other leaders:

The way I have chosen to live my life for the sake of Reformed theology and the supremacy of God and the inerrancy of the Bible and the importance of solid Reformation gospel truths, the five *solas*, and so on, is to give *all* my energy to putting them in a positive, aggressively spreadable form, *not* to spend my time shooting at the people who don't like them.⁶

Although this approach would be correct as to doubtful issues of interpretation or personal convictions, taking this position as to indisputable gospel truth is indefensible on any Biblical ground.⁷ From Piper's discussion in the same audio of the idea of secondary separation, he makes it clear that in his view the decision to invite Rick Warren was a personal one:

So, I'm not going to draw the circle there. And suppose you disagree with me on that. Now you're faced with the question, ok, I'm with John Piper theologically. I'm not with Rick Warren on a bunch of things. John Piper has just chosen to hang out with Rick Warren. What do I do with John Piper? That's called secondary separation issues.⁸

The general impression is that the question of separation is not amenable to objective standards of judgment,

FBFI 2011 Resolution 11.2

Regarding Together for the Gospel (T4G) (submitted by David Shumate)

Together for the Gospel (T4G) is an organization founded by a group of conservative Evangelical men (Mark Dever, J. Ligon Duncan III, C. J. Mahaney, and Albert Mohler) for the avowed purpose of defending and promoting the gospel against false doctrine and practice. T4G seeks to fulfill its purpose principally through holding biennial conferences, publicly disseminating its message through its website, and facilitating the creation of a loose network of local fellowships of likeminded pastors.

From the standpoint of separatist Baptist Fundamentalism, T4G is important for at least three reasons. First, it publicly states the position of prominent voices within conservative Evangelicalism. Second, it concerns itself with doctrinal issues that are at the core of the Christian faith and message. Third, it reaches a large audience both within Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism.

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International acknowledges that T4G is a serious attempt within Evangelicalism to contend for the gospel. This attempt is manifested in a number of ways, including: (1) The delineation of orthodox truth and militant exposure of error through a series of doctrinal affirmations and denials and through conference presentations; and (2) the inclusion under the rubric of the "gospel" many core doctrines of the Christian faith as indispensable to its propagation and defense.

We applaud and pray for the genuine success of all sincere efforts to maintain and promote Biblical truth and practice. Nevertheless, we are greatly concerned by the signal failure of T4G to articulate and stand for the clear and crucial Biblical mandate of ecclesiastical separation. This omission is evident both in the movement's basic organizational documents and in the conference sessions.

Although separation is not the only practice involved in contending for the faith, it is impossible genuinely to contend for the faith without a willingness to separate

over the faith. The defense and confirmation of the gospel must include the proclamation and practice of separation because ecclesiastical cooperation with false teachers is both serious disobedience to the Scriptures and fatal to the long-term defense of the faith and purity of the church. History teaches that a great contributor to doctrinal error within Evangelicalism has come from the repudiation or disregard of the need for separation. Therefore, the failure to teach and promote this doctrine undermines T4G's purpose.

We appeal to the leaders and participants of T4G to promote and defend not only the fundamentals of the faith but also the Biblical doctrine of separation, which is a necessary corollary and a clear command of our Lord. Such a promotion and defense does not necessarily involve identifying oneself with any particular group of separatists or the adoption of their particular verbal formulation of the doctrine. It does, however, demand a serious engagement with the pertinent Biblical texts, a clear articulation of the Biblical doctrine, and a genuine commitment to Biblical obedience. We acknowledge that there is a great cost associated with moving to a separatist position, especially when it cuts across friendships, institutional loyalties, and apparent ministry opportunities. Therefore we pray that T4G leaders and participants would have both courage and discernment in the articulation and application of this doctrine.

We also appeal to those separatists sympathetic to T4G to avoid the serious error of obscuring or undermining Biblical separatism through an unqualified endorsement of T4G. Such an error produces two tragic consequences. First, it does great injury to conservative Evangelicals by depriving them of a clear and unified witness to the indispensability of separation. Second, it causes great confusion within Fundamentalist churches and institutions regarding the critical importance of this Biblical teaching. While we can hope for the ultimate success of any endeavor that faithfully seeks to clearly articulate the essence of the faith, we must not jettison or cripple separatism in the process.

and hence we are bound to respect each other's decisions in this area.⁹

A vignette from one of the 2010 panel discussions highlights some of the diversity within the T4G group. Mark Dever was asking the panel members how they responded to various distortions of gospel truth in their ministries. When he got to Ligon Duncan the following interchange ensued:

Mark Dever—Lig, wisdom from the PCA. I mean when you guys were having trouble in the PCUS with the modernist trajectory, you just started a new denomination.

Audience and Panelists—(Laughter)

Al Mohler—And thanks be to God!

Audience and Panelists—(Laughter)

Ligon Duncan—We call it “church discipline in reverse.”

Mark Dever—OK. So with these challenges, are these challenges [false theological “trajectories”] inside even your churches?¹⁰

It would not be fair to accuse these men of repudiating separation per se. (Mohler, for one, seems sympathetic, and Duncan's tongue-in-cheek rejoinder about “church discipline in reverse” actually reflects an argument sometimes made by separatists.) Nevertheless it is probably accurate to conclude that T4G as a group does not view separation from modernistic institutions to be normal or mandatory.

Why the Focus on T4G?

Whereas this appeal to promote and practice ecclesiastical separation could be made equally to all conservatives, it is particularly appropriate in the case of T4G. This is true for reasons that center on positive characteristics of T4G and on the nature of ecclesiastical separation.

Because of the Clear Teaching of the Bible

Both in its Affirmations and Denials and in its conference presentations, T4G holds that theology must come from the Scripture and that the guarantor of sound doctrine is sound exegesis. It is this characteristic that makes it especially appropriate to appeal to the leaders and participants of T4G to articulate and defend the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation. It is the separatist's contention not only that ecclesiastical separation is a good idea but also that it is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Although not exhausting the pertinent material, several texts that teach the doctrine are Romans 16:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 16:22; 2 Corinthians 6:11–7:1; Galatians 1:8, 9; and 2 John 7–11. To be sure, when it comes to associations, there are other principles involved, such as maintaining spiritual and practical unity within the Body. Nevertheless, as the T4G doctrinal statement well puts it, “We deny that any portion of the Bible is to be used in an effort to deny the truthfulness or trustworthiness of any other portion” (Article II). If the Bible teaches separation, then separation cannot be schismatic. Both doctrines, purity and unity, must be true, both must be taught, and both must be practiced.¹¹

It is also essential to note that the passages cited above contain affirmative commands to believers to churches. This fact refutes the idea that ecclesiastical separation is something that is left solely to the individual conscience. If believers are clearly commanded to do something and they refuse to do it, then they are liable to being held to account for it. It is not an appropriate response to say that consistently practicing separation is too difficult. If God commands it, He will give grace for us to obey it. The often-cited failures of separatists to practice separation in a balanced and Spirit-filled way are the fault not of the doctrine but of human sinfulness. Your disobedience does not justify a different disobedience on my part. As Phil Johnson puts it, “The answer to hyper-separatism is not *no separatism at all*.”¹²

Because of the Vital Defense of the Faith

T4G is concerned with the zealous propagation and stout defense of the Christian faith, stating that it exists “to stand together for the Gospel.” In order to appreciate what this means, one must understand how T4G defines the gospel. By this term they are not referring simply to the facts one must know in order to exercise saving faith in Jesus Christ. Rather, they also are talking about that body of essential truths that define Christianity. The T4G doctrinal statement includes the affirmation of such teachings as the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the deity of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Birth, the substitutionary atonement, and salvation by grace alone through faith alone.

In addition, T4G exhibits a willingness not only to declare the faith but to contend for it. This militancy is reflected in the fact that their public documents contain both affirmations of essential truths and denials of various negations and perversions of those truths. It also can be observed in some of the conference sessions in which the speakers identify and rebuke false teachers and ministries by name.¹³

In light of the seriousness of T4G toward defending the faith against falsifiers of doctrine, it is all the more imperative that they acknowledge and adhere to the Biblical

... THE LACK OF SEPARATISM IS A REAL AND SERIOUS SPIRITUAL PROBLEM WITH THE ORGANIZATION IN PARTICULAR AND WITHIN CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICALISM AS A WHOLE.

teaching on ecclesiastical separation. This is because it is not possible to consistently defend Fundamental Christian doctrine while extending spiritual recognition to the enemies of that doctrine. In the words of Mark Minnick,

An evangelical ministry that tolerates unorthodox (that is, nonevangelical) persons within itself or that behaves in other ways towards them as if they were evangelical, should expect that one of the consequences will be con-

fusion about the essential doctrinal elements necessary to being evangelical.¹⁴

This confusion is all the more pernicious in light of the fact that a reason that Paul gives for the necessity of identifying and turning away from false teachers is that they deceive the unsuspecting (Rom. 16:18). This makes the failure to point out and separate from false teachers highly destructive to the believers. Phil Johnson has put it this way:

The fact is, Scripture commands faithful Christians to confront, rebuke, and correct those who twist or reinvent the gospel. . . . If they fail to amend their errors . . . there comes a time when separation is mandatory. The neglect of that duty (and in many cases, a *refusal* to comply) has destroyed countless churches and evangelical institutions, not to mention the broad evangelical movement itself.¹⁵

It has been said that separation is to the ministry what sterilization is to surgery. However skillful and well intentioned a team of surgeons may be, those who disregard sterilization procedures will end up infecting and killing patients.

Iain Murray points out the logical impossibility of truly affirming the gospel while refusing to separate from its deniers: “How can evangelicalism be said to represent biblical essentials if one regards those as Christians and works alongside those who actually deny these essentials?”¹⁶ He goes on to argue that those who are disobedient in this matter put themselves at risk of undermining their own doctrinal convictions because they have grieved the Holy Spirit, who gives us spiritual discernment:

Horatius Bonar was a true reader of Scripture and of church history when he said, “Fellowship between faith and unbelief must, sooner or later, be fatal to the former.” This is so, not because error is more powerful than truth, but because if we befriend the advocates of error, we will be deprived of the aid of the Spirit of truth.¹⁷

A refusal to be obedient leads to theological blind spots. Although it is possible for us to refuse to practice something because we cannot see it in the Bible, it is also possible for us to be blind to something in the Bible because we are unwilling to practice it.¹⁸

Because of the Responsibility of Influence

There is no doubt that T4G has been given a “bully pulpit,” and they have been willing to use it. They and others like them are striking a chord in Evangelicalism and are even having an influence on many within Fundamentalism. They have been willing to speak clearly and forcefully about issues and individuals. Their effort to purify Evangelical doctrine is sincere and forceful, but with their notoriety and influence comes the great responsibility not to perpetuate the sixty-year-old error that caused the doctrinal mess in the first place. As Iain Murray has noted, not only did the early New Evangelical leaders reject much of the “culture” of Fundamentalism, but they jettisoned ecclesiastical separation as well:

Together they shared the common conviction that Fundamentalism had been too separatist, too negative, too exclusive. Evangelicals needed to make their voices heard in the mainline denominations. Many Christians were still to be found there, and, with a wise approach, the denominations might yet be won back to the faith.¹⁹

History records that this engagement quickly brought with it a theological looseness that threatened the very definition of Evangelicalism. Phil Johnson observes,

Neo-evangelicalism reacted to the extreme militancy of certain angry fundamentalists by repudiating separatism altogether. That philosophy . . . steadily and systematically moved the boundaries of the evangelical movement further and further out, until there were effectively no boundaries at all.²⁰

Johnson is not a cheerleader for Fundamentalism; he is highly critical of both twentieth-century Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism, saying that they have “failed egregiously.” He does advocate ecclesiastical separatism, however, and argues that if groups like T4G adopt an inclusive policy it “will in very short order utterly nullify any gains those movements have made.”²¹

Fundamentalists who are sympathetic with T4G should remember that they too are responsible for the use of their influence. One should treat T4G charitably and accurately, and an appreciation of much of its emphasis is in order. T4G is not New Evangelical in that it, unlike the New Evangelicals, is not advocating a deliberate policy of reaching out to liberals to gain their support and goodwill. Quite the opposite—T4G is trying to clean up the theological mess that ensued from that earlier error. It is probably fair to say that T4G inherited rather than adopted its lack of separatism. This does not mean that T4G is immune to criticism for this un-Biblical posture, but rather that its position and spirit should not be misrepresented.²² On the other hand, the lack of separatism is a real and serious spiritual problem with the organization in particular and within conservative Evangelicalism as a whole. It would be a grave error for Fundamentalists, however sympathetic they may be to the positive aspects of the movement, to give unqualified approval of it. Such an error would result in two great evils. First, it would be send mixed signals to the leaders and participants of T4G and deprive them of a unified, Biblically based witness of the essential nature of separation. Second, it would cause wavering separatists to be confused about the real importance and nature of the teaching. In the long run it would be bad both for conservative Evangelicalism and for Fundamentalism and would represent a failure to love our brothers as ourselves.

Conclusion

Ecclesiastical separation is a vital issue. It is neither a matter of personal preference nor a doctrine of slight importance. Rather it is commanded by the Scriptures, and it is essential for the long-term defense of the faith. A failure to articulate, defend and practice it is disobedience with grave consequences. Those who desire the genuine success

of T4G must not abandon or disregard this serious Biblical obligation. The gospel is too important.

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¹ Examples include Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (1976), George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (1987), Richard Quebedeux, *The Worldly Evangelicals* (1978), and Millard Erickson, *The Evangelical Left* (1997).

² *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 242.

³ Together for the Gospel, "Affirmations and Denials," <http://t4g.org/aboutus/affirmations-and-denials-2/> (accessed 3/1/2011).

⁴ Separation from false teachers is often distinguished from separation from persistently disobedient brothers and separation from the world. Fundamentalists have written and preached extensively on the topic of separation. See, e.g., Fred Moritz, *Be Ye Holy: A Call to Christian Separation* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994); Ernest Pickering, *Biblical Separation* (Schaumburg, IL, 1979); and Mark Sidwell, *The Dividing Line* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1998).

⁵ R. C. Sproul, "The Defense and Confirmation of the Gospel—What I Have Learned in 50 Years (Session II)" <http://t4g.org/2010/04/the-defense-and-confirmation-of-the-gospel/> (audio at 2:40–3:15; accessed 3/8/2011). See also Mark Minnick, "What's an Evangelical to Do?" Part IV, *FrontLine Pastors' Insert* March/April 2009, pp. 2–3.

⁶ "Ask Pastor John," March 31, 2010, <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/more-details-about-our-national-conference> (see video at 10:18–12:06; emphasis in original video; accessed 3/8/2011).

⁷ See note 11 below.

⁸ "Ask Pastor John."

⁹ It is true that, as with many Biblical teachings, there will be times when the application of principles of separation will not be clear cut. Nevertheless, just because some applications are in gray areas does not mean that the entire issue is subjective.

¹⁰ "Dever, Duncan, Mahaney, Mohler, MacArthur (Panel II)," 2010 T4G conference, <http://t4g.org/2010/04/mark-dever-ligon-duncan-c-j-mahaney-al-mohler-john-macarthur-panel-ii/> (audio at 2:42–3:19; accessed 3/1/2011).

