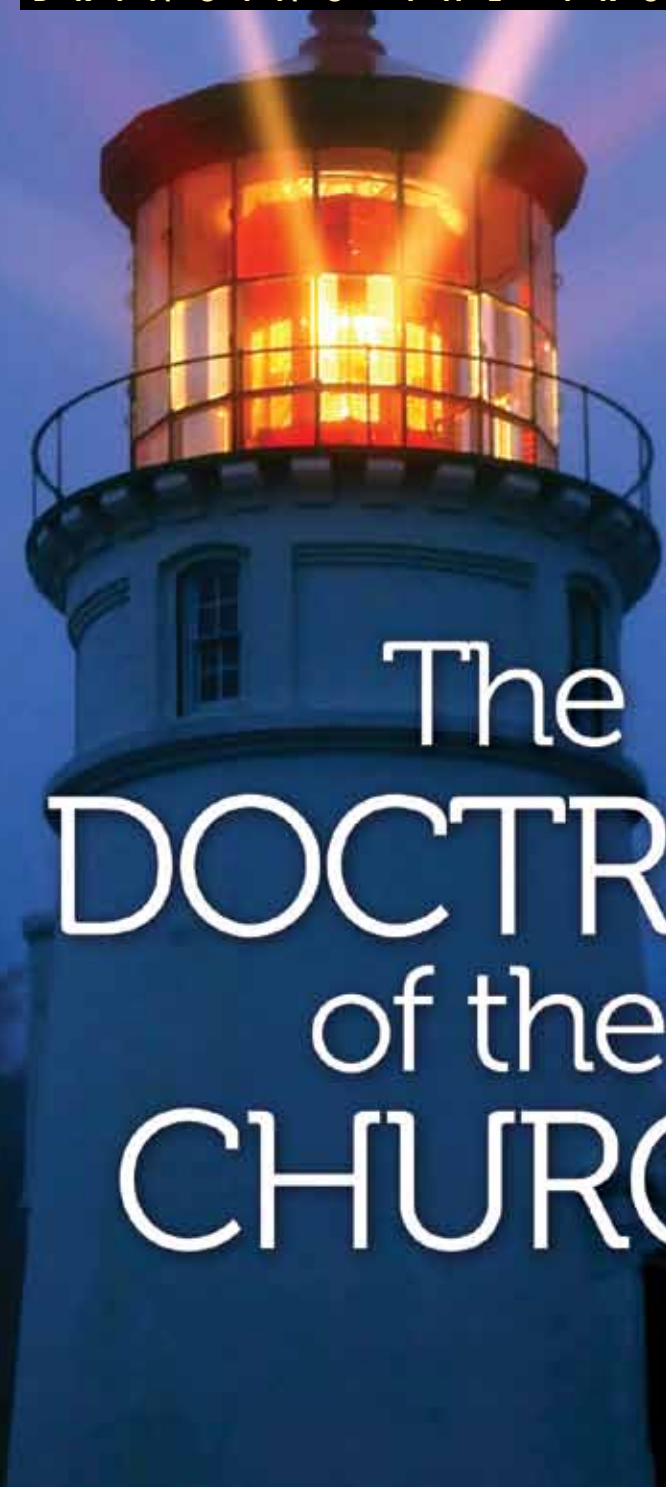


Dispensationalism • Leadership in the Church • Unity and Purity in the Church

FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

July/August 2011 • \$3.95



The DOCTRINE of the CHURCH

Training Tomorrow's **LEADERS**



LEARNING TO
**LOVE & LIVE
THE BIBLE**



Trusted Fundamental Curriculum
Systematic Doctrinal Teaching
Comprehensive Teacher Manuals
Family Devotional Guides
Quality Uniforms and Awards



Call today to receive a **FREE** packet of information & sample materials! **864.322.0700, ext. 112**

E-mail: flclubs@frontlineclubs.com • Website: www.frontlineclubs.com

Contents

JULY/AUGUST 2011

FRONTLINE MAGAZINE

VOLUME 21 • NUMBER 4

6 Twentieth Anniversary Remembrances Separatist, Baptist Fundamentalism

Kevin Schaal

In its purest form, Fundamentalism is a deep commitment to and willingness to contend for the clear teaching of the Word of God.

13 Leadership in the Local Church

Larry R. Oats

Allowing churches to be flexible where the New Testament is not definitive is a historic Baptist position.

17 Unity and Purity in the Church

David Saxon

As early as the second century, two contradictory trends had developed which would affect the doctrine of the church until the present time.

21 The Primacy of the Local Church

Brian Trainer

The church, in this dispensation, is the very center of God's work in and to the world.

We are grateful to Dr. Larry Oats for his help with this issue.

8 Dispensationalism

Larry R. Oats

Fundamentalists must look to their past to understand their present and to determine their future.

24 The Spiritual Nature of the Church

Larry R. Oats

The church is a living organism, linked organically to Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Departments

4 Mail Bag

5 On the Front Line

The Doctrine of the Church
Larry Oats

20 On the Home Front

26 Ladies' Circle

Loneliness
Claudia Barba

27 Wit & Wisdom

David Atkinson

28 Regional Reports

Doug Wright

29 The Evangelist's Corner

Stifling the Work of God
Jerry Sivnksty

30 At a Glance

Colossians: Living Life in Christ Alone
Layton Talbert

33 Newsworthy

Robert Condict

35 Global Focus

The Mission of the Church and Its Accomplishment, Part Two
Pearson Johnson

37 Chaplain News

John C. Vaughn

39 Behind the Lines

Fundamental Baptist Ecclesiology and the Military Chaplaincy
John C. Vaughn

Visit us on the Web at
www.fbfi.org

We want to hear from you!

Let us know what you like or don't like about *FrontLine*. Address your comments to **Managing Editor, *FrontLine***
2801 Wade Hampton Blvd, Suite 115-165,
Taylors, SC 29687 or send them by e-mail to info@fbfi.org.

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



[The 2011 FBFI Annual Fellowship in Indianapolis] was a great conference and it answered many questions for me and my wife and I met some great people, and heard the kind of preaching that I was supposed to hear. I believe *FrontLine* is the best fundamental media available in content and quality of presentation. Thanks.

CH (1LT) Chris Wyrick
FBFI Army Reserve Chaplain
Springfield, MO

May the peace and the love of our lord Jesus be with you! I hope this letter will find you well. Greetings to you and the families. I am fine too with the family.

Please accept my regards for the wonderful works which you are doing for the Lord Jesus as per great commission.

I am a Zambian chaplain assistant serving under the special forces at 1 Commando Headquarters who would like to be in contact with you. This was after reading one of the magazines you produce. I am so much interested to be receiving any material you feel can be of help. I will appreciate if my request will be consid-

ered. Please connect me to other chaplains and chaplain assistants.

May the Almighty bless you and the families.

Peter Kabulayi
Chaplain Department
Ndola, ZAMBIA

Thank you for sending me copies of your *FrontLine* and a copy for my pastor. I am old, retired, . . . and just plain tired. But I love to read material that takes me back to my youth.

. . . Virgil Arrowood and I started the church in Westminster when I was studying at what is now Colorado Christian University. We share some great memories of the school and the church.

Then God let me pastor the First Baptist Church of Clifton, Arizona, for five years. Then I was called to the West High Baptist Church of Phoenix. It was associated with the Arizona Baptist (Conservative) Convention. I helped pull it out of the Northern Baptists and soon we had over one hundred churches around Arizona. God allowed me to help start a Bible Institute that has now grown into Arizona Christian University.

Wes Darby
Phoenix, AZ

FrontLine

Editor

John C. Vaughn
President

Office Manager

Malinda Duvall

Publication Editor

Steve Skaggs

Contributing

Editors

Mark Minnick
Layton Talbert

Design

Mike Moreau

Executive Officers

Kevin Schaal
Chairman

Chuck Phelps
Vice Chairman

David Shumate
Secretary

Doug Wright
Treasurer

Advisory Board

Ron Allen
Dale Cunningham
Jeff Davis
Roger Duvall
Gary Fisher
Phil Golden
Cary Grant
Mike Gray
Dale Heffernan
Marty Herron
Don Johnson
Larry Oats
Stephen Russell
Dave Schindel
Dale Seaman
Brent Snow
Bud Steadman
Dan Unruh
Joe Willis

Executive Board

Rick Arrowood
James Baker
Earl Barnett
Wayne Bley
Dave Byford
Robert Condit
Rick Cross
Johnny Daniels
Ken Endean
Johnny Franco
Mike Harding
Gary Hirth
David Innes
Stephen Jones
John Mincy
Mark Minnick
Jeff Musgrave
Tom Nieman
Dave Pennington
Matthew Recker
Wilbur Schoneweis
David Shumate
Ron Smith
Michael Sproul
Jeremy Sweatt
Wayne Van Gelderen
Doug Wright
Mike Yarborough
Aaron Young

Board Emeritus

Charles Britt	Tom Knauf
Gerald Carlson	Peter Maruyama
Ed Caughill	Bennie Moran
Walt Coles	Mike Moreau
Collins Glen	Fred Moritz
Brian Green	Ed Nelson
Bill Hall	Les Ollila
Bruce Hamilton	Randy Shaylor
Bob Jones III	John Stevens
Gary Jones	Bob Taylor
Walter Kirk	George Youstra

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

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

Advertising: For information contact Harvest Media at (847) 352-4345 or FAX (866) 583-5709. All advertising in *FrontLine* is for the sole purpose of sharing valuable resource materials with our readers. Although we carefully screen the materials, we are not giving a blanket endorsement of any products or advertisers.

FrontLine Magazine

2801 Wade Hampton Blvd., Suite 115-165
Taylors, SC 29687
(800) 376-6856 • (864) 268-0777
E-Mail: info@fbfi.org • www.fbfi.org

The Doctrine of the Church: Introduction to the Series

Larry Oats

Conservative Christianity in North America was a fairly homogenous movement until the mid-twentieth century. The rise of liberalism in the latter half of the 1800s brought about the discrete and defined movement eventually called Fundamentalism, an amalgamation of various churches and denominational leaders who stood for the truth of Scripture against the rise of unbelief in many of the mainstream denominations and seminaries. During the first half of the twentieth century, “‘fundamentalist’ and ‘evangelical’ meant roughly the same things. People might use either name to describe those who preserved and practiced the revivalist heritage of soul winning and maintained a traditional insistence on orthodoxy.”¹ Carl F. H. Henry agreed. “In the 1930s we were all fundamentalists. . . . The term ‘evangelical’ became a significant option when the NAE [National Association of Evangelicals] was organized. . . . In the context of the debate with modernism, fundamentalism was an appropriate alternative; in other contexts (of the debate within the fundamentalist movement), the term evangelical was preferable.”² Battles over the control of various denominations, primarily those of the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists, took place until the middle of the twentieth century; by then most Fundamentalists had left or been evicted from their denominations. After the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversies, Fundamentalism became increasingly prone to fracture, resulting in the emergence of two major divisions: New Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism.

In 1976 Harold J. Ockenga made the following declaration:

New-evangelicalism was born in 1948 in connection with a convocation address which I

gave in the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena. While reaffirming the theological view of fundamentalism, this address *repudiated its ecclesiology and its social theory*. The ringing call for a *repudiation of separatism and the summons to social involvement* received a hearty response from many evangelicals. The name caught on and spokesmen such as Drs. Harold Lindsell, Carl F. H. Henry, Edward Carnell, and Gleason Archer supported this viewpoint. We had no intention of launching a movement, but found that the emphasis attracted widespread support and exercised great influence. Neo-evangelicalism differed from modernism in its acceptance of the supernatural and its emphasis on the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. It differed from neo-orthodoxy in its emphasis upon the written Word as inerrant, over against the Word of God which was above and different from the Scripture, but was manifested in Scripture. It differed from fundamentalism in its *repudiation of separatism* and its determination to engage itself in the theological dialogue of the day. It had a new emphasis upon the application of the gospel to the sociological, political, and economic areas of life.³

While reaffirming traditional Fundamentalist theology, three times in this short statement Ockenga identified two elements that distinguished the emerging New Evangelicalism from the old Fundamentalism: the rejection of Fundamentalist ecclesiology (and its attendant separatism) and the rejection

of the Fundamentalist social theory. Fundamentalists responded with a call for separation from New Evangelicalism. For instance, George Dollar, Fundamentalist historian, declared, “A new and powerful movement began in the 1940’s. It was carefully defined in the 1950’s and then became a national menace in the 1960’s, even spilling over onto the mission field. . . . The movement has a permissive attitude on personal and ecclesiastical separation . . . and a new toleration of the ecumenical movement.”⁴ The result was a rift in the old movement. It is important to note that this New Evangelical movement was in one sense a separatistic group—the National Association of Evangelicals separated from the Federal Council of Churches. The debate between the Fundamentalists and Evangelicals centered around not separation per se, but the extent of separation—the decision concerning from whom one should separate.

A number of explanations for the varying positions on separation have been explored by numerous authors: sociological distinctions, disagreements in soteriology, diversities of hermeneutical methodologies, or even disagreements among the personalities and some attendant kingdom-building. One area not studied sufficiently well is that of ecclesiology. As seen in Ockenga’s quote, the issue of ecclesiology was frequently raised as a point of division, but there has been little serious study of just how those ecclesiologies differed.

In this issue of *FrontLine* the Maranatha Baptist Bible College and Seminary faculty are focusing their attention on the church.

Larry Oats serves as dean of the Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.

See page 38 for endnotes.



Twentieth Anniversary

Separatist, Baptist Fundamentalism by Kevin Schaal

(Originally published in *FrontLine* May/June 2009.)

The FBFI reaffirms its position and core value as promoting separatist Baptist Fundamentalism. Historically, Fundamentalism has been identified by an adherence to the fundamentals of the faith as identified during the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversies of the early twentieth century. From its inception Fundamentalism has not only held those doctrines known as the fundamentals but has also contended for them when necessary and battled any doctrinal position that would oppose or threaten them. In its purest form, Fundamentalism is a deep commitment to and willingness to contend for the clear teaching of the Word of God.

We readily recognize that not all Fundamentalists are Baptists. Early Fundamentalists included Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, and many more. They fought royally the corruption of theological liberalism within their own denominational structures.

We recognize that while the theological battles of the past continue today in various forms, new doctrinal corruptions have recently arisen that are of equal import with the fundamentals of previous generations. Such corruptions would include but not be limited to issues commonly known as the Open View of God; the New Perspective on Paul; the Social Gospel; the redefining of marriage; and various corruptions of bibliology such as the denial of inerrancy and the elevation of particular versions or texts above the original autographs of Scripture.

Separate

Separatism was not an early identifying mark of a Fundamentalist. The battles raged within the denominational structures over control of mission boards, colleges, seminaries, and, depending on the denominational structures, church buildings and individual churches themselves. When it became clear that the Modernists would maintain control of the denominational structures, Fundamentalists had a clear choice—stay and cooperate or leave. Cooperation meant compromise, so they separated. Separation eventually became an identifying mark of Fundamentalism because obedience to the Scriptures in the circumstances demanded it. The FBFI affirms the separatist practices of Fundamentalists as a correct and faithful response to those who would compromise the faith once delivered to the saints. We do not condemn our early Fundamentalist

leaders for remaining and fighting. Stewardship of the institutions founded and built by faithful believers demanded that they make every effort not to abandon valuable resources to compromise. But we also commend them for separating once it was clear that those resources were lost.

Separation took a new angle with the rise of New Evangelicalism. Under the leadership of such men as Ockenga, Carnell, and Graham, some Fundamentalists sought to re-establish relationships with the Modernists and remake Fundamentalism into a kinder, gentler, and more academically respected form. To the Fundamentalists of the 1940s and '50s this practice was a clear violation of many direct commands of Scripture. It also confused the message of the gospel. So the line was drawn between the two groups. They became Fundamentalists and New Evangelicals, later called "Evangelicals." Even today these terms can be confusing. Some use the term "Evangelical" to describe the whole of believers not categorized as theologically liberal. Others use the term to describe the group that would claim neither theological liberalism nor separatist Fundamentalism.

The FBFI affirms the necessity of separation both from unbelief (theological liberalism) and from brothers walking in false unity with those who deny the faith. The first group denies the faith by proclamation; the second denies it by through confusing association.

Another type of separation was at work during the rise of Fundamentalism. While the northern groups separated primarily over theological issues, Baptists, especially in the South, separated over worldliness as well. While separation over lifestyle issues was not considered an identifying mark of Fundamentalism everywhere (especially among the northern groups), it was seen so by some. It would be hard to argue that one is faithful to the Word of God while he is clearly living in worldliness. There has never been a consensus in Fundamentalism on the specifics of certain issues of entertainment, dress, or music, but there has been the clear understanding that true Bible believers seek to actively apply Biblical principles to every area of life and that they desire to be morally distinct from the sinfulness of the world around them.

While we would maintain that in the present environment, all true Fundamentalists are separatists, we also would assert that not

Remembrances

all separatists are Fundamentalists. History offers many examples of divisive groups that separated over issues clearly not justified by Scripture. The racism of supremacist groups and the primitivism of the Amish and some Mennonites are issues completely distinct from the driving forces of separation in Fundamentalism. It is for this reason that those who carry the mantle of early Fundamentalism now must call themselves Biblical Fundamentalists to draw a distinction between themselves radicals of all faiths.

While being firmly committed to our doctrine, practice, and history as Baptists, the FBFI clearly recognizes that not all Baptists are Fundamentalists. The two granddaddy denominations among the Baptists would serve as examples. Most within the Southern Baptist Convention would not identify themselves as Fundamentalists (even if they hold the fundamentals). The American Baptist Church (the former Northern Baptist Convention) has long ago identified itself wholeheartedly with the liberalism of the early Modernists.

Independent

We are independent Baptists, identifying with the early English Baptists and with the distinctives commonly held among almost all Baptists. These would include the affirmation of the Bible as sole authority for faith and practice, the autonomy of the local church, the priesthood of every believer, two offices of pastor and deacon, individual soul liberty (and responsibility), the separation of church and state, two ordinances (the Lord's supper and baptism), and a saved, serving church membership. Baptists have generally practiced congregational church government and have condemned sacramentalism even in the ordinances they claim are Biblical. There is no recognition of the communication of grace in the ordinances practiced by Baptists. We have always seen the ordinances as entirely symbolic.

The doctrine of the autonomy of the local church among independent Baptists has especially allowed our churches to grow and multiply free of the constant political battles within broader denominational structures. This is perhaps one great reason that a significant majority of those claiming the name Biblical Fundamentalist today also claim the name Baptist.

This autonomy is not without its deficiencies. The inability to

regulate doctrine from one church or school to the next has allowed extremism to exist in generous amounts among those who claim to be Baptist Fundamentalists. This would include, but not be limited to, text and translation issues as well as skewed forms of church government. While the New Evangelicals sought academic and intellectual recognition, some Fundamentalists have become extremists in the other direction. It is not necessarily a sin to be ignorant, but there is a certain sinfulness in willful ignorance, and it is deeply sinful to be proud of it.

While we certainly have an appreciation for those within other denominational circles who were or continue to be Fundamentalists, we, as the FBFI, boldly and without apology continue to identify ourselves as Baptists and faithfully teach the Biblical distinctives that define us as such.

We are Fundamentalists, clinging doggedly to the fundamentals of the faith and contending for them if need be. We will continue to examine attacks both old and new on Biblical orthodoxy and boldly defend in preaching, print (electronic and otherwise), and in practice.

We are Baptists, proudly claiming the history and ecclesiology of those who have identified themselves as Baptists for nearly five hundred years, and even more so with the New Testament Church whose practice we seek to follow.

We are also separatists, recognizing that every NT church must clearly define how it will relate with other faith groups in its local community and around the world. We will draw clear distinctions of fellowship and cooperation between ourselves and those who would deny the fundamentals. We will confront as necessary those who claim the fundamentals while walking in disobedience in this area.

Kevin Schaal has served as the senior pastor of Northwest Baptist Church since it began in 1987. He and his wife, Sandy, are the parents of five children. He also serves as the chairman of the Executive Board of the FBFI.

DISPENSATIONALISM

and Ecclesiastical Separation Historically Considered

Larry R. Oats

There is a great deal of confusion on the topic of ecclesiastical separation. Violations of this doctrine come from two sides. On one side is isolationism or the strong denominational position. A church or religious organization must be in nearly absolute agreement with another church or religious organization or must belong to the right association or denomination for there to be any fellowship. This type of separation can take place over doctrine or church polity, but all too often it includes external issues of personal preference rather than Biblical issues. This position, while sometimes very popular, is often damaging to the people involved. It can create a false sense of superiority; bitterness and rancor are too often its byproducts; and it assuredly subverts the commandment to love the brethren.

Of more concern is the movement of some of our Fundamentalist brothers into an “evangelical ecumenism.” The lure of the megachurch and marketing movements; the need to do battle in the arenas of abortion, euthanasia, politics, and numerous other worthy areas; the appeal of the supposed simplicity of the emerging church; as well as the attractiveness of Evangelicalism’s irenicism all serve to draw some Fundamentalists into a closer fellowship with Evangelical churches and organizations. Some Fundamentalists have already left the fold; others are reexamining their commitments. Others have asked why Fundamentalism cannot return to its early, interdenominational days, when essentially all true believers were able to fellowship together and stand against the “real” enemy of liberalism and unbelief.

Background

Fundamentalists must look to their past to understand their present and to determine their future. Fundamentalism is not a recent phenomenon. Kirsopp Lake’s famous declaration that Fundamentalism reflects the view of the Biblical writers and was once the position held by all Christians is familiar to many.¹

On the other hand, there is the realization that as Christendom changed in the early twentieth century, Fundamentalism had to change as well. This change did not bring about a new attitude in separation, as is often argued. There have been separatists since before Constantine derailed Christianity. Although we may not agree with all their doctrine, the Novatianists and Donatists were separatists. The Albigenses and Waldensians were separatists. Charles Spurgeon was a separatist who had to stand nearly alone in the Downgrade Controversy. As liberalism invaded America in the nineteenth century, ecclesiastical separation continued to be an issue. It is often unknown or purposefully ignored, but D. L. Moody argued

for a separatist position. He was not a theologian, nor did he have significant theological training, nor was his theology always consistent. But he clearly rejected liberals and the liberal theology and argued for separation from them.²

The battles between liberalism and Fundamentalism during the late nineteenth century were quiet and rarely publicized. Fundamentalists were in control of the denominations, but in the spirit of soul liberty tolerated the presence of liberals. At the turn of the century this began to change. Liberals were taking control of the denominations and the schools. In the early decades of the twentieth century, major battles erupted, and on most fronts Fundamentalism lost.³ As early as 1919 the issue of ecclesiastical separation was raised as a possible solution to liberal inroads into the denominations. At a meeting at Moody Bible Institute, the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association was formed. The leaders of the conference “requested all present to purge their denominations of heretics, and, failing that, to consider the possibility of establishing a new church.”⁴

This created a quandary. There is clear Scriptural teaching that a church should remove from its fellowship a heretic or a disobedient brother, but there is nothing nearly as clear in Scripture about believers leaving apostate churches or Fundamental churches separating from apostate denominations. During this time some Fundamentalists left their denominations and some stayed. Those who stayed criticized those who left for abandoning the fight and leaving the denominations in the hands of the Modernists. Those who left criticized those who stayed for compromising their position. Still others tried to do both.⁵

After the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversies of the early 1900s, Fundamentalism became increasingly prone to fracture, resulting in the emergence of two major divisions: New Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism.⁶ In the ‘30s and ‘40s turmoil reigned. Fundamentalist organizations rose and fell. T. T. Shields abandoned US Fundamentalism and retreated to Canada. J. Frank Norris and John R. Rice battled over Rice’s defection from Norris’s camp. The Presbyterians defrocked J. Gresham Machen in a travesty of justice and a spirit of rancor. The spirit of ecumenism reflected by the National Council of Churches eventually held sway in the great denominations of the North and in the eyes of the public, while the Southern Baptists and Southern Presbyterians retreated into a tenuous attitude of tolerance. Conservatives did not withdraw from their denominations. They did not seek to divide, but to purify the denominations. “Indeed because they loved their denominations—often unduly—and wished to preserve them from liberal inroads, their resort was not in new schemes of scriptural interpretations, but in shoring up old schemes, not in new doctrines, but in official confessions.”⁷

The 1940s and '50s saw a major movement develop. Carl McIntyre started the American Council of Christian Churches in 1941, but many Fundamentalists of that time (some who even then preferred the term "evangelical") believed he would be too strict theologically. Therefore the National Association of Evangelicals was started in 1942. The choice of the term "evangelical" was intentional. "It slowly became clear that the name they had chosen—'Evangelical'—was designating a group increasingly at odds with the 'Fundamentalists,' who sought more militancy."⁸ Fuller Seminary was founded to provide a place to train the New Evangelicals. Evangelicals and Fundamentalists were still on friendly terms, but there was division in the ranks.