¹¹ John Piper makes this point in a message that he preached in 2006 on Romans 16:16–21:

In other words, when a person departs from the doctrine that the apostles had taught, Paul sees this as a greater threat to unity than the disunity caused by avoiding such people. If we say: How can that be? How can dividing from a false teacher who rises up in the church promote unity in the church? The answer is that the only unity that counts for unity in the church is rooted in a common apostolic teaching. *Isolating false teachers—avoiding them—is Paul's strategy for preserving unity that is based on true teaching.* [emphasis added]

("Watch Out for Those Who Lead You Away from the Truth," part of the series *Romans: The Greatest Letter Ever Written*, November 5, 2006, <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/watch-out-for-those-who-lead-you-away-from-the-truth> (accessed 3/5/11)). Piper's exegesis of this text seems to contradict his later statement regarding his unwillingness to "shoot at" those who deny gospel truths. See above at note 6 and text.

¹² Phil Johnson on "The Piper-Warren Connection," *The Christian Worldview*, <http://thechristianworldview.com/tcwblog/archives/3781> (emphasis in original; posted 4/26/2010; accessed 3/5/11). If conservative Evangelicals object to the way that Fundamentalists have articulated and practiced ecclesiastical separation, then it is their right and their obligation to articulate what an exegetically and theological sound formulation of the doctrine would be and to work out a consistent methodology for putting it into practice.

¹³ For example in the 2010 general sessions, Al Mohler condemned Brian McLaren's view of Scripture: "There is not even a hint of revelation there. I want you to know that we are light-years to the left of Fosdick" (audio at 43:00–44:40). He also rebuked the prosperity gospel of Your Best Life Now and of the Crystal Cathedral (audio at 1:03:00–1:04:04). "How Does it Happen? Trajectories Toward an Adjusted Gospel," General Session III of the 2010 T4G Conference, <http://t4g.org/2010/04/how-does-it-happen-trajectories-toward-an-adjusted-gospel-session-iii/> (accessed 3/1/2011). In a panel discussion John MacArthur spoke against this same health-and-wealth heresy and those who propagate it: "If you go to the Grace to You website I've been hammering on this for a long time. There have been a lot of articles, including dealing with [Trinity Broadcasting Network] in a little blog I call 'The Unholy Trinity.' . . . I've just said, this is enough—enough is enough. I think if Jesus were here, He'd make a whip and go directly to TBN" (Panel II, 2010 T4G; audio at 11:51–12:15).

¹⁴ "What's an Evangelical To Do?" Part IV, *FrontLine Pastors' Insert* March/April 2009, p. 1.

¹⁵ "The Piper-Warren Connection."

¹⁶ "Divisive Unity," an address given at the Shepherds' Conference at Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, on March 11, 2001. Reported in *The Masters Seminary Journal* 12/2 (Fall 2001): pp. 231–47,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁸ This spiritual truth helps answer the often-asked question, "How can Brother/Pastor/Doctor So-and-So be wrong on issue such-and-such if he is such a godly person/gifted expositor/careful scholar?" It should also give rise to godly fear in the heart of every believer, and especially of every spiritual leader.

¹⁹ "Divisive Unity," p. 235.

²⁰ "The Piper-Warren Connection."

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² The author does not want to represent that the only issues he or other Fundamentalists have with T4G and its leaders is the lack of ecclesiastical separation; however, the author believes that staking out a Biblical position on that issue must be the first order of business. The issue is not identification with a particular group of separatists, but rather the determination and application of Biblical truth.

Is the “Associations” Standard Legitimate?

FBFI 2011 Resolution 11.4

Regarding “Associations” in Worship (submitted by Kevin Schaal)

The FBFI affirms the fact that God-focused corporate worship is a New Testament mandate and that man-centered worship is disobedience. We also affirm that in addition to the moral and doctrinal qualities of music or other worship tools the associations of any worship tool have the potential of drawing worshippers away from God, even when there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the tool itself. These associations include but are not limited to media type, publishers, lyricists, composers, recording artists, prominent theological movements and groups, and specific songs. We acknowledge that local congregations differ and the impact of those associations will vary from congregation to congregation. Association influences vary based upon time, distance, and circumstance. We also acknowledge that final applications must always be a matter of local church discernment. The FBFI urges pastors and worship planners to diligently research and consider the associations of the tools they use in worship and be willing to refrain from using anything that distracts God’s people from obedient, faithful, sincere, and doctrinally sound worship of God.

Everyone, to some extent, considers the issue of associations when choosing music. However, there is broad diversity of opinion as to how and why such determinations are made.

Jesus told the woman at the well that true worshipers must worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). His meaning in this passage is that the worship must be genuinely spiritual and based upon truth. (The lack of spirituality was the problem of the hypocritical Pharisees, who were worshiping at the temple in Jerusalem; the lack of truth was the problem of the Samaritans, who worshiped at the false site set up on Mount Gerazim and who rejected all of the Old Testament save the Pentateuch.) Both the head and the heart must be right.

The proper concept of God and how He expects to be worshiped are necessary in order to worship God in truth. It is impossible to properly worship God without being sincerely interested in knowing more about Him. In order to worship Him properly, serious attention must be paid to His holiness, love, greatness, and power. Of course, the more emphasis on the truth of God in worship, the more the wrong spirit of worship will decrease. It’s impossible to worship in pride when you have a knowledge and appreciation of God’s supreme holiness. Seeking to understand God’s majesty and power will stifle the desire to attract the attention of other worshipers. When an understanding of God’s hatred for sin is sought, worldly or selfish behavior will decrease.

Is the goal God-centered worship or man-centered worship? Many people say that they believe in God-centered worship but don’t actually practice it. **God-centered worship seeks to bring every worshiper consciously and emotionally into the presence of God.** It seeks to make much of God and little of the worshiper. Its primary attitudes are humility and submission, neither of which precludes joy or rejoicing. This attitude of humility is demonstrated in the very words translated “worship” both in the Old and the New Testaments. *Shachah* in the Hebrew and *proskuneo* in the Greek are the words most commonly translated “worship” in Scripture. Both words mean “to bow down” or “prostrate oneself” and are associated with the idea of bowing down in the presence of the King—a practice not commonly understood for most Americans. When subjects bow in the presence of the king, he stands unobstructed above everyone else. He is meant to be seen above all others. It is a demonstration of the worshiper’s humility and the superiority of the one being worshiped. It is also a position of submission—a readiness to hear and obey anything that the king might require. Such should be the primary attitudes of worship: humility and submission.

If the purpose in worship is God-centered, then the practice of worship must demonstrate that purpose. Worship services must be thoughtfully planned out to focus the congregation on God. Services must also eliminate any distraction that hinders the worshipers from focusing upon God. Our natural tendency is to be man-centered, either focusing upon ourselves or upon others. It takes tremendous vigilance and deliberate planning to keep the attention where it ought to be.

Music that directs the worshiper’s mind anywhere but to God is not appropriate for worship. Worship philosophies outside (and sometimes inside) of Fundamentalism have followed the opposite track. The practice has been to pur-

posefully use worldly (in a generic sense) associations for the purpose of gaining an audience. The idea is to make it sound like what the people have already been listening to—and like—and then slip in different words. Some churches commonly use this method when advertising their Sunday sermons. The criticism of this methodology is that it tends to leave people right where they are rather than lifting them out of their environment. Our responsibility is to take people before the throne of grace in purity of heart (spirit) and thought (truth).

So, making choices based upon “associations” is a judgment call. While it is impossible to know exactly how every worshiper will react to every piece of music, common sense reveals obvious problems. In the mid-1970s some Christians thought it was cute to sing about Jesus as “The Real Thing”—a completely unveiled rip-off of a Coca-Cola jingle used in popular media. While the words to the song might not necessarily be evil (though certainly not substantively doctrinally) and the music not evil (not in the rock genre), reminding people of their television sets and soft drinks while trying to focus upon God produces a cognitive dissonance and emotional frustration for those who truly understand what worship is all about. For the rest, it is just cool, fun, neat, etc. (based upon your generational expression).

The commercialization of worship music has added another dimension to this problem. The American mindset is to associate a song with the “star” who popularizes it. It is entirely possible for a contemporary Christian musician to make an otherwise good piece of music inappropriate by tying his face, doctrine, and reputation to that song in popular thinking. People today tend to categorize music by performer rather than by doctrinal content or musical genre. Use of a particular performer’s (or lyricist’s) song is often taken as an endorsement of *all* of that performer’s music. Disclaimers could be issued every time such a piece of music is used, but that in itself is distracting from worship.

There is even the possibility of one’s own music becoming unusable, if made famous by a musician with questionable doctrine, lifestyle, or convictions. Black-and-white, good-vs.-bad thinking muddies the issue. It is not that a good song can somehow be made bad; it is that a good piece of music can be made ineffective (or even distracting) because of the wrong type of association. The true worship of God is more important than the individual song—even one’s own. We must be careful to avoid making idols of songs because of our own sentimental attachments to them. Music is a wonderful tool in the process of worship, but it is not an end in itself.

This problem is not limited to a particular music style. Music that has been considered “high church” can be just as distracting from worship as a TV jingle. Kenneth Myers, in his book *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes* (1989, Crossway, p. 100), gives an example.

Because many Christians have adopted the subjectivism of popular culture, questions of the aesthetics of [worship] expression are usually reduced to a question of “what the market (i.e., congregation’s tastes) will bear.” As a result, not only does a lot of kitsch end up in

worship services, but so does a lot of good music that doesn’t belong there. I remember a worship service that ended with a performance of part of the “Organ Symphony” by Camille Saint-Saëns, a big blustery showpiece that is a wonderful occasion for an organist to show off, but totally inappropriate to close a service that featured a sermon on humility.

With the concept of appropriateness in mind, **it is logical to assume that some music that might be a distraction in one place would be completely acceptable in another place or at another time.** Some of our most beloved hymn tunes have other identities in other places where they are known as common folk songs, drinking songs, and even national anthem tunes. Such associations make these beautiful tunes offensive to some and dear to others.

The struggles many pastors and worship leaders in Fundamentalism are having with music from Sovereign Grace and Keith Getty and Stuart Townend are a present example of association concerns. In this case, for the most part, the theology of the music is deep and some of the melodies are singable and appropriate. Yet the practice of having both conservative and rock-type versions of the same songs available on websites becomes problematic. Some church leaders believe that the use of such music becomes a stumbling block to their members who will search it out online and become enthralled with the more disagreeable versions of the same songs. Others would contend that varying versions of even the most traditional worship hymns exist, and those who have true Biblical convictions about musical styles will not be swayed any more than they would with any other hymns.

This is a matter of local church discernment, and it is important. Spiritually sensitive and clear-thinking leaders will come to different conclusions on what is right for their ministries. But the big mistake would be to dismiss out of hand the impact such associations have on God’s people and focused worship. Shepherds must consider the safety of their flocks carefully.

The key “association” of any piece of music is the association made in the mind of the worshiper. Individuals will often ask, “If it’s not a problem for me, why should it be for someone else?” That’s a simple-minded and selfish response—a reminder of Paul’s discussion of meat offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 10. Music leaders must consider the associations made in the minds of an entire congregation. For this reason, whoever plans worship in a local church must know the worshipers and he must know where he wants to lead them. While he cannot read the minds of those he is leading, there are many situations in which the associational problems are quite clear, whether individual worshipers recognize those problems or not.

We must develop keen discernment skills in this area—not the skill of choosing between what is good and bad, but rather the constant pursuit of what is best in our worship of the Holy One.

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Expositional Preaching

Definition of Expositional Preaching

Presently, much is being written about expositional preaching. However, not everyone defines it identically. For the purpose of this article expositional preaching is an approach to examining and proclaiming Scripture with the goal of communicating clearly the message of the Bible. It is not limited to verse-by-verse book studies. In fact, even a topical message can be presented in an expositional style. However, preaching a topical message in an expositional style requires a great deal of work. Expositional preaching involves studying a verse or passage in its grammatical,

historical context, explaining clearly the authorial intent of that verse or passage, allowing the Spirit of God to move the heart of the expositor, and appropriately applying the Biblical message to a current audience.

Steps of Expositional Preaching

Utilizing certain “mile-markers” helps a preacher to prepare expositional messages. While preachers may choose additional “markers,” the basic elements of expositional preaching are as follows.

The first step of expositional preaching is to examine the historical setting and grammatical meaning of a verse or passage in order to determine the authorial intent of the passage. The preacher must exercise great care to not read his personal ideas into a passage. His goal is to exegete the meaning of the passage, not to use the Bible to provide a proof text or platform for his own message. He is to discover and faithfully proclaim God’s message.

Step two is to come to know the passage well enough to be able to clearly explain its authorial intent to his own audience. The authorial intent of a passage is what God communicated through a passage to its original audience. Such explanation requires a preacher to explain historical or cultural information in a passage and to interpret the meaning of that passage. If a preacher fails to clearly understand and explain a passage’s original intent, he is not proclaiming an expositional message. Unpacking and communicating the original meaning of a passage assures the audience that they are receiving God’s message rather than man’s.

Step three is to allow the Spirit of God to move the heart of the expositor. Gaining Biblical knowledge is only part of a preacher’s preparation. Although gaining such knowledge can be challenging, heart preparation is often even more challenging. Until a passage moves the heart of a preacher it will not likely move the hearts of an audience. Such preparation requires much prayer and meditation.

FBFI 2011 Resolution 11.5

Regarding the Importance of Faithful Exposition of Scripture (submitted by David Pennington)

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International calls upon every independent Baptist pastor to passionately give himself to the faithful exposition of the Word of God. The goal of such exposition should be to interpret accurately, to explain clearly, and to apply practically God’s Word to the people of God and the unsaved. Expositional preaching is not limited to book studies but is an approach to Scripture that seeks to discern and proclaim the authorial intent of the Bible text. Rather than reading man’s ideas or interpretations into the Bible (eisegesis), the faithful expositor must seek to exegete accurately and to proclaim practically what God communicates in the Bible. He, being guided and illumined by the Holy Spirit, must interpret the Bible from a normal, grammatical, historical, and contextual perspective. He must seek first to experience personal impact by the message of God’s Word and then to proclaim faithfully the message of God’s sacred texts to the congregation.

From a human perspective, the work of the Holy Spirit within the heart of a preacher is what unleashes the power of a passage upon the audience.

Step four is to appropriately apply the message of a passage to a current audience. Proper application can be quite challenging. A preacher can easily misapply the passage. He can elevate a minor theme or idea within a passage to a major level of emphasis. He can extract a passage from its context and misapply it to a current situation or set of circumstances. However, his goal should be to clearly grasp and apply God's message (i.e., theme, big idea) within a passage to his current audience. With certain passages application will be more direct. With other passages the application will be less direct, involving Bible principles.

Impact of Expository Preaching

The impact of expository preaching is great! It is great because a preacher is proclaiming God's Word rather than man's. The origin of his message is from God. Whenever a preacher proclaims God's message under the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God, God moves upon an audience, regardless of the audience's historical time period.

An Example of Expository Preaching

Although there is limited space in this article, perhaps a condensed example will assist in communicating an expository study and its proclamation.

In Luke 16:1–13, the Lord Jesus gives the Parable of the Unjust Steward. In this passage Jesus is speaking to His disciples (16:1). However, the covetous Pharisees also hear His words (16:14).

Several factors become important to accurately interpreting the passage. In this parable, the master or owner of the house entrusts his household to a "steward" (16:1). So, first, the audience needs to know the definition of "steward." It is important for them to know that a steward, although he might be a slave, is a household manager. He has great responsibility.