In 1948 Harold J. Ockenga issued his now-famous call for a New Evangelicalism. (See *On the Front Line* in this issue.) Fuller Seminary was founded to provide a place to train these "New Evangelicals." In Ockenga's inaugural address he "unequivocally . . . repudiated any support of 'come-out-ism.'"⁹ Having just returned from a recent trip to war-ravaged Germany, he argued that it was imperative that the church not "withdraw itself to a separated community again."¹⁰ Also in the inaugural address, perhaps to placate the Presbytery of Los Angeles who had voted not to allow its candidates to the ministry to attend Fuller, Ockenga declared that Fuller would be "ecclesiastically positive." This was also a direct attack on Fundamentalists and their belief that separatism was foundational to Fundamentalism.¹¹

Edward John Carnell was the second president of Fuller; he had a problem with faculty member Charles Woodbridge, whom he felt was undermining the seminary. He declared to Ockenga:

The issue, of course, is the struggle between dispensationalism and the new evangelicalism. Dr. Woodbridge is a straight-line fundamentalist. He has been an enemy of your philosophy of the new evangelicalism from the very inception of the institution. My being appointed president crushed his hope of seeing the institution coming under the control of his position.¹²

Then came 1957 and Billy Graham's New York Crusade. For the first time, Billy Graham invited liberals to join him in his evangelistic crusades. Billy Graham's response to critics of his ecumenical evangelism was stinging: "It is interesting to note that Jesus spent more time rebuking the Pharisees who were the 'fundamentalists' of His day than He did the Sadducees who were 'modernists.'"¹³ Billy Graham had already resigned the previous year from the cooperating board of the *Sword of the Lord*. In 1958 John Walvoord decried the fact that so few desired to use the term "Fundamentalist." He stated, "The rising generation of young believers, ignorant of the historic antecedents of Fundamentalism, is led to believe that Fundamentalism is a bigoted and unnecessary controversial approach to Christian faith. The result is the current trend to avoid the label for reasons foreign to the real issues."¹⁴

This period was followed by one of reconsideration and repositioning. Jimmy Carter's election in 1976 saw an "Evangelical" in the White House, but one without

an Evangelical agenda. As a result of the disappointment over his administration, Jerry Falwell started the Moral Majority in 1979. From the beginning this was nonseparatistic. The leaders included James Kennedy, Greg Dixon, Tim LaHaye, and Charles Stanley. The Moral Majority joined the Catholics in the abortion battle; it joined the feminists in the battle against pornography; it joined the Mormons against the Equal Rights Amendment; and it joined the Jews in supporting Israel.¹⁵ The distinction between Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism was beginning to erode. More and more Fundamentalists began to join in Evangelical organizations and meetings. Other Fundamentalists were attempting to reestablish the tenets of Fundamentalism. In addition Fundamentalism developed more of a denominational flavor, with the Baptists moving into the fore.

What New Evangelicalism Found Wrong with Fundamentalism's Ecclesiology

When Ockenga decried the ecclesiology of Fundamentalism, he undoubtedly had reference to the premillennial, dispensational ecclesiology so common to the movement. While not all Fundamentalists were thorough-going dispensationalists, the movement drew support from a premillennial pessimism about the future of the church.¹⁶ Historians generally agree that the teaching of dispensationalism regarding the apostasy of the church was critical in the development of Fundamentalist views of the church.¹⁷ Fundamentalism generally taught that apostasy had set in early in church history. Passages such as 2 Timothy 3:1-7, interpreted from a dispensational point of view, taught that the last days would be preceded by a large-scale apostasy, led by the Antichrist who would use apostate churches and denominations to carry out his purposes. The Fundamentalist viewpoint required the Fundamentalists to separate from the apostate church and preserve the purity of the true church until the Lord returned. An emphasis on personal holiness, predicated by the dispensational view of an imminent Second Coming, demanded removing oneself from worldly practices on a personal level and from doctrinally corrupt churches and denominations on an ecclesiastical level.¹⁸

Decades later, attitudes had not changed. Darrell Bock, a leader in Progressive Dispensationalism, declared, "I am a dispensationalist. And that means I've got a bad reputation with many evangelicals."¹⁹ Bock and others attempted to produce a dispensationalism more in keeping with Reformed theology and hence more acceptable to Evangelicalism as a whole. A sidebar to Bock's article declares, "The newer dispensationalism also wants to bring itself in line with mainstream evangelicalism. The older attitude that saw 'dispensational truth' as over against everything else is being replaced by the realization that what binds evangelicals together is much greater than what separates them."²⁰

Dispensationalism, Evangelicalism, and the Church

Dispensationalism became the primary doctrinal and hermeneutical approach for Fundamentalism.

Dispensationalism spread among the Fundamentalists through the prophetic conferences held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An important difference between dispensationalism and those who reject this system of interpretation is the role of the church in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in the future.

Ockenga and those who joined him in the rejection of Fundamentalist separation realized that ecclesiology was critical.

Shall we contend against these unbelievers who are now in our churches and often in positions of great power, or shall we just quietly and unobtrusively withdraw from the church, giving up the buildings, the endowments, the great name and heritage of that particular local congregation or that denomination? Or should these adopt something which they call Christianity but is not Christianity at all when it is judged by either the history of the church, the creed of the church, or the incorporation papers of the church? . . . Unless we understand the nature of the church, we will never know how we should withdraw ourselves or separate ourselves from those who are not in the church.²¹

Although some of the early New Evangelicals came out of a dispensational background and carried some dispensational thinking with them, New Evangelicalism as a movement was heavily influenced by covenant theology. Carl F. H. Henry believed that the doctrine of the church was critical to the division between Fundamentalism and New Evangelicalism. Henry believed Fundamentalism had neglected

the doctrine of the Church, except in defining separation as a special area of concern. . . . This failure to elaborate the biblical doctrine of the Church comprehensively and convincingly not only contributes to the fragmenting spirit of the movement but actually hands the initiative to the ecumenical enterprise in defining the nature and relations of the churches.²²

He firmly believed that the Evangelicals needed to emphasize the spiritual unity of the church.²³

J. I. Packer, who wrote a chapter for Henry's *Basic Christian Doctrines*, argued that the "church is not simply a New Testament phenomenon. An ecclesiology which started with the New Testament would be out of the way at the first step."²⁴ He based his argument on Paul's image of the olive tree, which he viewed as the church, from which the Jews were essentially removed and replaced with Gentiles. He also argued that Paul called the Gentile believers "Abraham's seed" and "the Israel of God."²⁵ For Packer, the Fundamental idea of a Biblical ecclesiology was of "the church as the covenant people of God."²⁶ Christ was the link between the Mosaic church and the Christian church, and baptism was the New Testament correspondence to circumcision.²⁷ The New Testament adds to the Old Testament notion of a covenant people the picture of a new creation in Christ, raised with Him from death and possessed of a new life from the Holy Spirit.²⁸

Edward John Carnell was also covenant in his ecclesiology: "The church is a fellowship of all who share in

the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant."²⁹ He believed that the church was a continuation of Israel, the "spiritual Israel" of the New Testament.³⁰ He viewed the Old Testament church as the bud, the New Testament church as the flower. "The two phases differ in glory but not in substance. The church is one because the prophets and apostles spoke one Word. The church is the seed of Abraham."³¹ He defined the church in keeping with the Apostles' Creed: "True believers are a fellowship in Christ. This fellowship is not an external society whose rights dissolve when the corporation dissolves; it can exist without any organization at all."³² Carnell viewed Romans and Galatians as "the highest ranking sources in theology, for they alone develop the terms of the Abrahamic covenant in systematic, didactic language."³³ Carnell also declared that anyone who denied the "fellowship of all who share in the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant" was separatistic in nature and thus "cultic."³⁴

Carl McIntire is an interesting example of how important dispensationalism was in the Fundamentalist/Evangelical debates. McIntire is best characterized by New School Presbyterianism, an Americanized version of Presbyterianism. The New School was strongly influenced by the revivals of the early nineteenth century and adopted Nathanael Taylor's "New Haven Theology." There was an emphasis on volunteerism, interdenominationalism, millennialism, and the visible signs of faith, especially a conversion experience and a separated life.³⁵ Although McIntire was a student and disciple of J. Gresham Machen (Machen insisted he was not a Fundamentalist, even though he stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the battles against Modernism), he rejected Machen's pure Reformed Presbyterianism, preferring instead a broader Fundamentalist version. He was also committed to his own modification of a dispensational interpretation of Scripture.³⁶ Machen was an amillennialist, and his lack of tolerance for dispensational premillennialism precipitated the 1937 departure of the Bible Presbyterians. It is significant that Machen's view of the church was condemned as not purely reformed; a study of Machen's position, however, will reveal that it is completely in line with the Westminster Confession and other Presbyterian ecclesiologies, with one single exception—Machen was willing to separate when doctrine was at stake. Carnell believed that McIntire's departure from Machen's denomination was a fitting judgment on Machen's theories.

Machen . . . honored Reformed doctrine, but not the Reformed doctrine of the church. This inconsistency had at least two effects: First, it encouraged Machen's disciples to think that the conditions of Christian fellowship could be decided by subjective criteria; secondly, it planted the seeds of anarchy. . . . The result was a subtle reversion to the age of the Judges: each man did what was right in his own eyes.³⁷

The Future of the Church

The Scofield Reference Bible was one of the most important contributors to the spread of dispensationalism in the United States. It became the Bible of Fundamentalism in

the early twentieth century. Scofield emphasized a number of distinctives,³⁸ but it was his emphasis on a strict division between Israel and the church as two separate peoples of God that would affect Fundamentalist ecclesiologies.

The expected apostasy of the institutional church was an important factor in dispensational thought and in the separatism of the Fundamentalists. Scofield believed that the "Judaizing" of the church had destroyed her spirituality. This he viewed as the Catholic and Reformed position of using Old Testament Scriptures to refer to the church. These churches lowered the purpose of the church "to the civilization of the world, the acquisition of wealth, the use of an imposing ritual, the erection of magnificent churches, the invocation of God's blessing upon the conflicts of armies, and the division of an equal brotherhood into 'clergy' and 'laity.'"³⁹

In early Fundamentalism, "prophecies about the Great Apostasy seemed increasingly relevant. In the fundamentalists' eyes, their debates with the liberals in these days of world crisis began to take on cosmic proportions. No longer was liberalism simply a tendency to be deplored, but generally tolerated. The ruin of the church, long predicted and discussed in dispensational circles, now seemed to be happening before their eyes."⁴⁰ The alienating power of dispensationalism focused its view on "the ruin of the church."⁴¹

Carnell rejected the dispensational view of eschatology. He stated, "Dispensationalism is anxious to have the church raptured in order that an earthly Semitic kingdom might be founded. But this anxiety is fathered by a capital theological error. Unless the future of saved Jews falls within the general life of the church, we replace the spirit of the gospel with the spirit of Old Testament Judaism."⁴²

The rejection of dispensational eschatology seemed more connected to the social activism of the New Evangelicals than to any doctrinal problems. For instance, Ockenga declared, "The social theory of the fundamentalists was governed by eschatology. It was believed that conditions would grow worse and worse so that until Christ came again, the only effective application of the gospel could be to the individual."⁴³

Henry believed that the New Evangelical movement needed to "restudy eschatological convictions for a proper perspective which will not unnecessarily dissipate evangelical strength in controversy over secondary positions, in a day when the significance of the primary insistences is international."⁴⁴ He viewed himself as "broadly premillennial," but rejected dispensationalism and its "postponement theory of the kingdom."⁴⁵ By placing the kingdom in the future instead of the present, Fundamentalism had, in Henry's mind, eliminated the necessity of any kind of social activism. George Ladd's already/not yet view of the kingdom became the common position of Evangelicalism.⁴⁶ Millard Erickson declared post-tribulationism to be the official view of New Evangelicalism.⁴⁷

In my view, part of the confusion is the relationship between the church and the kingdom. Evangelicalism tied the church to the kingdom: "No study of the kingdom teaching of Jesus is adequate unless it recognizes His

implication both that the kingdom is here, and that it is not here."⁴⁸ The dispensational emphasis on the church age breaks down with an acceptance of a current kingdom. One must either split the Davidic kingdom into two segments, a spiritual and a physical, or he must accept two kingdoms. If the Evangelicals are right that there is a current kingdom in some sense, then unity becomes a more pressing issue.

The result of a wrong view of the future of the church in New Evangelicalism is twofold. First, there is confusion in its eschatology and, as a result, a diminishing emphasis of future themes. Second, by arguing for a present kingdom, Evangelicalism was able to defend doctrinally its renewed emphasis on social activism.

Israel and the Church

One of Carnell's arguments against separation is that the separatist "forgets that the nature of the church, like the nature of anything else in the theological encyclopedia, is decided by the testimony of Christ and the apostles, not by the testimony of separatists. The evidence is plain, and no amount of piety can change a line of it: Christ and the apostles did not decide the nature of the church by the presence or absence of heretics in the church." He then moved to the temple and its sacrifices. His identification of Israel and the church enabled him to identify the temple and its services with the church and its services. Jesus did not leave the temple to form a new one; hence a believer should not leave his church and form a new one.⁴⁹

He then quoted from Calvin:

Cyprian has excellently remarked: "Although tares, or impure vessels, are found in the church, yet this is not a reason why we should withdraw from it. It only behooves us to labor that we may be the wheat, and to use our utmost endeavors and exertions, that we may be vessels of gold or of silver. But to break in pieces the vessels of earth belongs to the Lord alone, to whom a rod of iron is also given. Nor let any one arrogate to himself what is exclusively the province of the Son of God, by pretending to fan the floor, clear away the chaff, and separate all the tares by the judgment of man. This is proud obstinacy and sacrilegious presumption, originating in a corrupt frenzy."⁵⁰

A theological argument for unity in the church includes "the oneness of ancient Israel."⁵¹ This is not merely a parallel drawn between unity in the Old Testament and unity in the New Testament. Erickson states, "Various New Testament images make it clear that the church, as the successor to Israel, is to follow her lead in manifesting unity."⁵²

Conclusion

Fundamentalism began as an amalgamation of dispensationalists and nondispensationalists determined to stop the onslaught of liberal theology. When the liberal enemy was no longer a threat, the number and influence of nondispensationalist separatists declined significantly. Fundamentalism is primarily a dispensational movement because dispensationalism alone maintains the proper view of the church, its future, its relationship to Israel, and

its purity. In my view, should Fundamentalism give up its dispensationalism, it stands in danger of moving quickly away from its roots and abandoning its historic adherence to Biblical separatism.

Larry R. Oats serves as dean of Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.

¹ Kirsopp Lake, *The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Boston: Houghton, 1926), 61.

² Carroll Edwin Harrington, *The Fundamentalist Movement in America, 1870–1920* (PhD Dissertation, University of California, 1959), 1.

³ This battle was primarily a northern one. Foy Valentine, former head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, stated, "We are *not* evangelicals. That's a Yankee word. They want to claim us because we are big and successful and growing every year. . . . We don't share their politics or their fussy fundamentalism, and we don't want to get involved in their theological witch-hunts" ("Born Again!" *Newsweek* [25 October 1976], 76).

⁴ Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918–1931* (New Haven: Yale, 1954), 50–51.

⁵ In the early days of the Conservative Baptist Association, nearly all the churches in the CBA also belonged to the Northern Baptist Convention.

⁶ Nancy Ammerman states that during the first half of the twentieth century in North America, "'fundamentalist' and 'evangelical' meant roughly the same things. People might use either name to describe those who preserved and practiced the revivalist heritage of soul winning and maintained a traditional insistence on orthodoxy" ("Protestant Fundamentalism," 8).

Carl F. H. Henry agrees: "In the 1930s we were all fundamentalists. . . . The term 'evangelical' became a significant option when the NAE was organized. . . . In the context of the debate with modernism, fundamentalism was an appropriate alternative; in other contexts (of the debate within the fundamentalist movement), the term evangelical was preferable" (George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 10). There were "evangelical" groups in England and Europe, but the triumph of Modernism in those groups had been so great in the early twentieth century that no one in the United States desired to be called "evangelical."

⁷ Sydney Ahlstrom, *Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale, 1972), 812–13.

⁸ Ammerman, "Protestant Fundamentalism," 37.

⁹ Carl F. H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian* (Waco: Word, 1986), 118.

¹⁰ Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹² Letter from Edward John Carnell to Harold J. Ockenga, probably in late 1956, quoted in Rudolph Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind* (New York: Cambridge, 1977), 104.

¹³ Billy Graham, "My Answer," *Sword of the Lord* (August 26, 1960), 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Ammerman, "Protestant Fundamentalism," 44.

¹⁶ Most of the Fundamentalists were premillennialists; the Scofield Reference Bible was their common Bible. Scofield described the visible church as "that visible body of professed believers called, collectively, 'the Church.' . . . The predicted future of the visible Church is apostasy (Lk. 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:1–8)" (*Scofield Reference Bible* [New York: Oxford, 1945], 1276).

¹⁷ "It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this ecclesiology for the history of Fundamentalism" (Ernest Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," *Church History* [March 1967]: 69).

¹⁸ Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875–1925* (New York: Oxford, 1979), 58.

¹⁹ "Charting Dispensationalism," *Christianity Today* (12 September 1994), 26.

²⁰ Walter Elwell, "Dispensationalists of the Third Kind," *Christianity Today* (12 September 1994), 28.

²¹ Harold J. Ockenga, *The Church in God* (Westwood: Revell, 1956), 326–27.

²² Carl F. H. Henry, "Dare We Renew the Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy? Part II: The Fundamentalist Reduction," *Christianity Today* 1 (24 June 1957): 24.

²³ Carl F. H. Henry, "Dare We Renew the Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy? Part IV: The Evangelical Responsibility," *Christianity Today* 1 (22 July 1957): 24.

²⁴ "The Nature of the Church," in *Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), 242.

²⁵ Gal. 3:29; cf. Rom. 4:11–18; Gal. 6:16. Packer, "The Nature of the Church," 242.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Packer also believed baptism "represents primarily union with Christ in His death and resurrection, which is the sole way of entry into the church" (*Ibid.*, 244).

²⁸ 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:1ff; Rom. 8:9–14. *Ibid.*

²⁹ Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 21. This book was written in response to a request to help produce a trilogy of books expounding the conservative, liberal, and neo-orthodox theological positions. His problem was, "Could he conscientiously write the case book without probing orthodoxy's weaknesses? And if he probed the multiple weaknesses subsumed under the label fundamentalism, could he do so without unleashing the Furies? The answer to both questions was no" (Nelson, *The Making and Unmaking of an Evangelical Mind*, 107).

³⁰ Carnell, *Case for Orthodox Theology*, 115.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

³² Edward John Carnell, "The Government of the Church," in *Basic Christian Doctrines*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), 249.

³³ Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, 66.

³⁴ Ronald Nash, *The New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 88–91.

³⁵ See George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (New Haven: Yale University, 1970), and Marsden, "The New School Heritage," 129–47.

³⁶ Carl McIntire, "Premillennialism," *Christian Beacon* 1 (1 October 1936): 4.

³⁷ Carnell, *Case for Orthodox Theology*, 117.

³⁸ Such as a strictly literal hermeneutic, a precise scheme for dividing history into epochs or dispensations, and a pretribulational rapture.

³⁹ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (No city: No publisher, no date), 17.

Continued on page 38



Larry R. Oats

LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Editorial Note: As the author rightly concludes, "Allowing churches to be flexible where the New Testament is not definitive is a historic Baptist position." This article, therefore, represents one of several views and practices among Fundamental Baptists.

The issue of leadership in the local church has been problematic for most of the history of the church—and it is no different today. There have been and still are numerous approaches to this topic. This article seeks to focus on two specific elements that are sometimes confused: authority and leadership. In Roman Catholicism there is a single leader who, ultimately, exercises control over the entire church. In the Presbyterian and Lutheran churches authority resides in the congregation, which elects elders to serve in leadership roles in the presbytery or synod. In a handful of churches, there is no recognized authority or leader, other than the Holy Spirit; in these churches, there is an unusual reliance on a mystic leading of the Spirit in church matters.

For the readers of *FrontLine*, however, there would be general agreement that in Baptist churches the *authority* lies in the congregation, while the *leadership* of the church rests in one or more individuals. The purpose of this article is to argue for congregational authority and at the same time pastoral leadership.

Congregational Authority

Biblically, congregationalism is based on the instruction and practice found in the New Testament. The first indication of congregational authority is Acts 6:1–7. Most would agree this is a brief account of the selection of the first deacons in the church. While the noun *diakonos* ("deacon" or "servant") is not found in the text, the noun *diakonia*, "ministry," is found in verse 1 and the verb *diakoneo* ("to serve" or, to keep the transliteration, "to deak") is seen in verse 2. Some would debate whether or not this is the election of the first formal deacons; however, it is clear that this was a congregational decision. The "brethren" were instructed to choose seven men, and that instruction pleased the "whole multitude." This mix of leadership and authority is instructive. "The apostles assumed the leadership in making the proposal, but they left final approval of the plan and selection of the seven to congregational decision."¹ The apostles addressed the need to the entire congregation, not a select few. "From the earliest days of the New Testament the church practiced strong congregational involvement in church decisions. We see it here, and we also see it in chapters 11; 13; and 15. This was not a problem for the apostles; it belonged to the congregation, and they had to deal with it."²

As to the election of elders, Scripture is not as clear. In Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. This does not necessarily exclude a vote by the church. Philip Schaff, nowhere near a Baptist, argued that the word "appointed" should be understood in "its original and usual sense." He declared, "Paul and Barnabas appointed them to office in the newly-founded congregations by *taking the vote* of the people; thus merely presiding over the choice."³ Others think that "'appointed' means formally set them apart to their office after the church had chosen them. . . . Certainly, in any view justified by

the original word, their *appointment* does not necessarily exclude the approbation and concurrence of the church."⁴

Congregationalism is also demonstrated in the instructions given by Jesus and Paul for the discipline of the membership. In both Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Corinthians 5:1–7, the final discipline of the member is said to be the responsibility of the congregation, not the pastor, the deacons, or some committee tasked with church discipline.