Second, the audience needs to grasp what is occurring within the parable. A preacher must take the time to explain the details of this passage thoroughly. Because of his waste (irresponsibility), this steward is about to lose his stewardship (16:1b, 2). He is in a quandary regarding what to do once he is put out of his stewardship (16:3). After struggling over this matter, he draws a conclusion (16:4). He chooses to call in each of his master's debtors and recalculate their financial arrangement with his master (16:5–7). By reducing their bills, he creates a future obligation of his master's debtors that will benefit him once he is no longer a steward. Luke 16:5 reveals that the steward calls "every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*." The passage provides two examples. The first debtor owes his master one hundred measures of oil. The second debtor owes him one hundred measures of wheat. It is important to explain the measurements in these verses. One is a liquid measurement; the other is a dry measurement. The "hundred measures of oil" is approximately eight or nine hundred gallons of oil. The "hundred measures of wheat" is approximately nine hundred or a thousand bushels of wheat. Their debts are sizeable. Remember, they are simply representative of his mas-

ter's debtors. The passage implies there are other debtors.

Luke 16:8 is a pivotal verse in the parable. It reads, "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." It is easy to misinterpret this verse. "The lord" is the master or property owner. He is not commending the steward for his dishonesty but for his wisdom. The word "wisely" is the Greek word for prudence or foresight. It reveals that the steward is "shrewd." In fact, the parable might be more appropriately named "The Parable of the Shrewd Steward." His shrewdness involves anticipating and preparing for his stewardship coming to an end.

The latter half of Luke 16:8 is transitional. Jesus is contrasting the children of this world (the unsaved) with the children of light (the saved). He reveals that the children of this world, although limited to an earthly perspective, exercise greater shrewdness than the children of light, who, although they have an eternal perspective, do not operate very wisely. In fact, God's people often operate from a temporal perspective, as if this world is the only one in which they will live.

In Luke 16:9 Jesus begins to apply the parable to His hearers. The "I" in verse 9 is the Lord Jesus. He urges His hearers to "make to yourselves friends of [out of] the mammon of unrighteousness." By this He means that God's people are to use the material means entrusted to them to influence or impact the lives of others. The verse continues by saying "that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The phrase "when ye fail" refers to the ending of their stewardship. For believers, this will occur when the Lord returns or calls them home in death. Notice the next phrase: "they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The "they" refers to the friends believers have made. In other words, the people they have impacted by means of material things entrusted to them will receive (welcome) them into everlasting dwellings.

Jesus drives home His message more directly in Luke 16:10–12. He challenges His disciples to be faithful in "that which is least." By this He means in material things. He clarifies this in Luke 16:11 by contrasting faithfulness in "unrighteous mammon" (material things) with "true riches" (eternal riches). In Luke 16:12 He asks a rhetorical question that forces His audience to think soberly. The answer to His question indicates that no one, certainly not the Lord, will entrust true (eternal) riches to someone who has not been faithful with earthly riches.

Lastly, Jesus ends His parable with a bold statement. He says, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." In this statement, He urges His disciples to live with an eternal perspective.

A thorough study and clear proclamation of Luke 16:1–13 communicates powerfully to a modern audience. In short, God has entrusted to His people the stewardship of life. How they handle what is entrusted to them on earth will determine their heavenly reward. He urges them to live shrewdly.

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The FBFI and the Local Church

Like anything else of eternal value, unless the Lord builds the local church, they who minister in it minister in vain. If we are to avoid vain ministry, we must follow God's plan for His church as revealed in the Scripture. The Gospels mention the church only three

FBFI 2011 Resolution 11.6

Regarding the FBFI and the Local Church (submitted by John Mincy)

Given the fact that much of professing Christianity seems to be confused about the nature and duty of the local church, the FBFI encourages Fundamentalists to study and practice the New Testament teaching about the local church (including the distinction between the Church and Israel); to follow the model of the early church as revealed in Scripture; to emphasize the preeminence of the local church in God's program for this age; to remain untangled from denominations and conventions; and to humbly practice Biblical discipline and, if necessary, separation.

times, emphasizing that the church is God's idea, that the powers of Hell will not stop the church, and that the church is responsible to keep itself pure. Jesus gave the church its mission and purpose; the church began by the filling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; and we are here to work the plan that He started and left for us to accomplish. The apostles began working that plan, and the Lord of the church added to the church daily. That the local church was the central ministry tool that God was using is seen in its early history, in the ministry and letters of Paul, in the letters to the seven churches of Asia, and in the vision of the Lord Jesus walking among the churches. Every Christian should be an active member of a Biblical local church, and each is gifted to do an important job in his local assembly. The ultimate purpose of the church is the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission and to promote maturity in Christ so that both now and throughout eternity the church might show forth the wisdom and glory of God.

The local church is not simply a fellowship of believers meeting in a church building, home, or wherever. It is not a social club, an educational institution, a social services organization, or a gathering of families for Bible study and fellowship. It is not a religious cafeteria, entertainment

center, a place where I can fulfill my Sunday obligations to God, a place where I can get my emotional needs met, an expected part of my cultural life, or just a place to hear preaching. The local church has structure dictated by its Founder. It has elected officers, rules of conduct, and the authority to keep itself pure. Its job description is summarized in the Great Commission.

As a believer prepares for a church service he should be asking himself some questions: Am I really open to being changed by the Lord? Is there baggage that I am carrying that needs to be checked with the Lord before I can be in a usable position (unconfessed sin, bitterness, etc.)? Am I an observer of worship and fellowship or a participant? Do I consider church an optional activity? What is my motive for being here? Do I care enough to listen to what the Lord might be saying to me? Am I convinced that being a part of a local church is one of the most fulfilling and valuable things on earth?

The Greek word for “church” appears about 115 times in the NT, ninety-five percent of them referring to the local church. According to the Book of Acts the local church proclaimed the gospel, baptized and added believers to the body, studied the word of God as revealed by the apostles, fellowshiped (ministered to each other), remembered the Lord at His table, helped each other in times of need, demonstrated great unity, and praised and worshipped God. We need improvement in all of these areas in our churches today, especially in the areas of personal and corporate worship. Pure worship, in the sense of Scripture passages and hymns directed to God alone, needs to be a specific act in our lives and in our church services.

The churches were led by pastors/elders/bishops (overseers), synonymous terms for one office. In his final message to the Ephesian church leaders Paul warned about attacks that would come from within and without. John, in his third epistle, also warned about the wrong people being in control and taking the church in the wrong direction. In his pastoral epistles Paul instructs the churches about how their leaders should conduct themselves and reiterates the primacy of the local church, stating that it is the pillar and ground of God’s revealed truth.

The FBFI has made its position on the local church very clear through its constitution and resolutions. A 1980 resolution states, “The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship affirms its belief in the primacy of the local church, declares it to be the only Biblically mandated institution for the propagation of the gospel and edifying of the saints. . . .” Schools, camps, and other organizations cannot take the place of the local church. Among other things, this lays great responsibility on the church. There is need for improvement in maturing believers through well prepared and illustrated text-oriented preaching, preaching that reaches the heart as well as the head, preaching that constantly confronts the believer with truth and demands decisions and changes in his life and lifestyle. The local church must strive to give its members a vision of what God can do through a body, large or small, and to challenge them to center their lives on their church and not their family or culture. This goal is impossible without the proper training of male leadership. To that end churches should strive through prayer and

training to raise up faithful Christian workers and ordained men who can meet the qualifications and be entrusted with the responsibility of leading God’s flock, looking for God’s approval and success standards, not man’s.

Article II of the FBFI constitution mentions such things as promoting historic Baptist distinctives; maintaining ecclesiastical, personal, and civil (church/state) separation; recognizing the church as a body peculiar to the age of grace and entirely distinct from national Israel; believing “the local church is autonomous, the center of God’s program for this age . . . free from the interference of any religious hierarchy.” Denominationalism, whether organized or not, is a constant threat to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the local church. The FBFI has made great effort to avoid denominationalism, being a “fellowship of Fundamental, independent, Baptist pastors, Christian workers, and laymen as distinct from a convention of churches.” Financial and friendship ties have led many pastors and churches to remain in denominations or conventions even when they know that doing so is wrong.

Confusion about the relationship of Israel and the church originates from the abuse of the Old Testament. An honest and literal interpretation of the Scripture will lead one away from Reformed theology and the confusion of Israel and the church that goes along with it. Reformed theology, like many other errant systems (Romanism, Seventh Day Adventism, Mormonism, Armstrongism, JW’s, Gothardism, Campingism, etc.) stems from a misguided application of the Old Testament. The Reformers kept infant baptism/circumcision, spiritualizing hermeneutics, governmental ideas—all of which disagree with the New Testament interpretation of the Old. Their ideas of government led to the conclusion that people such as Baptists should not be allowed to practice their religion. This was the case in early America, even in the time of Jonathan Edwards and on into the early nineteenth century.

The doctrine of separation has fallen on hard times in the local churches today. We might describe the mood of the day as Carnellian *déjà vu*. E. J. Carnell was the intellectual leader of a new movement called “New Evangelicalism.” Carnell and especially Harold Ockenga made it very clear that a primary part of the thinking of their new movement was the repudiation of separation. This view continues in Evangelicalism, in the so-called conservative Evangelicals, and is being courted by some Fundamentalists. At this hour a curious mix of intellectualism and pious platitudes is leading a significant group of Fundamentalists into Evangelical compromise once again, similar to the days of Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell. Many are confused about separation because of the ministry of John MacArthur. Although MacArthur is to be commended for many things, he is a problem because he is so close to being a Fundamentalist but continues un-Biblical associations. Down through the history of denominational struggles most have been won by liberals, not because there were more liberals but because the biggest crowd was those who did not want to rock the boat and thus voted with liberals rather than put them out. At that point conservatives had to separate (GARBC 1932, Orthodox Presbyterians 1936, FBFI, and others). MacArthur seems to believe like

Fundamentalists but does not practice Biblical separation. Al Mohler and Mark Dever have a lot to offer, but they continue in their un-Biblical relationships and are influencing many to go the same way. MacArthur could do something about this, but he hasn't. A practicing separatist cannot share ministerial opportunities with these men.

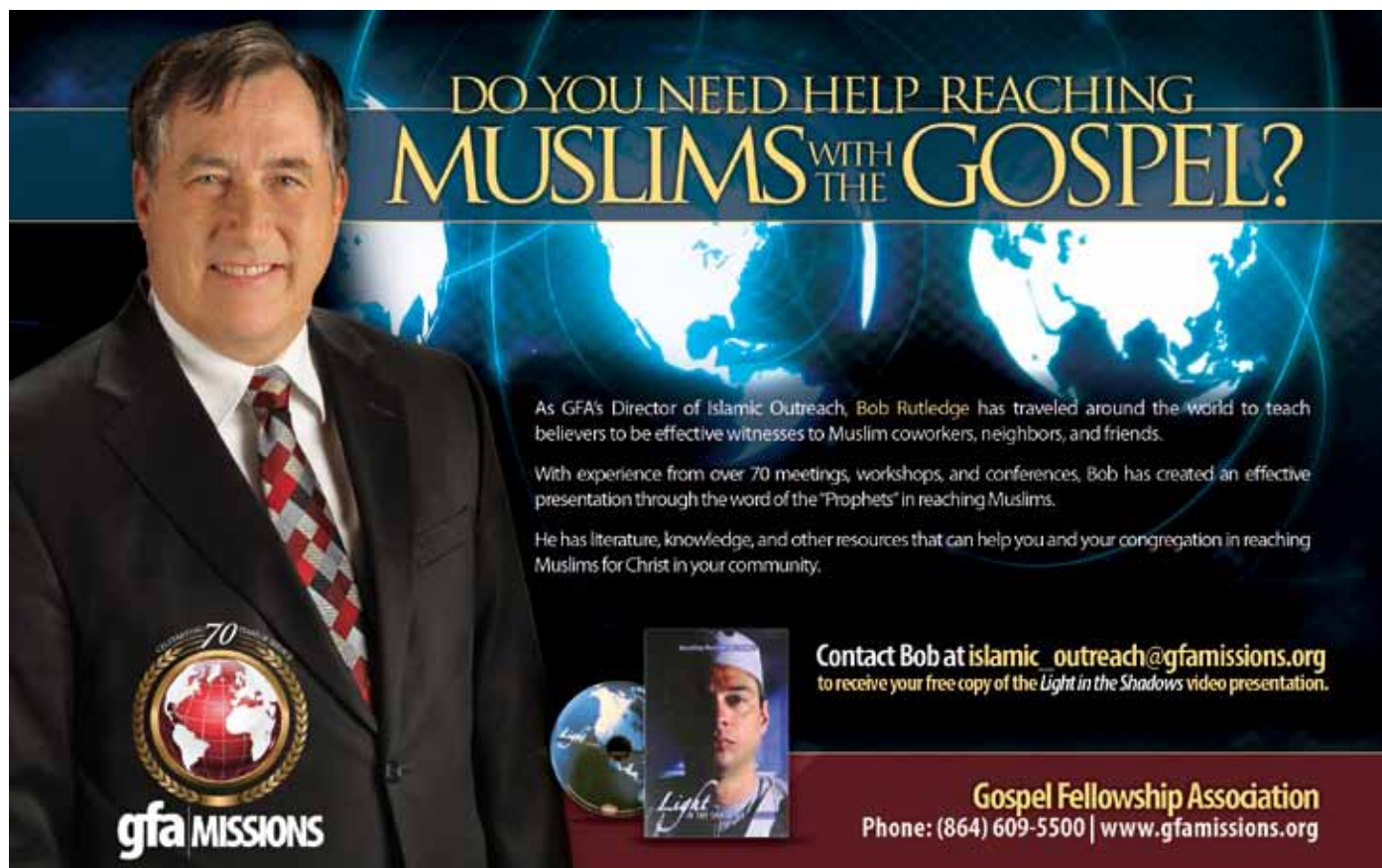
The fact that there is a doctrine of separation is obvious, and no Christian can afford to ignore, abuse, or subordinate it to other "greater" concerns. In many minds today fellowship over a particular view of the gospel or a particular view on the versions supersedes the restrictions of the Biblical doctrine of separation. The FBFI constitution is a concise summary on separation:

We believe in the Biblical doctrine of separation which encompasses: (1) separation of the local church from all affiliation and fellowship with false teachers who deny the verities of the Christian faith, and from those who are content to walk in fellowship with unbelief and inclusivism, from Christian individuals or organizations that affiliate with those who deny the faith or are content to walk with those who compromise the doctrine and practice of Scripture (2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:1–11; 1 Tim. 1:18–20; Matt. 18:15–17); (2) separation of the individual believer from all worldly practices (philosophies, goals, lifestyles, amusements, habits, and practices) that dishonor the Savior; and (3) separation of church and state (2 Tim. 3:1–5; Rom. 12:1, 2; 14:13; 1 John 2:15–17; 2 John 9–11; Matt. 22:21).

If church discipline and interchurch discipline (including separation if necessary) are consistently practiced wonderful results can follow: gaining a brother (Matt. 18:15), renewing fear of God in the church (2 Cor. 7:11), restoring those overtaken by sin (Gal. 6:1); producing shame for sin (2 Thess. 3:14), learning not to blaspheme (1 Tim. 1:20), repenting and recovering from sin (2 Tim. 2:24–26), and saving souls from early deaths (James 5:19, 20). The FBFI has tried to help churches practice this doctrine and has illustrated it with resolutions concerning John Piper, the Integrated Church, the Emerging Church, and other issues which intersect this doctrine. The FBFI has also warned about separating over issues that should not be separatist issues, such as the version controversy. In order to avoid bitterness and unhealthy reactions, discipline and separation, if necessary, should be done in a spirit of meekness and gentleness.

If we correctly understand the words of Jesus to Peter, the church, both the whole body and local churches, will continue until Jesus comes. The FBFI believes this and strives to be an organization that God can use to encourage men and women to be faithful to Great Commission, dispensational, separated, independent Baptist churches.

John Mincy holds an MA and PhD from Bob Jones University. He served as a missionary pastor in Singapore and is now pastor emeritus of Heritage Baptist Church in Antioch, California. John and his wife, Gini, have four children and nine grandchildren.