Congregational authority is a historic doctrine. Clement of Rome, at the close of the first century, declared, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, that the apostles appointed bishops and deacons "with the concurrence of the whole church."⁵ Roman Catholic Döllinger agreed: "The election of the clergy could not canonically take place without the participation of the assembled community."⁶ Baptists, throughout their history, have defended and promoted congregationalism.

Theologically, congregationalism is predicated on the priesthood of the believer. It is a formal recognition of the Spirit-directedness of the New Testament believer and an indicator of the confidence the Lord has in His own people when they are taught God's Word and submit to its instructions.

Pastoral Leadership

Leadership, in Baptist churches, is not the same as authority. Although it is generally agreed that the congregation is the ultimate authority, the congregation as a whole does not provide the leadership of the church. Instead, the New Testament directs the church as a whole to give proper respect and obedience to the church leaders. Hebrews 13:17 instructs the believers to "obey them that have the rule over you." The word "rule" is *hegeomai*, which BAGD translates as "to be in a supervisory capacity, lead, guide." The responsibility of the congregation is to "obey" and "submit." Those in authority, the congregation, are to submit to those in leadership. In 1 Corinthians 16:16 Paul used the same language as he instructed the Corinthians to "submit" to those who worked and labored with Paul. The believers in Thessalonica were told to recognize those who were over them in the Lord (1 Thess. 5:12). "Paul calls on the community to recognize as their leaders precisely those people who functioned in such a way as to toil for them, to protect and care for them physically and materially, and to direct them ethically."⁷ Paul told Timothy that elders who "rule well" are to be given double honor.

The leadership of the church is centered in the pastor/elder/bishop. While "pastor" is the most common term used today, Baptists have historically also used the term "elder." It is the more common New Testament term, and in a time when the wisdom of age was held in high regard, "elder" was a term of great respect. There are some who are returning to the use of the term "elder."

John MacArthur and Elder Rule

John MacArthur has popularized the practice of Elder Rule.⁸ This model of leadership is growing in the "free church" movement, with the end result, however, that the churches cease to be "free." In some forms of Elder Rule, the congregation elects the elders; in other forms, the elders

elect the elders, the elders therefore being self-perpetuating. Either way, the elders make all church decisions. In this model of leadership, the leadership of the church and the authority of the church both rest in the elders. All elders have the same rank; there is no *primus inter pares* (first among equals). All have one vote. MacArthur agrees with Baptists that "bishop" and "pastor" are terms for the elders, but he prefers the term "elder" because it is free from the nuances imposed upon bishop and pastor by the culture.

In MacArthur's view the primary duty of the elders is to oversee the affairs of the local church. We affirm much of what MacArthur teaches concerning elders. Their authority over the church is by precept and example (Heb. 13:7), not merely by declaration. Elders are to do the majority or all of the preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:7, 9). They are to be partners in prayer (James 5:14). They shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28). While I appreciate his belief that elders are not to operate by majority vote but must be unanimous in decisions (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 1:27; 2:2), I deny that the elders determine all church policy (Acts 15:22) and that elders are not subject to any higher earthly authority (1 Tim. 5:19, 20).

MacArthur argues that the use of the word *cheirotoneo* should not be used to imply that a congregational vote by show of hands was taken (although this is the very word that was used for votes taken in the Athenian legislature). He points out that in Acts 14:23 it was Barnabas and Paul who did the choosing. Second Corinthians 8:19 uses the term to describe the appointment of a brother "by the churches," which according to MacArthur means he was not selected by a single congregational vote but rather by the consensus of the elders of those churches. So "using the term *cheirotoneo* in an exaggerated, literal way is not sufficient to support the idea of the election of elders by congregational vote."⁹

MacArthur argues for a three-step process in the early transition period of the church. First, the apostles selected and ordained elders (Acts 14:23). As the churches grew, those who were close to the apostles appointed elders (Titus 1:5). Finally, elders appointed elders (1 Tim. 4:14). This third step is the final form of church government and became the norm for current practice—church elders appointing elders.

MacArthur rejects the singular pastor model. "The norm in the New Testament church was a plurality of elders. There is no reference in all the New Testament to a one-pastor congregation." He goes on to argue that a plurality of elders "is the only pattern for church leadership given in the New Testament." "Only by following this biblical pattern will the church maximize its fruitfulness to the glory of God." In a brief discussion, MacArthur rejects the argument that the "angels" in Revelation 2 and 3 refer to pastors, thus eliminating one problem with his position.¹⁰ MacArthur argues that James was "apparently regarded as a leader and spokesman for the entire church" (Acts 12:17; 15:13), but "was not in any kind of official position over the other elders."

The MacArthur position argues for multiple elders, equal to one another and functioning as both the *leadership* and the *authority* of the local church.

Mark Dever and Lay Elders¹¹

Mark Dever is a Baptist and holds strongly to much traditional Baptist thought. Like MacArthur he agrees that elder, bishop, and pastor are used interchangeably. He agrees with MacArthur that churches should have a plurality of elders. He makes much of the history of Baptists using a plurality of elders in their churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Dever differs from MacArthur in that he sees a hierarchy within the elders. He notes that Paul wrote not to the elders in Ephesus, but to Timothy alone. He concludes that the Biblical model is to give one elder the primary teaching and preaching responsibility. In addition to this one teaching elder are church “staff,” consisting of people the church has paid to work for the church (which may include individuals who are not elders). He rejects MacArthur’s view of Revelation 2 and 3 and argues that the letters to the seven churches are addressed to the singular messenger of each church.

Dever disagrees with MacArthur in a third area very significant to Baptists. Dever, as a Baptist, clings to congregationalism. Elders are elected by the congregation, and the responsibility for the discipline and doctrine of the congregation lies with the congregation as a whole. Dever declares, “Congregationalism may or may not be attractive, efficient, well understood, well practiced, easy, universally loved, impervious to distortion or corruption, but it is biblical.” Only the congregation and the whole congregation is responsible to God for the conduct and belief of the church (Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:6–8; 2 Tim. 4:3). For Dever, the elders do not “rule” but direct or lead the congregation. Dever notes that in the New Testament some elders came from outside a particular local church (such as Titus), while others were appointed from within the local congregations.

There is one area in which many Baptists would disagree. In addition to the paid “staff” are unpaid elders. In fact, Dever argues that the majority of the church elders are *not* paid. He argues this because some elders were supported fulltime by the flock (1 Tim. 5:17, 18; Phil. 4:15–18), but others worked at another job (such as Paul). Thus, he concludes that it is appropriate to have a formalized status of unpaid elder.

[Editorial Note: Some Baptists would counter that (1) the level of elder responsibility and the time required may not warrant a regular salary, and (2) it is not wrong for an elder to refuse remuneration if he has other means of support and does not need or desire additional remuneration.]

Both Dever and MacArthur have attempted to deal with the recorded practices and instructions given concerning the elder or pastor in the New Testament. Both, however, have failed in key areas. MacArthur insists that to be truly New Testament, a church must have a plurality of elders. More significantly, MacArthur rejects congregationalism. Congregationalism is predicated on the priesthood of the believer, is a formal recognition of the Spirit-directedness of the New Testament believer, and is an indicator of the confidence the Lord has in His own people when they are taught God’s Word and submit to its instructions. Congregationalism is reflected in Acts 6, 1 Corinthians 5, and other New Testament passages.

While Dever has maintained congregationalism and its attendant concepts, he errs in institutionalizing an exception. It is true that Paul worked while he ministered. But to formalize this is contrary to God’s Word. In 2 Corinthians 11 and 12 Paul speaks of his preaching to the Corinthians without being paid. In 12:13 he declares that this “free” preaching was an exception. The commentaries are divided as to whether or not Paul was actually apologizing when he stated, “forgive me this wrong,” or using irony or sarcasm by pointing out that his “offense” was not taking advantage of them. Either way, the emphasis is that Paul’s actions in Corinth were an exception. In 11:8 Paul noted that he was robbing other churches in order to minister to the Corinthians. Paul’s specific teaching in this area is found in 1 Corinthians 9:9–14, which can be briefly summarized as, “Pay your preacher.” He repeats this line of thought in 1 Timothy 5:17, 18. If a man has the qualifications of an elder and functions as an elder, it is the responsibility of the church to reward him as an elder.

MacArthur and Dever err in specifics, but they err more importantly in the same way, and this is instructive to each of us. They have argued for positions where Scripture is not clear. Were there churches in the New Testament with a plurality of elders? Certainly. Is there a requirement that a church *must* have multiple elders? No. Were these elders all equal in their leadership? It does not appear so, for Timothy in Ephesus and James in Jerusalem seem to be “head elders.” Were they all paid? Apparently not, but this was viewed as wrong and not the norm. Did they rule? Of course, but not to the exclusion of congregational authority.

Conclusion

The historic Baptist position has been one of Biblical flexibility. A church can have one pastor/elder/bishop and still be a New Testament church with the full blessing of God on its ministry. A church can have a plurality of pastors/elders/bishops and be a New Testament church with the full blessing of God on its ministry. A pastor/elder/bishop may work a secular job to help pay his expenses—this is frequently the case in new churches or in small churches. A pastor who is willing to do this should be commended, but the church should not institutionalize this model. The laborer is worthy of his hire, and the intent of the church (even when the ability is not there) should be to appropriately pay the pastors/elders/bishops.

One great advantage of the institution of the church is the flexibility God has given it to fit into every culture and situation. There are clear propositions that each church must follow to remain Biblical. Formalizing what is not explicitly commanded in Scripture and thereby creating an unbiblical requirement, or institutionalizing an exception in opposition to the clear teaching of Scripture is wrong. Allowing churches to be flexible where the New Testament is not definitive is a historic Baptist position.

Larry Oats serves as dean of the Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.

See Page 27 for endnotes.



BOB JONES UNIVERSITY SEMINARY PRESENTS

BREAKING | **BUILDING** **CHAINS** | **DISCIPLES**

A conference designed to help pastors, counselors and churches minister to those battling addictive substances and behaviors

- Addictions to chemical substances—illegal and prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco
- Compulsive behaviors—sexual sins, pornography, gambling, workaholism
- Self-destructive behaviors—cutting, burning, eating disorders

Speakers: Pastors with inner-city and addiction ministries, experienced addiction counselors, a medical doctor, and a deputy sheriff experienced in drug law enforcement

November 8–10, 2011

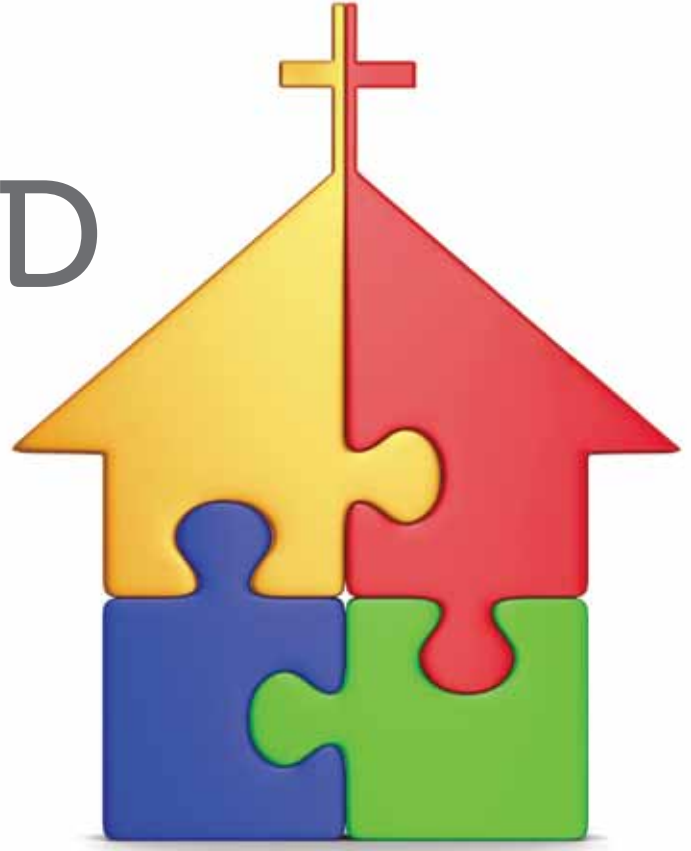
Hosted at Bob Jones University, Greenville, S.C.