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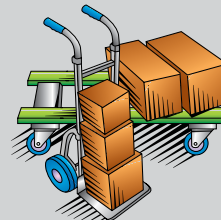
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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

Unloose My Stammering Tongue to Tell

This is the fourth in a series of articles on the eighteenth century Divine awakenings that breathed new life into thousands of churches and hundreds of thousands of entirely new converts or only nominal Christians. Historian F. R. Webber describes the Great Awakening as “a widespread reaction to generations of spiritual exhaustion.”¹

This *spiritual exhaustion* in the British Isles was due, paradoxically, to the extremes of antinomianism on the one hand and severe legalism on the other. In a sermon in 1755, Thomas Jones, chaplain of St. Saviour’s in Southwark, explained briefly how these cankered polarities had germinated through the hundred years between the English Civil War (1642–51) and the mid-eighteenth century.

Many persons . . . perverted the Christian doctrine of justification by faith, and asserted, that believing only in the name of Jesus would entitle them to eternal joys. This was downright antinomianism. Some faithful ministers thought it their duty to stem this torrent of iniquity, and to declare in all their discourses, that that could be no true faith in Christ which was unattended with its proper fruits. This method of preaching was soon abused, and, at last, paved the way for the present method of preaching justification by works; and so, in order to avoid antinomianism, we are at last run into rank arminianism; and I am sorry to say, the arminian doctrine of justification by works has too long prevailed among

us, and it is high time it should be exploded.²

Legalists Converted

Perhaps no one more exemplified the extreme pole of legalistic Arminianism to which Jones refers than John Wesley, his brother Charles, and their small band of soul mates mocked throughout the University as “The Holy Club” in the early 1730s. Of this sincere but self-righteous period in his life, John Wesley testified after his conversion that as a boy he had been *strictly educated and carefully taught, that I could only be saved by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God*. Later, just before entering Oxford, his hope was to be saved by (1) *Not being so bad as other people*. (2) *Having still a kindness for religion*. And (3) *Reading the Bible, going to church and saying my prayers*.³

John Wesley’s able and exhaustive biographer, Luke Tyerman, expressed some personal doubt (based upon remarks made by Wesley himself many decades later) as to whether the young clergyman was actually unconverted prior to the Aldersgate Street experience. But clearly Wesley’s *understanding* was at last opened to the reality of justification by faith alone in 1738, not before. It was only then, when he experienced his heart *strangely warmed* and felt that he finally *did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation*, that Wesley was revolutionized. His conversion and Charles’s three days earlier on May 21, 1738, completed the last radical work necessary to transform them both into the flaming evangelists whose impact upon the religious life of the British Isles is now a matter of historical record.

Awakening Preaching

In the last article, I attempted to isolate three of the factors about John Wesley’s preaching (and Charles’s as well) that energized it with such awakening power. They are powerfully instructive for our own day and just as desperately needed now as then.

First, at the core of his preaching was a kind of

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

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militant or combative evangelism. This was Wesley's way of overthrowing everything from notorious vice to religious formality.

Wesley did not waste his time deploring the evils of his day. He attacked them; and he attacked them by preaching repentance and conversion. He knew that the only hope of the corrupt heart was a new birth.⁴

Is it possible that the antidote to much of Fundamentalism's present carnality might be as uncomplicated as a deliberate return to a more combative, *sin-challenging* kind of evangelism?

Second, Wesley's preaching really labored at distinguishing true from spurious Christianity. The Wesley brothers were not satisfied with people's merely having correct intellectual notions about Christ. We ought to give more serious consideration to the stark exposure that in their experience, creedal Christianity alone was a subtly damning thing. *Christian faith*, Wesley now argued, *is then not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us. It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God.*⁵

Third, in order to clinch distinctions, it was a kind of evangelism that insistently employed negatives. Apart from negatives, people almost inevitably assume the possibility of synthesis; their ideas of religion might possibly be conjoined harmoniously with someone else's. But negatives segregate positions categorically. Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth and the life. "That's fine,"* responds many a devotee of mongrel Christianity or even other religious faith, *"you may take your path, I'll hold to mine, nevertheless we may yet walk side by side."* But when Jesus continued, *No man cometh to the Father but by Me*, He excluded this amiable compatibleness entirely. Negatives amount to declarations of war. War gets people's attention, and attention, in turn, creates the invisible conduction necessary to communicate heat and light. Doing this became John Wesley's "magnificent obsession."

Whitefield's Startling Preaching

The Wesleys were not the only Spirit-filled voices God employed to awaken eighteenth-century sinners. Luke Tyerman, the Wesleys' biographer, was also the leading biographer of George Whitefield.⁶ He wrote that it was Whitefield's preaching which *literally startled the nation*.

All eyes were fixed upon him. His popularity in Bristol, London, and other places was enormous. His preaching became the subject of public remark; his name, hitherto almost entirely unknown, became a household word. Thousands and tens of thousands were making enquiries concerning him.⁷

Tyerman's assessment was that apart from Whitefield's preaching preceding Wesley's, the latter would not have received the attention that it did.

This leads me to feel the need to draw attention to a feature of Whitefield's preaching that could be easily misunderstood and then misapplied. George Whitefield was an extraordinarily eloquent, *dramatic* preacher, the kind of public speaker sometimes referred to as a born actor.

Whitefield's parents ran a Gloucester inn spacious enough to contain a large hall. It served as one of the city's only two auditoriums for staging plays to entertain the public. As a boy, growing up in this atmosphere, Whitefield understandably aspired to acting. *I was very fond of reading plays, and have kept from school for days together to prepare myself for acting them.*⁸

Thus Whitefield developed an early flair for oratorical drama. Once converted, he employed it freely in his preaching. And being an itinerant, rather than a pastor fixed in one church, he was able to repeat his sermons until they were literally works of rhetorical art. Benjamin Franklin, who heard him frequently, remarked,

His delivery . . . was so improved by frequent repetitions that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turned and well placed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse; a pleasure of much the same kind with that received from an excellent piece of music.⁹

Jonathan Edwards' wife, Sarah, wrote in the same vein to her brother, James Pierrepont, after hearing Whitefield preach at their church in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1740.

He is a born orator. You have already heard of his deep-toned, yet clear and melodious, voice. O it is perfect music to listen to that alone! And he speaks so easily, without any apparent effort. You remember that David Hume thought it was worth going twenty miles to hear him speak; and Garrick said, "He could move men to tears or make them tremble by his simple intonations in pronouncing the word Mesopotamia." Well, this last was a mere speech of the playactor; but it is truly wonderful to see what a spell this preacher often casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. I have seen upward of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob.¹⁰

Apparently, it was largely this exceptional ability with words that gave Whitefield his initial reputation as a preaching prodigy.

Crafted Speech

All of this raises the extremely important question as to whether there is a special style of preaching we ought to employ if we expect God to really stir men out of their sinful lethargy today. Of course, our inclination isn't toward florid speech. In fact, the generation to whom we speak shrugs it off. The younger set even pegs it to be contrived and therefore inauthentic.

But there's a studied *ineloquence* that can be just

as highly crafted for the sake of contemporary appeal. It comes off as casual and self-deprecating. It's funny, offhand, hip, and even sometimes profane. But isn't it just as *deliberate*, just as craftily *intentional* as if it were written for the stage?

There are preachers who have, within the space of just a few years, dramatically revolutionized their public speech in this way. Almost overnight they're freely sling-ing around slang, endlessly punctuating their sentences with "like," freely popping off apparently spontaneous, funny witticisms. But isn't this just as put on, just as choreographed as if they were actors? And isn't there a great possibility that congregations which glory in these performances do so as much for their entertainment as for their substance (and perhaps more so)?

Regardless of whatever conclusions we may reach on this point, I think that it is critical to note that in Whitefield's case, the preaching style was *genuine*. I've not come across criticisms from either friends or foes who suspected that his preaching was showmanship. Whitefield related his experience and feelings.

Sometimes, when twenty thousand people were before me, I had not in my own apprehension, a word to say, either to God or to them. But I was never totally deserted, and frequently (for to deny it would be lying against God) so assisted, that I knew by happy experience what our Lord meant by saying, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The open firmament above me, the prospect of the adjacent fields, with the sight of thousands and thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback, and some in the trees, and at times all affected and drenched in tears together, to which sometimes was added the solemnity of the approaching evening, was almost too much for, and quite overcame me.¹¹

But most importantly, we must keep in mind that what Whitefield did was not just historically but also *scripturally* exceptional. Paul actually cautions us against relying upon this kind of eloquent rhetoric when he relates to the Corinthians that he himself deliberately chose not to evangelize them in this fashion. He gives his sobering reason for not doing so.

And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. . . . And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (I Cor. 2:1, 4-5).

And yet, as we know, the Old Testament prophets, our Lord, and even Paul sometimes preached eloquently. Apollos was strikingly fluent (Acts 18:24).

What seems to be the case then, is that by His own sovereign choice, God occasionally raises up an individual whose preaching is like the striking of oil. This man's astonishing facility with words arrests attention like the spouting of a geyser. But unless all that powerful display

is quickly captured and channeled into efficient, methodical, plain preaching, people are likely to be mesmerized only by the man, and just as likely to fall by the way once he has moved on. The geyser was a spectacular, momentary phenomenon. Its usefulness lay in that very fact—like a Biblical miracle, it was *unusual*. But for other preachers to attempt to imitate it, especially those for whom it is not second nature, would be a grave misunderstanding of preaching as God usually intends it. Whitefield's use of dramatic appeal should not be taken as a general model to be imitated in hopes of reproducing his awakening ministry. In a sermon preached in his church at Olney in 1770, John Newton observed of Whitefield,

The Lord gave him a manner of preaching, which was peculiarly his own. He copied from none, and I never met any one who could imitate him with success. They who attempted, generally made themselves disagreeable.¹²

Perhaps it is confirming of this conclusion that Jonathan Edwards, who greatly appreciated Whitefield's ministry, nevertheless felt the need very soon after Whitefield's visit to preach a series of six messages on the parable of the sower and the unproductive soils. He did so, in part, to caution his congregation against being overly attracted by *eloquence, aptness of expression and beautiful gestures*.¹³

The critical question for all of us is raised by A. J. Gordon, the American Baptist pastor who is best known today for his hymn "My Jesus I Love Thee." Gordon related a dream he supposedly had about his preaching one Sunday morning. It left him with a deeply disturbing question.

However imperfectly done, it was Christ and him crucified whom I was holding up this morning. But in what spirit did I preach? Was it "Christ crucified preached in a crucified style?" Or did the preacher magnify himself while exalting Christ?¹⁴

Christ crucified in a crucified style. That's got to be our relentless pursuit. *Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted.*¹⁵ This is the customary pathway to power. F. B. Meyer testified,

Up to a certain point in my own life I sought to influence men by mental conceptions, polished sentences, and vivid and striking metaphors. I found it did not keep them. But when I began to try humbly to realize the heavenly vision, I laid my whole being open to the torrent of God's power.¹⁶

With similar insight Robert Murray M'Cheyne recorded in his journal while still a very young preacher, *I see a man cannot be a faithful minister until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake—until he gives up striving to attract people to himself, and seeks only to attract them to Christ. Lord, give me this!*¹⁷

Whitefield's Impact

In Whitefield's case, people seem to have quickly shifted their attention from the preacher to his preach-

ing. Tyerman observed that *Whitefield's appearance, voice, elocution, and pulpit eloquence, drew around him thousands who, in the first instance, cared but little about his doctrines.* However, he continued, *They came to see and hear the orator; they returned more impressed with what he said, than how he said it.*¹⁸

Unfortunately, *what* Whitefield said is not sufficiently available for us to be able to assess his preaching as we would wish. Although his personal records and other sources indicate that he preached over 18,000 sermons during the span of a thirty-four year ministry (1736–70), there are only some seventy-five extant. Just as disappointing is the fact that these are not representative of his most mature preaching. Forty-two of them were composed while he was still in his early twenties, and eighteen are from the period of his last labors in London, about a year before his death. In addition, these eighteen were from shorthand notes taken down by hearers and published without his review or even permission. Sixteen of these eighteen were from his Wednesday night preaching when he was already fatigued from a long day.¹⁹ Whitefield actually disowned some of them as soon as they appeared in print. Of one on Christ as the Good Shepherd he wrote to a friend,

In some places it makes me speak false concord and even nonsense; in others the sense and connexion are destroyed by the injudicious, disjointed paragraphs, and the whole is entirely unfit for public review.²⁰

Nevertheless, what remains, especially from his early years, is helpful. J. C. Ryle included an assessment of the distinctive characteristics of Whitefield's preaching in his valuable though brief biography of the evangelist.²¹ These are the features of his preaching from which we can learn and which we undoubtedly ought to strive to perfect.

He preached, Ryle noted, *a singularly pure gospel.*

Few men, perhaps, ever gave their hearers so much wheat and so little chaff. He did not get up to talk about his party, his cause, his interest or his office. He was perpetually telling you about your sins, your heart, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, the absolute need of repentance, faith, and holiness, in the way that the Bible presents these subjects. "Oh, the righteousness of Jesus Christ!" he would often say; "I must be excused if I mention it in almost all my sermons."²²

Second, this pure gospel was delivered in terms that were *lucid and simple.* He seemed to *abhor long and involved sentences.* . . . *Simple Bible statements, apt illustrations, and pertinent anecdotes, were the more common weapons that he used. The consequence was that his hearers always understood him. He never shot above their heads.*²³

Confirmation of this lies in his effectiveness with even children. *Had several come to me,* he recorded in his journal, *amongst whom was a little girl of thirteen years*

*of age, who told me in great simplicity, "She was pricked through and through with the power of the Word."*²⁴ Again, he rejoices to himself, *Had the pleasure of hearing of the success of my discourse yesterday upon many souls, especially upon two little children, who were observed to come home crying, and to retire to prayers.*²⁵ When Whitefield visited Northampton, Jonathan Edwards requested that he give some special exhortations to his own family. Whitefield recorded, *I spoke to his little children, who were much affected.*²⁶ Howell Harris told of going with Whitefield to hear him *preach to the little children, many hundreds of them, in their own infant language.*²⁷

to be continued . . .

¹ *A History of Preaching in Britain and America*, I, 319.

² "A Visitation Sermon," *The Works of Thomas Jones*, ed. William Romaine, 362.

³ *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, I, 274.

⁴ From *John Wesley Came This Way*, as quoted by A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart*, 15.

⁵ "Salvation by Faith," *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Albert C. Outler, I, 121.

⁶ *The Life of the Reverend George Whitefield*, 2 vols.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 64.

⁸ "From My Infancy, till My Being for Some Time at the University," *Journals of George Whitefield*.

⁹ *Franklin's Autobiography*, ed. Frank Woodworth Pine, 119.

¹⁰ *Anecdotes of the Rev. George Whitefield*, J. B. Wakeley, 277.

¹¹ Quoted by John Gillies, *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield*, 39

¹² *Ibid.*, 244

¹³ *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, George M. Marsden, 212.

¹⁴ *How Christ Came to Church: The Pastor's Dream*, 30.

¹⁵ A. A. Whiddington.

¹⁶ *Meet for the Master's Use*, 31.

¹⁷ *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, ed. Andrew Bonar, 45.

¹⁸ *The Life of the Reverend George Whitefield*, I, 65.

¹⁹ *Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Late Reverend Cornelius Winter*, William Jay, 33.

²⁰ *The Works of the Reverend George Whitefield*, M. A., III, 406.

²¹ "George Whitefield and His Ministry," *Christian Leaders of the 18th Century*, 30–63.