For more information and to register go to www.bju.edu/seminaryconf

Register before Sept. 30 and save \$50.

UNITY AND PURITY IN THE CHURCH

A Historical Survey



As early as the second century, two contradictory trends had developed that would affect the doctrine of the church until the present time. One trend was toward external unity; the other was toward internal purity. These two directions were present prior to the Reformation, as Catholicism formed around the concept of an external unity and its opponents centered their arguments in an internal purity. This distinction continued through the Reformation, with Luther and Calvin arguing for an acceptance of a single church identifiable through external signs and the Anabaptists arguing for an internal purity of the local congregations. This division redeveloped in the twentieth century, as Fundamentalists reiterated the importance of pure churches (and denominations), while Evangelicals argued for greater unity despite doctrinal deviations. This article will briefly survey these historical movements and direct attention toward the impact on our current culture.

External Unity

The early church fathers, in refuting heresies in the second century, established external characteristics by which they argued that the true church could be known. Four significant early writers were Ignatius, Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Augustine.

Ignatius (who died about AD 107) spoke of “one Church which the holy apostles established from one end of the earth to the other by the blood of Christ.”¹ He was one of the first to use the phrase “catholic church,” although he

used it for local churches. Irenaeus emphasized a universal, visible church based in Rome. “For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority.”² Although he had a strong interest in maintaining the purity of the church, his desire to stem the rising tide of heresy resulted in a strong emphasis on external unity.³

Cyprian (200–258) emphasized the unity of the catholic church under the authority of the bishop. Schism is totally and absolutely unjustified. Unity cannot be broken, for to step outside the church was to forfeit any possibility of salvation.⁴ Schism was a Satanic trick whereby he “might subvert the faith, might corrupt the truth, and might divide the unity.” Unity was, for Cyprian, the clear teaching of Scripture. The view of the church as the bride of Christ meant that the schismatics were adulteresses. The idea of bride moved easily into the picture of mother; one bride obviously means one mother. Hence his decisive conclusion: “He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.”⁵

If Cyprian laid the foundation for Romanism, Augustine erected the papal throne, and blazed the way for the colossal tyranny of the Roman Church hierarchy.⁶ Augustine believed the church to be a “mixed body” (*corpus permixtum*) of saints and sinners. The holiness of the church is not that of its members, but that of Christ.⁷ Based on the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13,⁸ he argued that the Devil had some of his own children in the church; but, he argued, God had no children outside the church.⁹ “I tell

you of a truth, my Beloved, even in these high seats there is both wheat and tares, and among the laity there is wheat, and tares. Let the good tolerate the bad; let the bad change themselves and imitate the good."¹⁰

Internal Purity

A separatist movement developed in opposition to the centralized authority in the institutional church. These separatist churches considered the holiness of their members to be the real mark of the true church. They grew as a reaction against the gradual secularization and increasing worldliness of the larger Roman Catholic Church. "These congregations may be defined, therefore, as free churches because they won adherents and members, who when they freely accepted the word, turned away from the life of sin and voluntarily were baptized."¹¹

The separatists developed into numerous groups, some more and some less Biblical, and some heretical. One of the better known and more significant groups was the Donatists. Donatists insisted that the true church was a fellowship of real saints; therefore, they endeavored to purge the church of the unholy element. The free church principle was perpetuated in later groups such as the Paulicians, Cathari, Waldensians, Lollards, Hussites, and Anabaptists. These churches all had one belief in common: they considered the true church to be composed only of real saints, in opposition to the Augustinian mixture of saint and sinner.

Reformation Views of the Church

A number of theological issues were raised during the Reformation, but a central issue was the church. "The Reformation was about the nature of the Church more than it was about justification or grace." Luther had no desire to form a new church; his intention was "to serve the Church that was there, and which was, he believed, *una sancta ecclesia* [one holy church]."¹² The Church contains both the saint (*sancti*) and the hypocrite (*hypocritae*).¹³ Using John 18:36 and Luke 17:20, 21 as proof passages, he maintained the Augustinian and Roman Catholic tradition of equating the church and the kingdom. Having saints and sinners in the same church was not a problem for Luther. Only God can know precisely who are the members of the church, although the true believers (the *fideles*) can recognize what is the true church by the presence of its marks.

In contrast to Luther's vagueness, John Calvin developed a specific theory on the relation of the invisible church to the external ecclesiastical institution.¹⁴ Calvin followed and restated Cyprian's doctrine that outside the church there is no salvation. The church was the divinely founded body within which God effects the salvation of the elect. Therefore, he taught, like Cyprian, that one cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother. "But as our present design is to treat of the *visible* Church, we may learn even from the title of *mother*, how useful and even necessary it is for us to know her; since there is no other way of entrance into life, unless we are conceived by her, born of her, nourished at her breast, and continually preserved under her care and government till we are divested of this mortal flesh, and 'become like the angels.' . . . It is also to be remarked, that out of her bosom there can

be no hope of remission of sins, or any salvation."¹⁵

Calvin distinguished between the invisible and the visible church. The community of Christian believers is the visible church; the fellowship of saints (the company of all the elect) is the invisible church (in keeping with Augustinian ecclesiology). The invisible church is known only to God. The invisible church is made up of only the elect, while the visible church is composed of both good and evil, the elect and the reprobate.¹⁶

The Anabaptists practiced a different ecclesiology than did the Reformers. The Reformers maintained the Catholic practice of infant baptism, while the Anabaptists argued that only true believers, ones able to express their faith, could be baptized.

Baptism, however, was really only an external demonstration of their distinctive ecclesiology, not a root of it. While the magisterial reformers had seen the Church as corrupted by Catholicism, the Anabaptists saw it as fallen. Reformers such as Luther and Calvin had a tremendous regard for the living tradition of the historic church. As they saw it, the Roman Catholic Church had been the true church, but it had fallen on evil days and into unworthy hands. Therefore, they sought to bring about a spiritual renewal, initially from within, but eventually from without. In contrast, the Anabaptists set out to discard the entire Catholic pattern and replace it with the pattern they saw in the New Testament. They did not seek to introduce something new, but to restore something old. Rome and the Reformers had based their views of the church largely on the Old Testament; the Anabaptists denied the identity of an Old Testament church with that of the New Testament and insisted on a church of believers only.¹⁷

There were strong parallels between the Anabaptists and the Donatists. Both groups believed in a pure and holy body of believers, isolated from the corrupting influences of the world, and prepared to maintain their purity and distinctiveness. Discipline was maintained by heavy use of the "ban," and they separated from other churches that failed to maintain proper discipline within their ranks.¹⁸

Application to Today

In the middle of the twentieth century, Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism splintered into two distinct movements. An important feature of New Evangelicalism was its emphasis upon and effort toward unity.¹⁹ To many New Evangelicals, the division among Fundamentalists, often over what they viewed as minor doctrines, was deplorable. These men called for a Biblically-based ecumenism. They rejected the Federal Council of Churches as too liberal but also rejected the American Council of Christian Churches as too narrow; the result was the founding of the National Association of Evangelicals.²⁰

Harold J. Ockenga, coiner of the term "new evangelicalism," rejected Fundamentalism's "shibboleth of having a pure church, both as a congregation and a denomination."²¹ He was critical of their exegesis of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and the parable of the tares, which he viewed as the basis of their ecclesiology. Graham agreed with him: "The visible

Church is the present-day universal Church, composed of local groups of Christians. In it are both the 'wheat and tares' (Matthew 13:25-40)—the truly redeemed, and many who are not."²²

"The sad practice called 'come-outism' developed."²³ This highlighted the primary theological difference between Fundamentalism and New Evangelicalism. The Evangelical "differentiates his position from [the Fundamentalists] in ecclesiology."²⁴ Fundamentalist ecclesiology required separation, and the New Evangelicals saw this as a failed strategy. Ockenga saw the reason for the failure: "Purity of the Church was emphasized above the peace of the Church."²⁵

The Fundamentalist emphasis on doctrinal purity was not and is still not taken lightly. Bible-centered Baptists believe that the custody of the faith is a sacred trust. The purity of this faith is more important to the cause of Christ than any institution or movement. "Since the church was founded to spread the true faith, when this faith is corrupted and compromised, the reason for any church's existence is destroyed."²⁶

Fundamental Baptists place a strong emphasis on the purity of the church and any denomination, association, or fellowship to which that church may belong. Purity is of far greater importance than unity, especially when that unity is based on false doctrine or unbiblical practice.

Dr. David Saxon is a member of the Bible faculty at Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Watertown, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Jamie, have four children.

Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 46.

¹⁴ McGrath suggests that with the collapse of the Colloquy of Regensburg all hope of reunification with Catholicism was lost. Therefore, the second-generation reformers, such as Calvin, needed a more extensive ecclesiology (*Christian Theology*, 412).

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, translated by John Allen (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, n.d.), 4.1.4.

¹⁶ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 413.

¹⁷ Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1937; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 244.

¹⁸ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 416.

¹⁹ Millard Erickson, *New Evangelical Theology* (Westwood: Revell, 1968), 41.

²⁰ Harold John Ockenga, "Editorial," *United Evangelical Action* 2 (January 1943), 1. See also "What the N.A.E. Is and What It Is Doing," *United Evangelical Action* 7 (15 April 1948): 5-6.

²¹ Harold John Ockenga, "From Fundamentalism, Through New Evangelicalism, to Evangelicalism," *Evangelical Roots*, Kenneth Kantzer, ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), 42.

²² Charles G. Ward, *Christian Worker's Handbook* (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1982), 58.

²³ Klaas Runia, "When Is Separation a Christian Duty?" *Christianity Today* (23 June 1967), 942.

²⁴ Ockenga, "Resurgent Evangelical Leadership," 13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁶ Chester Tulga, "The Christian and the Problem of Religious Unity," *Sword of the Lord* 25 (2 January 1959): 11.

¹ Ignatius, *To Philadelphia*, 4.

² Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 3.3.2.

³ Earl D. Radmacher, *What the Church Is All About* (Chicago: Moody, 1978), 41.

⁴ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology, An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 408.

⁵ Cyprian, *De unitate Ecclesiae*, 3-6.

⁶ H. E. Dana, *A Manual of Ecclesiology* (Kansas City: Central Seminary, 1945), 116.

⁷ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 409.

⁸ Augustine, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, 23.1. That he made the church identical to the Kingdom of Heaven and identical to the world in the same parable apparently did not trouble him. Nor did it trouble him that Jesus described the "field" as the "world."

⁹ Augustine, *De Baptismo, Contra Donatistas*, 4.10.16.

¹⁰ Augustine, *Sermons*, 23.4.

¹¹ Gunnar Westin, *The Free Church Through the Ages*, Virgil A. Olson, tr. (Nashville: Broadman, 1958), 1-2.

¹² Geddes MacGregor, *Corpus Christi: The Nature of the Church According to the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958), 5-8.

¹³ "Augsburg Confession" in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolic Books of the Evangelical*

Shepherd's Bethel

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



Reht. Free



Fully Furnished Homes



Laundry Facility



Fashion Center

P.O. Box 37
West Baden Springs, IN 47469
812-936-9648
www.shepherdsbethel.org



Rev. Mark Robinson
Executive Director



Rev. Stan Rosenthal
Field Director

To the Jew first,
and also to the Greek

Rom. 1:16



Established in 1946

PO Box 35, Holly Springs, NC 27540 NC 27540
919-577-6331 ☎ www.JewishAwareness.org

Prophecy Conferences / Mission Conferences
Sunday on Israel in Prophecy
Jewish Evangelism Training
Passover Seders / Presentations
Pre-millennial
Pre-tribulational
Local church focused
Missionaries in U.S.A. and Israel



FREE 1 year ✧ *Israel's Messenger* Magazine ✧
subscription call or email: office@jewishawareness.org

2011 Fellowships

September 12-13, 2011

Wyoming FBFI Regional Fellowship
Friendship Baptist Church
115 Peterson Pkwy.
Thane, WY 83127
307.886.9241

October 17-18, 2011

North Central Regional Fellowship
Faith Baptist Church
1001 Scenic Drive
Manhattan, KS 66503
785.539.3363

October 24-25, 2011

Chesapeake Bay Regional Fellowship
Upper Cross Road Baptist Church
2717 Greene Road
Baldwin, MD 21013
410.557.6963

October 24-28, 2011

Caribbean Regional Fellowship
Calvary Baptist Tabernacle
PO Box 330
Carolina, PR 00984
787.750.2227

October 24-25, 2011

New Mexico Regional FBFI Fellowship
Northwest Baptist Church
402 San Clemente NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
505.325.7802

November 14-15, 2011

Southern California Regional Fellowship
Ironwood Christian Camp
49191 Cherokee Road
Newberry Springs, CA 92365
760.272.1350 (Ron Smith)

November 17-18, 2011

Northern California Regional Fellowship
Calvary Baptist Church
PO Box 889
160 Seaside Court
Marina, CA 93933
831.384.7743

2012 Fellowships

June 12-14, 2012

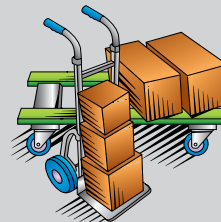
92nd Annual Fellowship
Tri-City Baptist Church
2211 W Germann Road
Chandler, AZ 85286
481.245.7900

June 11-15, 2012

Annual Chaplains' Training
Tri-City Baptist Church
2211 W Germann Road
Chandler, AZ 85286
481.245.7900

MOVING?

Please let the *FrontLine* office know your new address so we can update our records.



Just call (800) 376-6856

FBFI Membership and *FrontLine* Subscription Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

☐ FBFI Membership—\$39.95 (Includes subscription to *FrontLine*)

FrontLine Sub only: ☐ One Year (\$21.95) ☐ Two Years (\$39.95) ☐ Three Years (\$57.95)

Gift subscription for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

☐ One Year (\$21.95) ☐ Two Years (\$39.95) ☐ Three Years (\$57.95)

*International subscriptions add \$8 per year. Please make checks payable to FBFI.

Check all that apply:

- ☐ FBFI Membership
- ☐ New sub for me
- ☐ Gift sub
- ☐ Sub renewal

Payment:

- ☐ Check enclosed
- ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

() _____
Telephone Number

Mail to: FBFI

2801 Wade Hampton Blvd.
Suite 115-165
Taylors, SC 29687

SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

An Instructive Case Study in God's Providential Dealings with a Fervent but Critical Ministerial Student (Part 1)

For several issues we have been mining the events of the eighteenth-century Great Awakening for its enduring applications to contemporary ministry. The next two issues will focus on one young ministerial student whose life was changed forever by that revival—and especially the darkest phase of that change.

Jonathan Edwards's *The Life of David Brainerd* has been the single most influential biography in the history of Christian missions. William Carey, Henry Martyn, Samuel Marsden, Robert Morrison, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, David Livingstone, Andrew Murray, and Jim Elliot are only a few of the notable Christians who have borne eloquent testimony to the influence of Brainerd's life upon their own. *Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit*, John Wesley wrote in his journal, *and nothing can stand before them*.¹

All readers of Brainerd's life know that he was expelled from Yale. But to most the event is only a sidebar scanned hurriedly on their way to the four years he spent among the American Indians of New England's western frontiers. Yet for both ministerial students and instructors, this chapter of Brainerd's life is invaluable when some of its lesser known facts are thoughtfully processed.

While preparing a presentation of Brainerd's life and ministry for a missions conference, I was diverted

into a detailed investigation of the events leading up to his expulsion and his subsequent efforts to be reinstated. Gradually I realized that this phase of Brainerd's life is a healthy caution to a certain kind of ministerial student and to administrators and teachers in theological institutions who occasionally find themselves in the awkward position of having to correct such students.

Brainerd exemplified the kind of ministerial student who is *spiritually fervent, but of a critical spirit*. Ironically, it is his fervency for the things of the Lord that can make him especially liable to Satan's snare.

Perhaps Brainerd's experience is of particular interest to me because I passed through a similar stage early in my own ministerial training. Thankfully, my instructors didn't overreact, and God's grace safeguarded me so that I emerged relatively unscathed. But had I been demeaned, misjudged, treated harshly, or handled condescendingly by my superiors at school, my entire life and ministry would probably have been very different.

In Brainerd's case, God's providence so triumphed over wrongdoing (both his and Yale's) that his life became a unique inspiration to generations of Christians. But one wonders how many young, fervent-but-misguided missionaries and ministers have never recovered from being mishandled by their academic or pastoral authorities. My hope is that this article may help to preserve some zealous but critical-spirited ministerial student for a life of really useful service to the Lord.

Getting Acquainted Briefly

Several personal factors seem to have made David Brainerd especially susceptible to the excessive religious zeal eventuating in his expulsion from Yale. The first was his natural temperament.

Brainerd was born in Haddam, Connecticut (April 20, 1718) to what were evidently truly Christian parents, but he was orphaned by the age of fourteen.

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

Inside

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

Brainerd revealed that he was dispositionally inclined toward *melancholy* (we would say, depression) from his youth, and no doubt the loss of his parents was a factor. But more importantly for this study, his tendency toward depression would have also made him especially hungry for exhilarating, emotionally fulfilling religious experiences. Lesson one: know yourself! Know the flaws in your temperament that may leave you particularly vulnerable to some religious but excessive experience which seems to promise their solution.

A second personal factor may have inclined Brainerd toward the kind of zeal that becomes judgmental: his own conversion experience. Like Martin Luther, he struggled unsuccessfully to live righteously. For over two years he attempted to govern himself by Scriptural rules. But at the same time he proudly resisted some of God's ways, particularly the rigidity of His Law and the absoluteness of His sovereignty. Finally when he was twenty-one, Brainerd received assurance of his salvation. As he recorded in his journal,

As I was walking in a dark thick grove, "unspeakable glory" seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul. . . . It was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God; such as I never had before, nor anything that I had the least remembrance of it. So that I stood still and wondered and admired . . . and I was inwardly pleased and satisfied that He should be God over all, forever and ever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness and greatness, and other perfections of God that I was even swallowed up in Him. . . . Thus the Lord, I trust, brought me to a hearty desire to exalt Him, to set Him on the throne and to "seek first his Kingdom," i. e. principally and ultimately to aim at His honor and glory as the King and sovereign of the universe. . . . At this time, the way of salvation opened to me with such infinite wisdom, suitableness, and excellency, that I wondered I should ever think of any other way of salvation. . . . I wondered all the world did not see and comply with this way of salvation, entirely by the "righteousness of Christ."²

After such a long and agonizing ordeal before his dramatic breakthrough into genuine saving faith, it isn't surprising that Brainerd felt strongly about the nature of true conversion. Anything short of complete commitment to Christ would have appeared to him to be a spurious saving experience. This is germane to what would happen at Yale two years later.

A third personal factor that undoubtedly contributed to Brainerd's unusual seriousness about spiritual matters was his precarious health. Twice during his first two years at Yale he had to return home to recover from illness. On the first occasion he lay near death with fever and measles. On the second he began to spit blood, one of the earliest indications that he had already contracted the tuberculosis from which he would die seven years later.

Conditions at Yale

When Brainerd enrolled at Yale in September 1739, there were over forty resident students, many of whom were evidently unconverted. Although not infected with the aberrant theology for which Harvard had already become notorious, Yale was not a warm religious environment. *I went to college and entered there, but with some degree of reluctance, fearing lest I should not be able to lead a life of strict religion in the midst of so many temptations*, Brainerd recalled.³ Yet after recovering from his first illness he enjoyed precious times of *unspeakable sweetness and delight in God, and of a sweet sense and relish of divine things*.⁴

When he returned to Yale after his second illness, Brainerd discovered a marked improvement in its spiritual atmosphere. George Whitefield had recently preached there, and many of the students had been significantly changed. For several months Brainerd and some of his fellow students enjoyed warm spiritual fellowship. Toward the end of February 1741 *a great and general awakening spread itself over the college . . . in which I was much quickened, and more abundantly engaged in religion*.⁵

We would love to know the details of what took place immediately thereafter, but Edwards related that when Brainerd lay dying, he gave instructions (unknown to Edwards) that the two small diaries which he had kept for the following thirteen months be destroyed. Thankfully, we can piece together from other sources significant details of the events leading to his expulsion.

A Convergence of Factors

In March 1741, a thirty-eight-year-old Presbyterian pastor, Gilbert Tennent, preached numerous times in New Haven's First Church and at Yale. His ministry aroused the entire student body to a degree that exceeded even Whitefield's impact. Student Samuel Hopkins recalled,

On his coming to New Haven, the people appeared to be almost universally aroused, and flocked to hear him. He stayed about a week in New Haven, and preached seventeen sermons, most of them in the meeting-house, two or three in the college hall. His preaching appeared to be attended with a remarkable and mighty power. . . . Many cried out with distress and horror of mind, under a conviction of God's anger, and their constant exposedness to fall into endless destruction. Many professors of religion received conviction that they were not real Christians, and never were born again; which numbers publicly confessed, and put up notes, without mentioning their names . . . desiring prayers for them as unconverted, and under this conviction.⁶

Tennent was followed a month later by Ebenezer Pemberton, pastor of New York City's First Presbyterian Church. One of Pemberton's church members related that he had been *sent for to Yale College on account of the many distressed persons there*. After he would conclude a

sermon, even children followed him to his lodgings, weeping and anxiously concerned about the salvation of their souls.⁷

Pemberton's sermon at Yale challenged the students to lay aside their dreams of being great scholars for the sake of pursuing the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Throughout his schooling Brainerd had struggled over academic aspiration. *My ambition in my studies greatly wronged the activity and spiritual vigor of my spiritual life*, he confessed in his journal. *Towards the latter end of January, 1740–41, I grew more cold and dull in matters of religion by means of my old temptation, viz., ambition in my studies.*⁸ Pemberton's emphasis was the catalyst to surrender.

That Brainerd's spiritual fervency was fueled by the sermon is apparent; when it was published, Brainerd purchased six copies.⁹ But even more revealing is the fact that the day after Pemberton preached, Brainerd made one of the most significant decisions of his young life. It was his twenty-third birthday, and that day he committed himself to *be wholly the Lord's, to be forever devoted to his service.*¹⁰

Unfortunately, the awakening taking place at Yale and many other places in New England was often accompanied by strange and alarming phenomena, including holy laughter, screaming and loud shouting, doleful wailing, swooning, and prolonged bodily prostration in church aisles or out on the ground. To the further consternation of traditionalists, evangelists such as Whitefield and Tennent warned the crowds thronging their meetings that even many ministers were unconverted.¹¹ The consequences were predictable.

Church members, some well-intentioned and others merely censorious, began micro-inspecting their pastors' spirituality. Some concluded that their ministers were either unsaved or unworthy of their pulpits, and hastily abandoned their churches to form entirely new, separated congregations.¹² Not surprisingly, the attacked ministers began denouncing not only the revivalists but even the awakening itself.