²² *Ibid.*, 51.

²³ *Ibid.*, 51–52.

²⁴ *Journal*, Wednesday, February 21, 1739.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, March 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, October 18, 1740.

²⁷ Quoted by Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, II, 524, from Howell Harris, *Reformer and Soldier*, by Tom Beynon, 19. 

Bring . . . the Books

Standing Firm for the Faith: J. Gresham Machen

One of the great sorrows of modern Fundamentalism is that many of her future leaders are woefully ignorant of the lives and ministries of her past leaders. Fundamentalism was birthed by men who were passionate for truth, burdened for the lost, and committed to a pure and obedient church. In failing to remember their lives and stories, we stand in danger of forgetting and forsaking the movement they started. One of the more significant individuals in the early history of Fundamentalism was the scholar-preacher J. Gresham Machen. Most in the current generation know only echoes and shadows of Machen. The story of his life and ministry has been preserved in a small volume by one of his former students and collaborators, Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Banner of Truth).

John Gresham Machen was born on July 28, 1881. His parents were deeply committed to Christ and raised their three boys in an environment where the Bible was honored, family prayers were regular, and membership and attendance at the services of their church were considered sacred obligations and genuine privileges. His father was a prosperous Baltimore lawyer who saw to it that his boys were raised with a deep appreciation of learning and culture along with their personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Gresham enrolled in the Classics at Johns Hopkins University and graduated with honors in 1901. The following year, he enrolled at Princeton Seminary where he eventually spent most of his teaching ministry. At the end of his seminary training, Machen was awarded a fellowship to study theology in Germany with the invitation to return to Princeton to teach. During his year in Germany, Machen was exposed to liberal theology and Higher Criticism. One professor, Wilhelm Herrmann, was particularly captivating to Machen. His dynamic teaching style, magnetic personality, and apparent religious fervency initially masked the danger of his liberal theology. Machen was thrown into a spiritual confusion:

I can't criticize him [Herrmann], as my chief feeling with reference to him is already one of deepest reverence. Since I have been listening to him, my other studies have for a time lost interest to me; for Herrmann refuses to allow the student to look at religion from a distance as a thing to be studied merely. He speaks right to the heart; and I have been thrown all into confusion by what he says—so much deeper is his devotion to Christ than anything I have known in myself during the past few years. I don't know at all what to say as yet, for Herrmann's views are so revolutionary. But certain I am that he has found Christ; and I believe that he can show how others may find Him—though, perhaps afterwards, in details, he may not be a safe guide.

Machen later concluded that the Christ Herrmann taught was not the historical Christ of the Bible. Having personally experienced the powerful allurements of liberal theology, it is no wonder that Machen devoted significant energies in combating liberal theology when it surfaced in America within his denomination. His writings reveal an appreciation for men who were passionate about evangelism and who were willing to fight for Biblical orthodoxy. After hearing Billy Sunday preach, he wrote in a letter,

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

The sermon was old-fashioned evangelism of the most powerful and elemental kind. . . . The climax was the boundlessness of God's mercy; and so truly had the sinfulness of sin been presented that everybody present with any heart at all ought to have felt mighty glad that God's mercy is boundless. In the last five or ten minutes of the sermon, I got a new realization of the power of the gospel. . . . Every morning, on the page of the paper devoted to Billy Sunday, a Unitarian statement appears in opposition. I like Billy Sunday for the enemies he has.

Machen's most influential work was *Christianity and Liberalism*, in which he argued that Liberalism was not Biblical Christianity at all. So convinced was he of this dichotomy that he was willing to stake his entire academic career and ordination to fight against any intrusion of liberalism in his denomination and seminary. He lamented the inclusivism being promoted by some:

Dr. Erdman does not indeed reject the doctrinal system of our church, but he is perfectly willing to make common cause with those who reject it, and he is perfectly willing on many occasions to keep it in the background. I, on the other hand, can never consent to keep it in the background. Christian doctrine, I hold, is not merely connected with the gospel, but it is identical with the gospel, and if I did not preach it at all times, and especially in those places where it subjects me to personal abuse, I should regard myself as guilty of sheer unfaithfulness to Christ.

May the Lord grant to Fundamentalism young men as committed to battling for truth, orthodoxy, and Biblical separation in our day as Machen was in his. ☞

Dr. Sam Horn is vice president of Ministerial Training at Northland International University in Dunbar, Wisconsin, where he and his wife, Beth, have served since 1996.

Straight Cuts

God's Will—Romans 12:1, 2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1, 2)

These verses are so rich and full that I would not presume to know or explain all that is here. I would like to survey them briefly in order to work toward a glorious truth at the end of verse 2 about God's will. In preaching we so often use these verses to talk about dedication that there is little time left in the sermon to focus much on what is said about God's will.

There is no doubt that these verses are a great text on dedication. But also note the reference to "this world." Paul brings up worldliness as well, a subject of great importance in its own right. By focusing on worldliness (v. 2), we can then go on to compare the *goal*, *method*, and *appeal* of the world to that of God. That done, we come out at the end to what Paul says about God's will that is so relevant in a study of either worldliness or dedication. Worldliness is my key focus here.

As to the issue of *goals*, it's as simple as this: God want us to be like He is, and the world wants us to be like it is. Note Paul's use of the word "therefore" in verse 1. It signals the transition in Romans from the doctrinal to the practical part of the epistle. How is the gospel—arguably Paul's theme in the book (Rom. 1:1–4; 16:25, 26)—to impact our lives? A simple answer might be godliness as opposed to worldliness.

Next is *method*. How does God accomplish this goal, and how does the world? Now note the words "conformed" and "transformed" in verse 2. To conform (*suschematizomai*) signals pressure. It means to shape, fashion, or form something after itself. The world is constantly pressuring us to be like itself. Think of something extruded from a mold. God's approach is, thankfully, different. He transforms (*metamorphoo*). Now think of the metamorphosis that takes place when the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. What God does starts from the inside and works out. He first transforms the heart by the gospel and then indwells us by His Spirit. As Paul notes elsewhere, the Spirit is the agent in this process of transformation (2 Cor. 3:18). It is through the Spirit that we have both the desire and power to be godly, not worldly.

Last we can note the *appeal*. The world appeals to our fallen nature. It has a direct avenue through "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Eph. 2:3). Once again God takes a different route. His appeal is to the regenerate heart, first by his "mercies" (v. 1). Put differently, the love of Christ constrains us (2 Cor. 5:14). Second, still appealing to the heart, He tells us something about His will. It is "good, acceptable and perfect."

Commentators and translations go back and forth over the Greek construction involved with these words. Are these three terms used attributively, i.e., as adjectives (see, for example, Stewart Custer's commentary on Romans, *The Righteousness of God*, 222) or as substantives, i.e., as nouns (see, for example, John Witmer, *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, II, 487–88)? There is no reason "good," "acceptable," and "perfect" cannot be taken adjectivally. Yet the construction is unusual with those words being set off by the article.

It's best in this case not to bog down in the grammatical discussion and so miss the point Paul is making. The truth about the grammar may in fact lie somewhere in the middle. The words do describe God's will, but the article sets them off, perhaps to give greater emphasis to the point Paul wants to make about the appeal of God's will. Leon Morris seems to achieve this balance in his treatment of the verse (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 436).

Again, we see the appeal in the contrast. What the world dishes up ultimately proves to be bad for us. It fails to please either God or the believer, and it leaves us empty and incomplete. What God offers is the exact opposite. By experience we both prove and approve (*dokimazo*) that God's will is good for us. Doing God's will never leaves us feeling bad about things. Instead, it is acceptable or pleasing (*euarestos*), satisfying what God wants and leaving us joyful in the process. It is also perfect (*teleios*), finally making us whole and complete. I like how John Murray puts it: "It is a will that will never fail or be found wanting. If life is aimless, stagnant, fruitless, lacking in content, it is because we are not entering by experience into the richness of God's will" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, II, 115).

So when we're preaching on dedication or worldliness, there is a great ending here. We can tell people that dedication and godliness are neither dull nor unrewarding. Instead, God's will, like Jesus, is the only thing that really satisfies and the only means by which we achieve our true purpose in life. That will preach! ☞

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

Dr. Tom Coleman is pastor of Calvary Independent Baptist Church in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and president of the Keystone Christian Education Association headquartered in Harrisburg.

References to sowing and reaping appear frequently in Scripture. Often these terms from the world of agriculture are used metaphorically of our choices and the corresponding effects those choices will have on our lives: “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor. 9:6).

Galatians 6:7–9 is probably the text that gives the fullest Biblical expression to the idea of spiritual sowing and reaping:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

The Laws of the Harvest

More than thirty years ago the late John Lawrence, longtime Bible professor at Multnomah School of the Bible (now Multnomah University), enumerated seven principles of sowing and reaping which he called “the laws of the harvest.” Originally published as *Down to Earth: The Laws of the Harvest*, the work was republished by Multnomah in 1982 under the title *Life’s Choices: Discovering the Consequences of Sowing and Reaping*. Lawrence’s insights are helpful, practical, and well illustrated. For something of an online “preview,” see J. Hampton Keathley III, *The Seven Laws of the Harvest*, <http://bible.org/article/seven-laws-harvest> (accessed 2/24/2011).

Here are Lawrence’s seven laws:

Law 1: We reap only what has been sown.

Law 2: We reap the same in kind as we sow.

Law 3: We reap in a different season than we sow.

Law 4: We reap more than we sow.

Law 5: We reap in proportion to what we sow.

Law 6: We reap the full harvest of the good only if we persevere; the evil comes to harvest on its own.

Law 7: We cannot do anything about last year’s harvest, but we can about this year’s.

It is precisely because these principles are so obvious and valid when used in a purely agricultural context that they make an impact when used to illustrate sowing and reaping in our spiritual lives.

Spurgeon on Sowing

In *Exploring the Mind and Heart of the Prince of Preachers*, Pastor Kerry Allen has topically cataloged over five thousand pithy statements, anecdotes, and illustrations gleaned from the writings and preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Taken primarily

from the sixty-three-volume set of Spurgeon’s printed sermons, here are a few of the insights that Allen has selected on the topic of “Sowing” (pp. 456–57):

I believe in God’s blessing the actual work of our hand; he waters not the seed which we talk of sowing; but that which we actually scatter.

When you are doing anything that is right, you cannot tell how much blessing you are scattering.

But if you should not live to see it on earth, remember you are only accountable for your labour, and not for your success.

You shall have a harvest, whatever you are doing. I trust you are all doing something. If I cannot mention what your peculiar arrangement is, I trust you are all serving God in some way; and you shall assuredly have a harvest wherever you are scattering your seed. But suppose the worst,—if you should never live to see the harvest in this world, you shall have a harvest when you get to heaven. If you live and die a disappointed man in this world, you shall not be disappointed in the next.

Sowing to the Flesh

John R. W. Stott (*The Message of Galatians*, 170) gives this description of sowing to the flesh:

To “sow to the flesh” is to pander to it, to cosset, cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. The seeds we sow are largely thoughts and deeds. Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we read pornographic literature, every time we take a risk that strains our self-control, we are sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh. Some Christians sow to the flesh every day and wonder why they do not reap holiness. Holiness is a *harvest*; whether we reap it or not depends almost entirely on what and where we sow.

Richard De Haan (*Our Daily Bread*, 8/16/1998) provides a fitting illustration of one who reaped the consequences of his sin (cf. Psalm 7:16):

“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 Emperor Charlemagne wanted to have a magnificent bell cast for the church he had built. An artist named Tancho was employed by the church to make it. He was furnished, at his own request, with a great quantity of copper, and a hundred pounds of silver for the purpose. He kept the silver for his own personal use, however, and substituted in its place a quantity of highly purified tin. When the work was completed, he presented the bell to the Emperor, who had it suspended in the church tower. The people, however, were unable to ring it. So Tancho himself was called in to help. But he pulled so hard that its tongue fell down and killed him.

Sowing to the Spirit

Here is another observation from the Prince of Preachers (*Faith's Checkbook*, May 2).

Sowing looks like a losing business, for we put good corn into the ground never to see it anymore. Sowing to the Spirit seems a very fanciful, dreamy business; for we deny ourselves and apparently get nothing for it. Yet if we sow to the Spirit by studying to live unto God, seeking to obey the will of God, and laying ourselves out to promote His honor, we shall not sow in vain. Life shall be our reward, even everlasting life. This we enjoy here as we enter into the knowledge of God, communion with God, and enjoyment of God. This life flows on like an ever-deepening, ever-widening river till it bears us to the ocean of infinite felicity, where the life of God is ours forever and ever.

Let us not this day sow to our flesh, for the harvest will be corruption, since flesh always tends that way; but with holy self-conquest let us live for the highest, purest, and most spiritual ends, seeking to honor our most holy Lord by obeying His most gracious Spirit. What a harvest will that be when we reap life everlasting! What sheaves of endless bliss will be reaped! What a festival will that harvest be! Lord, make us such reapers, for thy Son's sake.

Sowing and Faith

The Bible places great emphasis on our faithfulness in sowing the seeds of righteousness, assuring us of a fruitful yield. Yet in any spiritual endeavor, man's best efforts yield nothing apart from God's sovereign working.

In 1 Corinthians 3:6–9, Paul reminds his readers,

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God.

Those who farm vocationally experience this reality in vivid ways. For many years I had the privilege of observing and learning from my father-in-law who, in my opinion, was a “model farmer.” He understood the needs of his livestock and knew how to work the land to achieve the best possible yield. He was resourceful, versatile, prudent, and seemingly tireless. He was personable and able to foster effective working relationships with just about anyone. But as capable and diligent as he was, he never lost sight of the fact that, apart from God's gracious provision and protection, there would be no harvest.

From a human standpoint, a farmer can do everything right and still lose his crop. He can prepare the land and plant the best seed at the right time. He can make judicious determinations regarding the use of herbicides and pesticides. He can plan and prepare in countless ways, having at the ready all necessary equipment and manpower to bring in his crop—and still get nothing unless God providentially provides the needed rain (but not too much) and protects from hail and from the damage that may arise due to insects or disease.

Farmers know that if they don't sow they won't reap. But they also know that their sowing alone doesn't ensure a harvest. They must depend on God's merciful and mighty hand.

A. W. Tozer (*The Next Chapter after the Last*, http://preceptaustin.org/galatians_68_commentary.htm, accessed 2/23/2011) says,

The way to deal with a law of God is to work along with it. By faith and obedience we can put every divine law to work for us. And the law of sowing and reaping may be brought to our service and made to toil for our everlasting good. So kind is God and so thoughtful of His creatures.

“He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” There it is, and we have but to submit to it to gain from it an everlasting reward. Deeds done in the Spirit, in obedience to Christ and with the purpose of bringing honor to the Triune God, are seeds of endless blessedness. The first gift of life is not by works, but by faith in the work of a sufficient Redeemer; but after the miracle of the new birth has been accomplished, the Christian to a large extent carries his future in his hands. If he denies himself and takes up his cross in meek obedience, his deeds will become seeds of life and everlasting glory. He may forget his deeds of love or think them small and useless, but God is not unmindful. He never forgets. The sweet harvest of a life well lived will be there to meet the sower after the toil is ended and the heat of the day is past.

May we always depend upon God, while, by His grace, sowing to the Spirit. ☞

Gospel Tract Soulwinning: Go Ye Prepared!



If we obey God's Great Commission we will be concerned about and looking for opportunities to give the gospel message to the lost all around us—at our front doors, at stores, banks, gas stations, or wherever our daily routine takes us. While there are other good methods of personal evangelism and soul winning, there is no doubt that the daily distribution of gospel tracts is an effective method of soul winning, quicker and easier than any other when people are pressed for time.

First, it is the quickest method of personal soul winning because it takes only seconds to do. That is important, because although we might have the time to sit down with someone and go through the plan of salvation with him, he might not have the time. At other times the problem is reversed—the other person has the time, but we don't. In spite of our very busy schedules, passing out gospel tracts to those around us is an outstanding solution to the problem of getting the salvation message to others. It takes only a few seconds to hand someone a tract and to ask him or her to read it, but those precious seconds could make the difference for that person between life and death—between Heaven and Hell.

We should carry gospel tracts with us wherever we go, lest we walk by unsaved people unprepared to give them the gospel. Tracts greatly help us to carry out the Great Commission because they are like little preachers that always have the time to present the salvation message to people when neither of us has the time to talk. Also, gospel tracts are willing to wait as long as necessary until the people we give them to have time to read them and consider the message they present. When we give someone a tract, we should pray that the Holy Spirit will convict the person's heart and remind him to read the tract.

Since tract distribution is such a simple method of personal evangelism, every believer can be involved in personal soul winning because every believer (even a new convert) can do it. Tracts are especially helpful because

they offer Scripture verses and can be used by those who have not yet memorized the references that make the gospel clear. Further, believers who lack confidence in conversation can use gospel tracts to begin a conversation or to build their confidence. Churches will gain new converts as members become active in personal soul winning.

To begin an effective program of personal soul winning through tract distribution, churches should encourage members to be prepared by picking up tracts at church and carrying them in their pockets or purses wherever they go. We would never leave home expecting to make a purchase without taking money, checks, or credit cards with us. In the same way, if we expect to make converts, we must take the gospel with us. Having a tract that clearly presents the gospel ensures that we have the gospel in a format that we can readily present to others. If you know to take your *money wallet*, you should know to take your *tract wallet*. In fact, a vinyl checkbook cover, available from any bank, makes an excellent tract wallet. Before leaving home, fill it with a dozen tracts and purpose to distribute them before you return home. Getting into the habit of carrying a tract wallet will make it easy for men to carry tracts in suit coat or hip pocket, a convenient habit when wearing a shirt with no pocket. In the same way, having a tract wallet allows ladies to have tracts in good condition as they carry them in their purses with other items.

Think of your tracts as the gospel net you need to cast out so that you will be able to catch souls for Jesus. If you are a follower of Christ you must be a fisher of men who, wherever he goes, is prepared for a prayerful presentation of the gospel to all men. Why not have a tract wallet filled with good gospel tracts, and "don't leave home without it"?

Jim L. Bray is the founder and director of The Power of the Word literature ministry in Shelby, North Carolina. You may obtain copies of his tract at www.thepoweroftheword.com.



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*To the Jew first,
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Rom. 1:16



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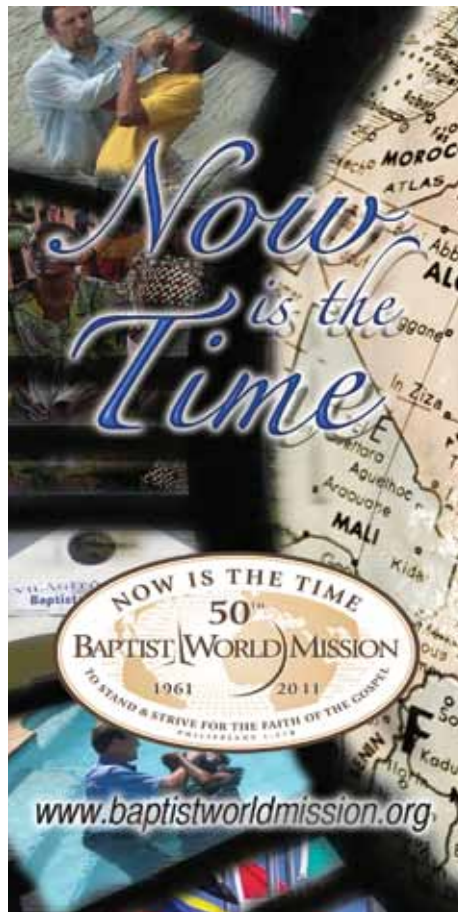


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Regional Report

Doug Wright

South Regional Meeting • March 7–8, 2011

Ninety-five people registered for and attended the South Regional Meeting hosted by the Wilds in Brevard, North Carolina. This is the second time the Wilds has hosted the South Regional, and, like the last meeting, FBFI members and friends came from not only the South but from other places as well. A great blend of both participants and vendors allowed for good fellowship and a great time of encouragement.

Evangelist Ben Farrell was the first General Session speaker. His opening message focused the participants on the theme of power through prayer. Joining Ben as General Session speakers were Dr. John Monroe from Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina; Pastor Tony Miller from Morningside Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina; and Dr. Bob Jones III from Bob Jones University. As usual, the Wilds provided godly and stirring music as well as activities and their classic “fun time.” Mike Privett, Dale Cunningham, Steve Russell, and Mike Yarborough got the privilege of joining Steve Staloda in one of the skits.

The theme, “Power through Prayer,” was practically applied in the six men’s workshops and two ladies’ workshops. Paul Downey (“Understanding the Biblical Command to Pray for Our Enemies”), Michael Gray (“The Pastor and His Prayer Life”), and Brad Blanton (“Transforming Your Sunday School through Prayer”) presented the first series of workshops on Tuesday morning. Steve Hankins (“A Paradigm for Praying for the Next Generation”), Layton Talbert (“Developing a Personal Theology of Prayer”), and Joe Vaughn (“Developing a Prayerful Youth Ministry”) presented the second set of workshops. The ladies’ workshops were led by Denise Cunningham (“The Fellowship of Prayer”) and Debra Blanton (“The Prayer Life of the Pastor’s Wife”). The theme was practically applied further in an afternoon season of prayer. Both men and ladies gathered in the fireplace room to pray specifically for revival in our own hearts and in our churches. Lord willing, our ministries will be impacted at length by this year’s South Regional Meeting.



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Making Daddy Big to Little Eyes

September Washer

Oh, the joy of being a child. Our children dream of adventure. They are motivated by noble deeds, honor, valor, courage, being rescued by the valiant, and the fight between good and evil. They are often awed by people who have spent years developing a skill. They do not excitedly dream of the work and self-denial required to faithfully manage their homes year after year. Although their heroes may exhibit Christian character traits, they do not often think in terms of having compassion, humility, kindness, gentleness, patience, self-control, perseverance, godliness, goodness, faithfulness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness, and tolerance. These traits are all listed in Colossians 3: 12–16; Ephesians 4:2, 3, and 32; James 3:17; 2 Peter 1:5–7; and Galatians 5:22, 23.

Our eight-year-old son, David, is no different. Such was the case driving home from Neighborhood Bible School this summer. He had been awed earlier that day by a juggler at the local library. Driving home I was listening to him excitedly tell me about all that he was going to learn and do. “Mommy, I do not know who I am going to marry yet, but she is sure going to be happy with me!” He said this with the most delightful boyish grin and unabashed confidence. I couldn’t help but laugh and mutter something such as, “Really!” He continued, “Mommy, wouldn’t you have liked to marry a man who could juggle and . . .” He rattled off all of the things he is dreaming of being able to do. I am ashamed to admit that I let the opportunity slip by to talk about any number of things. The following is what I want to tell him about the kind of husband he should be:

“David, your daddy came to the church today to unlock our van. He had already made one trip to church to drop you off, and he shouldn’t have had to come. I was supposed to pick you up. Daddy drove back to church with the other key, arriving calm, with a smile, a hug, and loving us. Daddy has done this every time I have locked the keys in the car . . . and they are many. We arrived home to find him caring for the baby, the housework done, and homemade pizza and French bread waiting for us—all after working ninety-eight

hours the last two weeks. He loves God and attempts to follow Him with all his heart. He loves us and faithfully comes home to us every day. We never have a moment’s worry about where he is. He gets up every morning and faithfully goes through the mundane events of life. Day in, day out, he’s faithful to what God has given him to do. He denies himself multiple pleasures of life that I am sure he could feel entitled to and that the world constantly bombards him with. He is a man of God who has learned to deny himself for the sake of his family and others.”

What do you do when you find your good and godly husband faithfully working at something not so glamorous to little eyes? Maybe he pastors a small handful of people and works long hours on the side to support the family and ministry; maybe he spends long hours studying as he works toward a degree; maybe instead of juggling he makes the juggler’s balls; maybe instead of riding in the fireman’s cab his job is the unsung support role. The world is full of men who are still searching for adventure and meaning, men who have never learned the important lessons that prepare them for the hard task of daily living.

Do you have a good, godly, and faithful husband? Do you have a husband who goes above and beyond what even our culture views as being a good daddy? If so, proudly say to your children, “Look at your daddy. That is the kind of man you want to be!” Make him big to their little eyes. Never express disappointment or wishful thinking about the task given to him. Repeatedly verbalize what it is that makes him a great man of God. It may not seem too exciting to a little boy or girl dreaming of adventure and opportunity, but someday the children will remember and realize that their daddy demonstrated real courage, bravery, humility, and selfless love every day.

And hey, our daddy can even juggle a little bit!

September Washer is a wife and mother of three children and is involved in ministries with her husband, David, at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

The particular church is the executive institution or business body, within the kingdom, charged with official duties and responsibilities for the spread of the kingdom.
—B. H. Carroll

There is no big star among the seven stars of Revelation 1:16. They are all equal and relate directly to their Lord. Each church is independent.
—John Halsey

Only the church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any great interest in the church before. . . . I am forced to confess that what I once despised, I now praise unreservedly.
—Albert Einstein

The Greek Fathers used the term, *He ecclesia kuriakon*, "The Lord's Assembly." In time the noun was omitted; the adjective and article only were used. A local church is, above all, "The Lord's." —Richard V. Clearwaters

For thirteen hundred years was baptism generally and regularly an immersion of the person under water.
—Brenner, a Roman Catholic

It does appear from Scriptures that not even one infant was ever baptized; therefore, Protestants should reject it on their own principle, that the Scriptures are our only rule of faith and practice, and that infant baptism has an unscriptural usage.
—Archbishop Hughes, a Roman Catholic

Immersion, and not sprinkling, was unquestionably the original, normal form. —Philip Schaff, a Presbyterian

The two ordinances are committed to the care of (Christ's) churches, whom He holds responsible for their preservation in their original purity and integrity.
—J. M. Pendleton

See the author of rhanism, that is sprinkling; not Christ, nor the apostles, but Cyprian; not in the days of Christ, but some two hundred and thirty years after.
—Thomas Lawson, a Quaker

For those who claim that the New Testament churches had no membership, I ask, "Who would be eligible to vote on disciplining members?" (1 Corinthians 5:13).
—Richard V. Clearwaters

The church is the recruiting agency for the kingdom.
—B. H. Carroll

Each participation in the Lord's Supper is a wordless confession of faith's basal principles.
—Henry G. Weston

The perils of denominationalism are clearly seen through historical investigation of the process of evolution from cooperative fellowship to coercive convention to dictatorial denomination.
—James E. Singleton

It is doubtful whether it is good to refer to the deacons as a board. A board is usually considered authoritative with power to act and enforce, and the Bible nowhere mentions deacons with this authority. Deacons are servants and not bosses.
—Otis R. Holmes

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



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Being a Witness for Christ (Part Two)

Acts 5:42 says, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." The zeal of these men is very challenging! They had a passion for telling others about our wonderful Savior. Today, many of the Lord's people need this same fervor. We need to go out and tell others about our Lord just as these men did. I know that many who are reading this article have a love for the Lord, but why don't they go out and give the gospel to others? I believe one of the reasons is because they don't know how to approach the unsaved with the gospel. Now, we know there are a lot of Christians who have a zeal for witnessing, but they have no tact in their presentation. But this should not be an excuse for other Christians to keep silent when it comes to witnessing for Christ. So how do you present the gospel? What approach should you use?

We are all unique; we all have different temperaments and abilities, and we need to use those when we tell others about Christ. The apostles Paul and Peter were very different in their personalities, but the Lord used both of them in very effective ways in preaching the gospel. One thing is imperative—we must have the leading of the Holy Spirit in reaching others for Christ. We see this in the life of Philip in Acts 8:29: "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." It makes no difference how sincere or enthusiastic a person may be; if he is not led by the Holy Spirit, his labor may be in vain. We should always pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us in our endeavor of witnessing. Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

With the Holy Spirit's leading, Philip approached the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8:30 says, "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeest?" Please observe that Philip began by asking the eunuch a question. It would be wise for us to incorporate this same method when we witness for the Lord. Obviously, we don't just walk up to a complete stranger and start spouting off questions about the gospel. We must ask the Lord to help us in getting to know a person's background and finding an open door

to talk with him about the Lord. A person needs to know that you truly have an interest in him before he will listen or open up to you. Once that rapport is established, then you can begin asking him questions. For example, I know a man who begins by asking people, "Do you have any religious beliefs?" He then lets them answer. Then he will ask, "What do you believe about Jesus Christ?" Again, he lets them express their beliefs. Then he asks, "What do you believe a person has to do to go to Heaven?" If they don't know, he will ask, "Would you like me to show you from the Bible what God has provided for you to go to Heaven?" If they say no, he will not press the issue. We must realize that we can effectively present the gospel only when someone knows that we aren't trying to force them into something.

Often when I witness to someone, I will ask him several questions after I get to know him a little. First I will say, "Do you mind if I ask you a question?" When I ask his permission, he will usually allow me to proceed. I will ask, "If you stood before the Lord and He asked you, 'How do I forgive mankind of their sins?' what would you say?" After listening to the response, I will then ask permission to show him from the Bible how God forgives sin. I will open my Bible and have the person read verses aloud that point him to Jesus Christ. I firmly believe that as he reads the verses himself, he realizes that God sent His Son to die for his sins and that Christ arose from the grave. After I witness to him from the Scriptures, I will give him an opportunity to accept Christ as his Savior. However, if he hesitates, I will not force him into making a decision. Remember, the Holy Spirit must reveal to him his need of Christ. John 16:8, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

We must allow the Holy Spirit to do the work of convicting people of their sin. Then their decisions will last for eternity as they truly accept Christ as their Savior! May all of us see the importance of being a witness for Christ.

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

Written and Compiled by Dr. Layton Talbert

EPHESIANS—

Major astronomy observatories are located at higher elevations for a reason, and it's not just to get a little closer to the stars. Palomar Observatory in southern California is on a mountaintop over a mile above sea level. Above much of the air and light pollution that would diminish its view, its massive lenses can detect and photograph objects several billion light years away. Hawaii's Keck Telescope sits atop a mountain 13,600 feet high. The Cerro Tololo Observatory, at 7800 feet in elevation, is located in the northern desert of Chile—one of the clearest, driest, darkest places on earth. But placing observatories in such remote locations also involves a distinct disadvantage: they are inconvenient to get to and uncomfortable to work at—cold, windy, not easily or quickly accessible. In a way, the first three chapters of Ephesians are much the same—at such elevation they are not immediately accessible, but the view from there is astonishing and worth the trouble.

Background

Ephesians is fervent and warmhearted, but not personal. Several factors suggest that it was not addressed to one single church (Ephesus) but designed as a “circular” to be shared among several churches. (1) *No personalized greetings*. This is utterly un-Pauline, given Paul's three years of ministry in Ephesus (Acts 18:9, 10) and moving farewell to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20). (2) *Hints that many readers did not know Paul personally* (1:15; 3:2). Again, this is unlikely if it was addressed specifically to the Ephesian congregation. (3) *No specific doctrinal or practical “problems” are addressed*. The “generic” spiritual nature of its contents is quite un-Pauline, unless it was composed with multiple churches in mind whose problems would be specific and divergent and not effectively addressed in the “public” forum of a circular. (4) *Colossians 4:16 may refer to what we call “Ephesians.”* Tychicus carried both epistles, almost certainly on the same trip (Col. 4:7; Eph. 6:20). (5) *The words “in Ephesus” are absent from the major early manuscripts of Ephesians*. Rather, they read: “Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God to those who are saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace to you. . . .”

Overview

F. F. Bruce described Ephesians as “the quintessence of Paulinism.” It is a masterpiece of soaring theology complemented by earthy practicality and addressed to all God's people at large—to the “saints [lit., holy ones] and

faithful [lit., believing ones] in Christ Jesus” everywhere. Though the exalted theology may sometimes challenge our understanding and interpretation, the application is as straightforward as it is universal. The vista from this Ephesian Everest is heady, expansive, breathtaking. It is no wonder that Paul wove into his tour through this theological terrain two extended prayers for our understanding and comprehension of these truths (1:15–21; 3:14–21).

First, look *down*. The dimensions of salvation are massive even on the **personal** level.

- We are blessed with all spiritual blessings (1:3).
- We are chosen by God (1:4).
- We are predestined to the adoption of sons (1:5).
- We are accepted before God in Christ (1:6).
- We have been redeemed and forgiven (1:7).
- We are given a glimpse into the mystery of His will (1:9).
- We have obtained an inheritance (1:11).
- We are sealed by the Spirit (1:13).
- We were dead but have been raised to sit with Christ (2:5, 6).

Next look *out*. Beyond the personal level, the dimensions of the work of God are *global*—as broad and inclusive as mankind himself.

- Gentiles who were once far off from God and aliens to the promises made to the Jews are brought back to Him by the blood of Christ (2:11–13).
- God, in Christ, has broken down the wall separating Jew from Gentile, removed the enmity between them, reconciled both to Himself in create one new body, the Church (2:14–18).
- Gentiles are now fellow heirs with the Jews, of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel (3:6).
- Now there is one whole family in Heaven and earth (3:15).
- Our unity in one body is to be preserved and cherished (4:3–6; note continuing references to unity of the body in 4:12, 13, 15, 16, 25).

Finally, look *up*. The ultimate aim of God's work in Christ is not merely personal or global but *universal*. The work of God in Christ has massive ramifications not merely for life but for all *eternity*, not merely for earth but for *Heaven*, not merely for men but for *angels*. Paul pulls us up and out and beyond the confines of our little man-centered

THE EVEREST EPISTLE

world and gives us a cosmic view, a telescopic glimpse of reality from the divine perspective outside the world:

- 1:3—He unveils our spiritual blessings *in the heavenlies* in Christ.
- 1:4—He describes what God did for us *before the foundation of the world*.
- 1:9, 10—He speaks of the *dispensation of the fullness of times* when God will gather together in one all things in Christ, including *things in heaven*.
- 1:20, 21—*Heavenly places . . . above all principality and power and might and dominion, not only in this age but in the age to come*
- 2:6—*Heavenly places*
- 2:7—*In the ages to come*
- 3:9—*The beginning of the ages*
- 3:10—God is making known His wisdom to *principalities and powers in the heavenlies*
- 3:11—according to His *eternal purpose*
- 3:21—*throughout all ages*.
- 6:12—our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against *principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies*.

Structure

Ephesians breaks very naturally into two major segments.

Ephesians 1–3	Ephesians 4–6
Doctrine	Decorum
Comprehension	Conduct
Faith	Function
Belief	Behavior

Content Outline

The content of Ephesians has been aptly summarized in three verbs drawn directly from Paul's own language:

- **Sit** (Eph. 1–3)—See 2:6.
- **Walk** (Eph. 4–6a)—See 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15.
- **Stand** (Eph. 6b)—See 6:11, 13, 14.

A more detailed summary of the contents of Ephesians looks like this:

- 1:1, 2—**Opening**
- 1:3–3:21—**The Believer's Position**

- 1:3–14—Praise to God the Father for what He did for us
 - Before the Creation (1:3–6)
 - In the Crucifixion (1:6–12)
 - At our Conversion (1:12–14)
- 1:15–23—Prayer to God the Father that we would comprehend our privileged position
- 2:1–22—Exposition of God the Father's Work in Christ
 - 2:1–10—Salvation for Jew and Gentile in Christ
 - Past (2:1–3)—“you were dead . . . and once walked . . . and we also”
 - Present (2:4–6)—“But God . . .”
 - Reason (2:7–10)—“in order that . . .”
- 2:11–22—Reconciliation for Jew and Gentile in Christ
 - Past (2:11–12)—“Remember that you were . . .”
 - Present (2:13–15)—“But now . . .”
 - Reason (2:15–22)—“so as to . . . and that he might . . .”
- 3:1–13—Revelation of God the Father's Ultimate Purpose
- 3:14–21—Prayer to God the Father that we would experience what we know
- 4:1–6:9—**The Believer's Walk**
- 4:1–16—Walk Worthily
 - 1–6—unity
 - 7–16—maturity
- 4:17–32—Walk Differently
 - 17–24—purity
 - 25–29—integrity
 - 30–32—charity
- 5:1–7—Walk in Love
- 5:8–14—Walk in Light
- 5:15–6:9—Walk in Wisdom
 - 5:15–17—walk wisely in God's will
 - 5:18–6:9—walk under the Spirit's influence
- 6:10–20—**The Believer's Warfare**
- 6:21–24—**Conclusion**

Dominant Motifs

Try color-coding in your Bible these words and themes that dominate Ephesians.

In the heavenlies (5x)

- The significance of this expression is not so much its frequency but its uniqueness; it appears nowhere else in the NT.

Continued on next page.

Holy Spirit (12x)

- More than all other Pauline epistles combined (except Galatians and the lengthy epistles to Romans and Corinthians).
- Colossians, by contrast, has only two references to the Spirit.

God the Father

- Ephesians contains the most concentrated focus specifically on God the Father this side of John's Gospel.
- 53 nominal and pronominal references to the Father in chapters 1–3
- Colossians, by contrast, has about this many references to Christ.

Grace, God the Father's (13x)

- 13x; more than any other NT book except Acts, Romans, Corinthians

Riches, God the Father's (16x)

Church (9x)

- More than any other NT epistle except Corinthians
- More than any other NT book in the sense of the universal church (rather than a local church)

Mystery (6x)

- Mystery is identified in 3:6—that Gentiles and Jews are now joined together in one body by faith in Christ.

Unity of Jew and Gentile—This theme is elaborated on in several passages (1:10; 2:11–22; 3:1–12, 15; 4:1–6) and emphasized through specific terms:

Body—7x

One—11x (plus “unity” 2x, linguistically related)

Theme

Ephesians is all about **what God the Father is doing in the church, through Christ, for His own glory, forever** (3:21). In expounding that theme, Ephesians issues a twofold call to all believers: (1) to comprehend the magnificence of the Church as the divinely devised institution created to magnify His own glory in the heavenlies and throughout eternity (Eph. 1–3), and (2) to walk worthy of that calling here and now (Eph. 4–6).

Conclusion

After a succession of explosive insights (1:9–11; 2:7, 21, 22; 3:8–11, 20, 21), Ephesians opens a “wardrobe door” into a whole new world in 3:10. God displays His wisdom not to the Church but (literally) *through* the Church. To whom? To *principalities and powers* (cf. Eph. 1:21), to spiritual rulers and authorities in heavenly places. In other words, *God is doing things to and for and in and through us in order to manifest to all other created spiritual intelligences (angels) His perfections, for their benefit and for His glory*. This is part of His eternal purpose—or, as Ephesians 3:11 puts it literally, the divine “purpose of the ages.”

Thus we see that the great end of God's works, which is so variously expressed in Scripture, is indeed but ONE; and this one end is most properly and comprehensively called, THE GLORY OF GOD; by which name it is most commonly called in Scripture; and is fitly compared to an effulgence or emanation of light from a luminary (Jonathan Edwards, “The End for Which God Created the World”).

Charles Bridges opens his classic work on *The Christian Ministry* with an explicit reference to Ephesians 3:10:

The Church is the mirror that reflects the whole effulgence of the Divine character. It is the grand scene in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe. The revelations made to the Church—the successive grand events in her history—and, above all—the manifestations of “the glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ”—furnish *even to the heavenly intelligences* fresh subjects of adoring contemplation.

The creation of the world, the salvation of your soul, the establishment of the church, the prophesied consummation of earthly history—all of it is *of* Him, and *for* Him. God, not man, is the ultimate center of gravity. “For,” as Paul exclaims elsewhere, “of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).

FBFI 2011 Resolution

11.3 Regarding Beverage Use of Alcohol (submitted by Chuck Phelps)

The FBFI recognizes that God's Word forbids believers to be brought under the power of that which skews judgment and is addictive; that modern alcohol is a far more toxic substance than anything known in Bible times because distillation was unknown in the Biblical world; and that exegetical arguments for allowing for the consumption of wine or grain alcohol cannot appropriately be applied to modern distilled beverages.

Socially, we understand that the consumption of alcohol and its increasing availability and acceptability is consistently tied to violent crimes; that driving drunk is a leading cause of highway deaths; that alcohol contributes frequently to moral indecency through loss of inhibitions; that alcohol distorts godly judgment; that alcoholism is a leading destroyer of the family; that alcohol is a great destroyer of college students; that Fundamentalist leaders of previous generations fought tenaciously against the trade and consumption of alcohol; that social drinking often leads to alcoholic addiction; and that modern science allows for a vast number of beverage choices that are enjoyable, healthful, and free from the harmful effects of alcohol. Therefore, the FBFI emphatically affirms our historical stand against the consumption of alcohol as a beverage.

Islamic Hearings

The US House Homeland Security Committee held meetings on the Islamic agenda that sent shock waves through the halls of the politically correct. Representative Peter King of New York indicated that the meetings were necessary in light of the growing radicalization of American Muslim communities. He highlighted the attempted car-bombing that was discovered in Minnesota and linked to the Somali terrorist group Al-Shabaab.

Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison called the meeting "McCarthyistic." From King's own New York district, a coalition of eighty spiritual leaders from a plethora of "faiths" wrote a letter denouncing the hearing as promoting "greater distrust and division at a time when unity and moral courage are needed."

Dr. Richard Land, representing the Southern Baptist's Ethics and Liberty Commission, praised the meetings as an opportunity for the Muslim Community to denounce terrorism.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/so-baptist-ethics-leader-welcomes-islam-hearings-49316/>.

Cleanliness Statute

The Alliance Defense Fund is taking up a Concord, New Hampshire, case regarding the tax sta-

tus of Destiny Christian Church. In addition to its regular worship schedule, the church had decided to use its facilities to feed and house the homeless. Inspection of the church facilities was ordered, and the usage of the facility was no longer determined to be "religious" enough to be considered a church. The state pressed to receive back taxes for 2008 and 2009.

At the heart of the investigation was the tidiness of the building. Inspectors found too much clutter and disorganization to allow them to believe that the building was used for worship purposes. On this basis, it was proposed that the church be stripped of its tax-exempt status.

The fate of the New Hampshire church is now being decided by the New Hampshire Superior Court for Merrimack County.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Church/Default.aspx?id=1299800>.

NIV 2011

Today, the New International translation of the Bible is available in its 1984 revision and its 2005 Today's New International Version (TNIV). Very soon both will be phased out for the coming of the NIV 2011.

In 2005 NIV translators introduced "gender neutrality" to the translation as so many of the modern translators are

doing. This drew immediate criticism from conservatives. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, in a written statement in 2005, argued that the TNIV would "alter the theological direction and meaning of the text."

The NIV translation committee argues in response that it has maintained the masculine pronouns when referring to God. He has remained "Father." The committee has only altered the pronouns when both men and women are in view. The Southern Baptists rejected the 2005 translation. It is uncertain what position they will take on the NIV 2011 in their annual meeting this summer.

This article can be referenced at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42138347/ns/us_news/.

The Gospel Coalition

Tuesday, April 12, 2011, inaugurated the 2011 Gospel Coalition. Over 5300 registrants attended keynote and workshop sessions surrounding the theme "They Testify about Me: Preaching Jesus and the Gospel from the Old Testament."

The Gospel Coalition was founded in 2007. The preamble of their founding documents explains the reason for their existence: "We are a fellowship of evangelical churches deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of

Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures. We have become deeply concerned about some movements within traditional evangelicalism that seem to be diminishing the church's life and leading us away from our historic beliefs and practices. On the one hand, we are troubled by the idolatry of personal consumerism and the politicization of faith; on the other hand, we are distressed by the unchallenged acceptance of theological and moral relativism."

Scheduled speakers included John Piper, Albert Mohler Jr., James MacDonald, Joshua Harris, Tullian Tchividjian, Mark Driscoll, and many more.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/tim-keller-john-piper-albert-mohler-to-kick-off-2011-gospel-coalition-49800/>. The website for the Gospel Coalition is www.thegospelcoalition.org.

The Shouwang Church

After being removed from the restaurant they had been renting, the Shouwang Church of Beijing has resorted to outdoor meetings. The church insists that it has no political or human rights motivations. Rather, members believe that the government has hampered their ability to procure a suitable facility for their one thousand members. According

to the BBC, church leaders have stated, "The church's position remains unchanged. We will continue to gather outdoors until the Lord shows us the way."

On Sunday, April 10, 2011, one hundred members were detained and sent to an undisclosed location via bus. All those detained were released within the following two days except for the pastor, his wife, and one female church member.

The Shouwang Church is an unregistered (i.e., "underground") church. Such churches are seen as subversive by the Chinese Communist government.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/beijing-church-plans-more-outdoor-services-despite-arrests-49804/>.

Love Wins?

Megachurch pastor Rob Bell has repackaged the universalist dogma in his recent work, *Love Wins*. In his work Bell asks "Are heaven and hell real places?" "Who goes where?" and "How do we know and why does it matter?"

Bell's website promotes the work with these words: "Rob Bell addresses one of the most controversial issues of faith—the afterlife—arguing, would a loving God send people to eternal torment forever . . . ? With searing insight, Bell puts hell on trial, and his message is decidedly hopeful—eternal life doesn't start when we die; it starts right now. And ultimately, *Love Wins*" (<https://www.robbybell.com/lovewins/>).

Spiritual and theological relativism is still alive and well at Mars Hill Bible Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Church/Default.aspx?id=1326562>.

NOTABLE QUOTES

Iwould rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.
—Charles Spurgeon

Loose discourses lose their profit. Blunt iron, that toucheth many points at once, doth not enter, but make a bruise; but a needle, that toucheth but one point, entereth to the quick.
—Thomas Manton

Great faults do not only ruin the soul, but lesser; dallying with temptations is of sad consequence.
—Thomas Manton

In the Scriptures, God is frequently represented as searching for a man of a certain type. Not men, but a man. Not a group, but an individual. . . . When God discovers a man who conforms to His spiritual requirement, who is willing to pay the full price of discipleship, He uses him to the limit, despite his patent shortcomings.
—J. Oswald Sanders

Sometimes we heard it said that ten minutes on your knees will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your books. "What!" is the appropriate response, "than ten hours over your books on your knees?"
—B. B. Warfield

There is not an inch of any sphere of life over which Jesus Christ does not say "Mine."
—Abraham Kuyper

That the Holy Scriptures cannot be penetrated by study and talent is most certain. Therefore, your first duty is to begin to pray, and to pray to this effect that if it please God to accomplish something for His glory—not yours or any other person's—He very graciously grant you a true understanding of His words. For no master of the divine words exists except the Author of these words, as He says; "They shall be all taught of God" (John 6:45). You must, therefore, completely despair of your own industry and ability and rely solely on the inspiration of the Spirit.
—Martin Luther

New Baptist Covenant II

It has been three years since the inaugural meeting entitled "Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant." At that time over 15,000 people from various "Baptist" backgrounds came to Atlanta for the meeting. Former President Jimmy Carter outlined plans for a November 2011 meeting from the Carter Center in Atlanta.

Jimmy Allen and William Shaw will cochair the event. President Carter will serve as the moderator. Stephen Thurston, president of the Northern Baptist Convention, and Carroll Baltimore, president of the Progressive National Convention, are already slated to speak. Other personalities will be forthcoming.

This year's meeting will be broadcasted to locations around the country to encourage broader involvement. To date, San Antonio is the only other committed location.

The Covenant's theme is taken from Luke 4:18, 19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.abpnews.com/content/view/6278/53/>.

Compiled by Robert Conduct, FBFI Executive 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.

The Mission of the Church and Its Accomplishment, Part One

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19, 20). The words translated “go ye therefore and teach” in verse 19 are better understood as “go therefore and make disciples.” This passage, commonly referred to as the Great Commission, gives the disciples and the New Testament Church the primary mission for this age—to *make disciples*.

The question that naturally follows from this command to make disciples is, “How were they to make disciples, and how did they accomplish the task they were given?” In the Commission passage it is somewhat clear how they were to go about making disciples by considering the accompanying participles in the passage: they were to be going, baptizing, and teaching. A scan through the Book of Acts further clarifies the method they used in making disciples and how they accomplished their goals in doing so.

First, the disciples were to *go* and make disciples. They were to go from where they were to where there were not disciples of Jesus Christ. The need to go is rather obvious, but throughout Acts we see them “going” in a variety of ways. They began in Jerusalem, and at Pentecost people became disciples of Christ, many of whom presumably went back to their cities of habitation. There were people who were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Cretans, Arabs—people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, and Rome. The beginning of the New Testament Church was an amazing event!

Following the establishment of the church in Jerusalem, we read that the Church expanded throughout Jerusalem in Acts 6:7: “And the Word of God increased [kept on spreading]; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” We tend to focus too much on “going” being to the “regions beyond.” However, in Acts, the “going” included the spreading of the Word in the city where they lived.

In Acts 8 they continued going and not, at first, by their own initiative. Saul began ravaging the church and, to escape the persecution, believers began scattering into Judea and Samaria. By God’s providence, they were ful-

filling Christ’s command in Acts 1:8 to be witnesses in Judea and Samaria. These nonapostolic believers (Acts 8:1) saw God at work, and “therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (Acts 8:4, 5). Philip later went on a longer trip to minister the Truth to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26ff.) and preached the gospel on his return home.

After Saul was converted, he proclaimed the gospel in Damascus (Acts 9:19) then went to Tarsus while Peter strengthened the new churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (vv. 31, 32). Peter then ministered the gospel to Cornelius and his household in Caesarea, while Paul went with Barnabas to Antioch to mature believers there (11:27). The church in Antioch then, after a year of strengthening, sent Paul and Barnabas to go and make disciples in other places. Paul continued his missionary journeys to make disciples in new places and strengthen churches where the gospel had gone already. Acts ends rather abruptly as the Church continued to carry out the Commission.

What do we learn from this quick overview of the “going” that takes place in Acts? First, the church was and should always be advancing both near and far. There are people in our communities to whom we need to take the gospel while we are sending workers to far-off places. Your church must never allow itself to become stagnant, still, or inward focused. It should resist the temptation to focus on foreign fields while ignoring its own field. Second, there are people moving throughout the world who need to be reached and who can then make disciples in places they move to or return to. We live in a mobile, “shrinking” world, and we need to use these trends for the sake of the gospel. Third, while the mission of making disciples advances, the Church should also be maturing disciples and establishing churches in the faith as well. This was a vital part of the early church’s “going.”

In the next issue, Lord willing, we will discuss the importance of baptizing and teaching in the task of making disciples and what that means for the missions outreach of our local churches.

Pearson Johnson is the pastor of missions and evangelism at Inter-City Baptist Church in Allen Park, Michigan. You can e-mail him with questions or comments at pjohnson@intercity.org.

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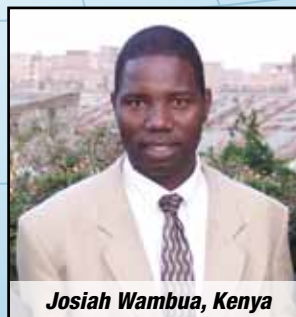
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Chaplain News

Lukus Counterman

The church has been tasked with the job of reaching the world with the gospel. At times, to reach those within our geographical location, we must be willing to consider alternate ways of doing this. Below, **FBFI Chaplain and Pastor Lukus Counterman** tells of his burden and what he was willing to do to reach onto the military base near his church.

My dad was in seminary at Calvary Baptist in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, when I was born in 1978. When he finished, he moved our family to New York, where he planted a church. During those difficult ministry years, my parents were faithful to teach and train the three boys God had given them. I was saved at the age of five, and the many Scriptures my parents taught me are the heritage I treasure today. As a teen, I rebelled against the idea of ministry for my own life because I was disappointed by the poverty and excessive hard labor my dad had experienced in his church-planting endeavor. I wanted to make lots of money, so I went to University of Maryland and got a degree in Biological Science and completed all the pre-med requirements.

Before I was to enter dental school, I had a free semester in which my family encouraged me to go be with my brother at Maranatha Baptist Bible College. Since the female students intrigued me, I decided to start a master's degree in Counseling there! During that semester, the Lord began His work of purifying me, and I ended up counseling teens at Northland Camp that summer. While there, I was brought under deep conviction of my need to surrender to God's will for my life. Soon I was broken about my

materialism and self-will, and God called me to preach.

That next year, I finished up at Maranatha, married Liesl Shingledecker (one of the Pettit Team members) and moved out to work with my dad at his church in Maryland. My next four years were spent finishing my MDiv at Calvary Baptist Seminary. In 2004 this Northern family somehow received a call to Texas to pastor a church in Wichita Falls, the home of Sheppard Air Force Base. Before we moved, a pastor friend had encouraged me to pursue a reserve chaplaincy ministry because he thought I could be used to win airmen to Christ. I considered his words as I began my pastorate in Texas.

We found serving a church full of military members to be a great blessing, though at times particularly difficult because the moment a new family would join the church, another family would PCS (move) to a different base. Still, we were thrilled to see many airmen and entire families of military servicemen saved and discipled. The tug to be a reserve chaplain was beginning to grow stronger in me as I recognized that the military truly was a field white unto harvest. We found so many tender hearts in our exposure to those serving at Sheppard, and soon I began to pursue entering the Air Force. The application process was a long, tedious journey with many roadblocks. Finally, in January of 2009, I was commissioned as an officer in the United States Air Force.

Completing my Officer Training School later that year and Chaplain's School in 2010, I have served as an IMA Reserve Chaplain, beginning at Vance Air Force Base in Enid, Oklahoma. In my two years as chap-

lain I have witnessed to a rabbi, an imam, a priest, agnostics, and many others. I have been able to preach the gospel in chapels. I have spoken in briefings and Bible studies and prayer meetings. This year God opened the door for me to volunteer one day a week at Sheppard Air Force Base, where I am able to give the chaplain's "word of wisdom" (i.e., Biblical truth) every week to an entire staff of pilots.

Doing military chaplaincy is a privilege. It is fun. It is tiring. Many, many counseling and gospel opportunities abound. In fact, I find more to do than I can possibly handle while pastoring Wichita Falls Baptist Church! But I depend on the Lord to show me the ministries that will bring Him the most glory.

If you have a desire for military missions and have a seminary degree or can pursue a degree, consider the chaplaincy. You will discover an openness in many hearts that will encourage you in gospel ministry. You will grow in your dependence upon Christ for the power and wisdom to reach the military, a wide-open, blazing white harvest field.



A Certain Sound

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International has stood for the Word of God and for Baptist Fundamentalism since its inception in 1920.⁸ It began as a protest within the Northern Baptist Convention, functioned as a fellowship of preachers within the Conservative Baptist movement, and since the early 1960s has been an independent fellowship of like-minded Baptist individuals. It has attempted to mark out a consistent, Biblical, Baptist, and separatist course. As independent Fundamental Baptists, we seek to “sound the trumpet” in a way that will encourage Baptist brethren in their service for Christ.

Bible Based

Our doctrinal statement⁹ declares our belief in the inspiration, inerrancy, and preservation of God’s Word. Though brief, the statement reflects the clear teaching of Scripture and our identification with historic Bible-believing, orthodox Christianity. Our other theological affirmations flow from the inspired Word and our belief that it is our sole authority in matters of faith and practice. This fellowship has spoken by resolution against the extreme positions in the version debate on at least ten occasions since 1985. Those resolutions are available at the FBFI website. In addition, several within the FBFI frame of reference have written extensively against the aberrant theology of the King James Only position.¹⁰

Dispensationalist

Because we affirm the sole authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice, we recognize its teaching concerning the church. Sections 1 and 9 of our statement affirm our commitment to a dispensational understanding of Scripture. In Ephesians 3:1–11 and Colossians 1:25–29 the Bible unequivocally states that the church is a mystery, not revealed to the world until God revealed it in the New Testament era. God has a future plan for Israel (Rom. 11:2). Israel and the church are distinct entities, and the church has not replaced Israel in God’s plan. Those who are committed to Covenant Theology base their system upon supposed covenants of works and grace, which are not found in Scripture.

Baptist

The sole authority of Scripture leads us to affirm that we are unashamedly Baptists. Our Baptist Distinctives come directly from the Word of God. Because the church is a New Testament phenomenon, the New Testament is the authority for church practice.¹¹

Scripture teaches that the members of a New Testament church should be those who have believed the gospel and have testified of their faith in Christ by believer’s baptism—that is, immersion in water (Acts 2:41; 8:38, 39).

The same authoritative New Testament teaches us the truth of the autonomy of the local church. Acts 15 describes the independent yet fraternal relationship between the

churches at Jerusalem and Antioch. Paul repeatedly stressed to the Corinthians that what he taught them by apostolic authority was common practice among the churches he planted.¹²

It is the Word of God that teaches the priesthood of the believer (Eph. 3:12; Heb. 10:19–25). This also includes the priesthood of *all* believers (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

We affirm that this same inspired, authoritative book teaches us the truth of individual soul liberty. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who teaches God’s truth (1 John 2:27), and all will give an individual account to God (Rom. 14:12). “Everyone to whom it [Scripture] comes is bound to study it for himself, and govern his life by it.”¹³

The Bible teaches two ordinances for the local churches, and they are believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We practice these two ordinances in obedience to the command of our Lord (Matt. 26:26–29; 28:19).

We believe in the separation of church and state because Christ established the principle that we live in two realms and have responsibility to Caesar and to God (Matt. 22:21).

Separatist

No one who believes the Bible can reasonably question that it teaches believers in Christ and Bible-believing churches to separate from theological unbelief. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17). Paul warned the elders of the Ephesian church about false teachers (Acts 20:29, 30). The New Testament is replete with clear commands to separation from unbelief.¹⁴ We are imperfect servants of Christ, but we have endeavored to maintain a testimony of separation from unbelief. We know the history of New Evangelicalism and acknowledge that a rift between brethren occurred over this issue. We recognize that Conservative Evangelicals are brothers in Christ. It is a mystery that some of these brethren today, by whatever name they are called, can maintain ministry ties with unbelievers. As Fundamental Baptists we must commit ourselves again to two issues. We must consistently expose and refute false teachers and their doctrine (2 Tim. 2:16–23). We must also consistently maintain the godly attitude that Scripture mandates separatists to exhibit (2 Tim. 2:24–26). We must not neglect or forsake either Biblical instruction.

We must never forget that Biblical separation is at the same time personal separation from sin and the flesh. Several of the separation passages cited teach separation from both false doctrine and the sins of the flesh.¹⁵ Great debates go on about standards for personal Christian conduct,¹⁶ but it is enough to say that the Biblical commands (both positive and negative) in Colossians 3:1–17 and Ephesians 4:17–5:21 are from God and are binding upon believers today.

Conclusion

One brief article cannot address every important matter. Some theological issues need more attention. Certainly issues of a philosophy of ministry and preaching need to be addressed. Those topics do receive regular attention in this publication.

We live in confusing and uncertain days. Let us fix our attention on the revealed Word and chart our course by it as we pray “come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

Dr. Fred Moritz serves as a seminary professor at Maranatha Baptist Seminary and as executive director emeritus of Baptist World Mission.

¹ Harold John Ockenga, Introduction to *The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 11. Ockenga twice used the word “repudiated” in reference to the ecclesiology, social theory, and separatism of Fundamentalism.

² *Know Your Roots: Evangelicalism Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Madison, WI: 2100 Productions, 1991), videocassette.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.centalseminary.edu/resources/nick-of-time/169-lets-get-clear-on-this>; accessed March 18, 2010.

⁵ <http://gloryandgrace.dbts.edu/?p=290>; accessed March 18, 2010.

⁶ Phil Johnson, “Where Evangelicalism Went Astray,” Wednesday, March 18, 2009. Adapted from Johnson’s seminar at the Shepherds’ Conference, entitled, “What Is an Evangelical?”

⁷ <http://manhattandeclaration.org/read.aspx>. The declaration articulates commendable positions on life, marriage, and religious liberty. As Bible believers we preach about those crucial matters. Many Fundamentalist churches involve themselves in activities to promote those issues. Individual believers can and should be politically active to promote those good issues in the public square. It is to ecumenical religious cooperation in connection with these goals that we object.

⁸ Curtis Lee Laws coined the term “Fundamentalist” when reporting on the first meeting of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship in 1920.

⁹ The FBFI Doctrinal Statement is part of its constitution. It may be viewed at: <http://www.fbfi.org/content/view/3/3/>.

¹⁰ See the books *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* and *God’s Word in Our Hands*, both edited by J. B. Williams and Michael D. Sproul; and *God’s Word Preserved: A Defense of Historic Separatist Definitions and Beliefs*, available from Tri-City Baptist Church, Tempe, Arizona.

¹¹ Robert Delnay (“The Unnoticed Baptist Distinctive” in *Faith Pulpit*, Ankeny, IA: Faith Baptist Theological Seminary, February 1987, 1) said, “It is the truth that while the whole Bible is verbally inspired and that the two Testaments harmonize perfectly, in any seeming conflict between the Old and New Testaments, in this age of grace it is the New Testament rule that prevails.” He goes on to say, “The church is not Israel, and those of us who are dispensational have already assented to this basic idea. We have accepted the principle that in any seeming conflict, we take the New Testament rule. Often we have accepted the corollary that Old Testament rules apply to the church only to the extent that the New Testament repeats them.”

¹² See 1 Corinthians 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33–38; and 16:1, 2.

¹³ Francis Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches* (Watertown, WI: Roger Williams Heritage Archives, 2003 electronic copy of 1857 edition), 132.

¹⁴ These include but are not limited to 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Galatians 1:8, 9; 2 Timothy 2:16–26; 2 John 7–11; and Jude 3, 4.

¹⁵ As examples, see 2 Corinthians 7:1 and 2 Timothy 2:22.

¹⁶ Peter Masters has addressed this issue among the Conservative Evangelicals. See “The Merger of Calvinism with Worldliness” from *Sword & Trowel* 2009, No. 1. Available at <http://www.metropolitantabernacle.org/?page=articles&id=13>.

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