One minister increasingly prejudiced against the revival was Thomas Clap, rector of Yale College. He had invited Whitefield to preach there and had evidently welcomed Tennent and Pemberton as well. But with growing dismay he observed the revival's disturbing excesses.

It was at this very time and due to the ministries of these very evangelists that David Brainerd was making his greatest spiritual progress. But the personal, dispositional factors we noted and his own torturous path to salvation, combined with the frigid spiritual conditions at Yale and the personal academic ambitions he had struggled against since becoming a student, seem to have converged to set him up for a tragic fall. And the growing tensions between those who supported and those who opposed the awakening in New England became the regrettable circumstance occasioning it.

Commencement Week, 1741

Clap and the trustees of Yale invited Jonathan Edwards to preach the college's commencement address

in September. Edwards was one of Yale's leading graduates. He had also experienced revival firsthand in his own church at Northampton, Massachusetts, as well as elsewhere. (He had just preached "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" at Enfield, Massachusetts—now Connecticut—two months earlier.) Yale's administrators no doubt trusted that he would put things back into right perspective. But Edwards's sermon could have been easily misconstrued by overly zealous students.

His text was 1 John 4:1. In his remarks he acknowledged the revival's extravagances. But he also argued that the *imprudences and errors that have attended this work, are the less to be wondered at, if it be considered that it is chiefly young persons that have been the subjects of it, who have less steadiness and experience, and are in the heat of youth, and much more ready to run to extremes.* The young people who were included in the improprieties should be warned but not opposed, Edwards counseled. If they could *see plainly that their ministers have an ill opinion of the work*, they would not feel inclined to approach them for advice and would be therefore *without guides.* So Edwards exhorted the administration and faculty and other ministers in attendance, *Let us all be hence warned, by no means to oppose, or do anything in the least to clog or hinder that work that has lately been carried on in the land, but on the contrary, to do our utmost to promote it.*¹³

Unfortunately, some of the visiting ministers that week convened late night "revival" meetings marked by the very extravagances that were discrediting the awakening. One of them, James Davenport, was a particularly nettlesome problem. He had the disturbing custom of praying publicly against whoever happened to be the local minister and denouncing him as "*an unconverted Man.*" *Thousands are now cursing of him in Hell*, Davenport would thunder, *for being the Instrument of their Damnation.*¹⁴

Meanwhile, the trustees were convening throughout the week to discuss how to keep the student body within appropriate bounds. As commencement approached, it was deemed necessary to deny two of the students their degrees *for their disorderly and restless endeavours.*¹⁵ The trustees drafted a new rule: *If any Student of this College shall directly or indirectly say, that the Rector, either of the Trustees or Tutors are Hypocrites, carnall or unconverted Men, he shall for the first offence make a publick confession in the Hall, and for the Second Offence be expelled.*¹⁶ Satan's trap was now perfectly laid for any student, who like Brainerd, was *spiritually fervent, but of a critical spirit.*

Snap!

Brainerd was called before Clap to answer for a comment he had made about one of the tutors, Chauncey Whittelsey. Leaning on a chair in a classroom, David had said to a fellow student that Whittelsey *had no more grace than this chair.* Clap seems to have also questioned Brainerd about attending a separatist meeting which the rector had refused him permission to attend. Clap's final decision was to require Brainerd to do as the new

rule mandated and to make a public confession. But Brainerd refused, arguing that since his statement had been made in private, he should not be required to confess it publicly.

Several things were at stake for Brainerd. One would have been little more than pride. Because he had matriculated at what was in those days a late age of twenty-one (students then entered college as early as thirteen), he was considerably older than many of the other students. On the other hand, Whittelsey, the tutor in ancient languages whom he had slandered, was only six months his senior. These age factors would have made it especially humiliating to repent of his words publicly.

Another much more serious matter, however, would have been the kind of ministry he had been having among his fellow students. Samuel Hopkins testified that Brainerd was one of three older students who showed

extraordinary zeal and concern for the members of college; and, without paying regard to the distinctions of higher and lower classes, they visited every room in college, and discoursed freely and with the greatest plainness with each one; especially such whom they considered to be in an unconverted state, and who acknowledged themselves to be so, setting before them their danger, and exhorting them to repent, &c. The consciences of all seemed to be so far awakened as to lead them to hang their heads, and to pay at least a silent regard to their reprovers.¹⁷

One can easily imagine how conflicted Brainerd must have felt. He had been a “reprover” of students whose salvation was not apparent. Some of them, including Hopkins, had finally come to saving faith. What damage might be done to some who were as yet unconverted but nevertheless under conviction, precisely because of his bold confrontations, if he were required to confess before them that he had done wrong when similarly assessing Chauncey Whittelsey?

But Clap, too, had much at stake. His position. The new rule. The order and conduct of the student body. Beyond these considerations, James Davenport had earlier viciously attacked Clap’s friend, Joseph Noys, pastor of New Haven’s First Church (Yale’s unofficial college church). Davenport had called Noys a *Devil incarnate*, *unconverted*, and a *Wolf in Sheep’s clothing*. The result was that First Church was convulsed by an attempt of some in the congregation to withdraw and form another assembly.¹⁸ And now, when the entire Christian community was spiritually and emotionally stressed, Clap was forced to deal with this censorious (and influential) student, David Brainerd.

Clap held his ground. Jared Ingersoll, a New Haven attorney, told the inevitable result. *Brainerd . . . is expelled*

for going to the Seperate meeting att N. Haven contrary to the Rectors Command & also for uttering certain speeches concerning the Rector and one of ye tutors, yt. were judged unbecoming for all which he refused to make any acknowledgement of blame.¹⁹ David Brainerd was trapped, as much a victim of the dark side of the Great Awakening as of his own well-intentioned but rash judgments.

¹ For this and similar quotations from the men named, see Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, ed. Norman Pettit, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 7:3–4 [hereafter, WJE, 7].

² WJE, 7:137–40.

³ Ibid., 142–43.

⁴ Ibid., 145, 146.

⁵ Ibid., 152–53.

⁶ Edwards A. Park, *Memoir of the Life and Character of Samuel Hopkins, D.D.*, 2nd edition (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1854), 16.

⁷ Quoted by David Wynbeek, *David Brainerd: Beloved Yankee* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), 23.

⁸ WJE, 7:145, 151–52.

⁹ John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 17.

¹⁰ WJE, 7:163. The journal entry is actually recorded on his twenty-fourth birthday, written as he reviewed the decision he had made on that very date a full year earlier, the day after Pemberton’s sermon.

¹¹ Tennent’s most famous sermon was “The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry” (1739), republished by Archibald Alexander in *Sermons and Essays by the Tennents and Their Contemporaries* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855) and in *Sermons of the Log College* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993).

¹² Vance Christie states, “Approximately 100 new congregations were formed as a result of the revival, most of those by separatists” (*David Brainerd: A Flame for God* [Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2009], 33).

¹³ *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, ed. C. C. Goen, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 4:269, 270.


¹⁴ Quoted by Grigg, p. 19.

¹⁵ Quoted by Stephen Nissenbaum from a letter by Samuel Johnson, dated 3 October 1741 in *The Great Awakening at Yale College* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 57.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Quoted by Park, p. 16.

¹⁸ Grigg, 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22. 

Bring . . . the Books

James Stalker, *The Example of Jesus Christ*

Perhaps no greater testimony to the life and ministry of James Stalker could be stated than to say that when those who know of him think of him they think instinctively of Christ. Born in Crieff, Scotland, Stalker (1848–1927) ministered for fifty years, heralding the message of the life and ministry of Christ to congregations in Kirkcaldy and Glasgow and to university students of the Free Church of Scotland.

His first book, published shortly after his thirtieth birthday, presented a portrait of the life of Christ. The nearly twenty subsequent titles from his pen included multiple Christological classics: *Imago Christi, the Example of Jesus Christ* (1889), *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ* (1894), *The Christology of Jesus* (1899), and *The Ethic of Jesus* (1909). The very atmosphere of his many other titles evidences that he was much with Jesus.

Of all of his works on the Person of Christ, perhaps the one that most surprised Stalker was *Imago Christi, the Example of Jesus Christ*. As he wrote his first volume (*The Life of Jesus Christ*), aspects of the Lord's life arrested his attention and called for further investigation over nearly ten more years. He gave close attention not merely to Jesus' words (this would lead to yet another book!), but to His daily and private life—a life, Stalker found, that commended itself as exemplary in every way. He believed that a prolonged look at the very lifestyle of Christ as portrayed in the Scriptures would be a Scriptural tonic for those whom God had “awakened to the value and solemnity of time, and [who] feel that the one thing needful is to fill [their] few and quickly passing years with a life large and useful and ever more abundant.”

My first reading of the book began rather perfunctorily in order to complete an assignment nearly twenty years ago. I was in my mid-twenties and fairly certain I knew in advance most of what the author would say. The introductory chapter critically analyzing the fifteenth-century devotional classic, *The Imitation of Christ*, did not readily interest me, and I didn't understand yet the role that it played in the development of Stalker's study. As I progressed through the subsequent chapters, the purpose and value of Stalker's study slowly dawned on me. I quickly grew disappointed that the copy I read belonged to the library and not to me. I wanted to write in the margins, underline statements, and flourish its pages with my yellow highlighter. I had been a believer for nearly twenty years, but I had never seen Christ as Stalker compelled me to see Him as I began to realize how much I had missed in my reading of the Gospels. I soon obtained my own copy of the book, and I have read it and referenced it repeatedly. Nearly every time I use it I find it hard to put down.

The book surveys Christ in various arenas of life, dedicating sixteen chapters to Christ in the home,

in the state, in the church, as a friend, in society, as a man of prayer, as a student of Scripture, a worker, sufferer, a preacher, a teacher, a controversialist, and so on. The chapter topics arise inductively and are informed by culling the Gospels for every contributing thread and weaving them so effectively together that the colorful hues of Jesus' family life, His affection for His own people, and His personal spiritual life vividly stand out. Stalker helps open believers' eyes to the reality of Jesus' life—not simply that He lived but that He lived like us, under obligations in multiple relationships to those over Him, around Him, and under Him. Stalker's pastoral heart enables one to see Christ's daily life through fresh eyes and skillfully applies the example of Jesus' life to the believer.

The book is full of pithy, memorable nuggets:

Jesus was never so completely a king as at the moment when His claims to kingship were turned into ridicule.

He is greatest, according to the mind of Christ, who renders the greatest services to others.

It contains touching, probing paragraphs:

Christ was the friend of Peter and John and James, of Martha and Mary and Lazarus, in Palestine long ago. But He is still the friend of men; and, if we wish it, He will be ours. There are those who walk with Him and talk with Him. They meet Him in the morning when they awake; He is with them in the street and at their work; they tell Him their secrets and appeal to Him in every time of need; they know Him better than any other friend.

It contains entire chapters you will want to read again and again.

Stalker reverently brings Jesus to life, reintroduces Him to us, and gives us a glimpse of the potential that is ours to know Jesus as well as He wants to be known. In this way, Stalker shows himself a friend to those who long to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Older editions of many of Stalker's titles can be readily found through book searches. *The Example of Jesus Christ* also has been regularly reprinted, made available through Logos software, and is today available free on Google Books (books.google.com) and other sites dedicated to preserving the Scottish evangelical heritage. ☞

Dr. Robert Vincent is an assistant pastor at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

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

Straight Cuts

Galatians 1:3–9: Why So Much Emphasis on the Gospel?

Have you heard it, too? Have you noticed that there seems to be much use of the word “gospel” in people’s vocabulary these days? That’s a good thing, isn’t it? Or could it be used so tritely at times that the heartfelt meaning escapes the usage, just as in phrases such as “How are you?” “Happy Easter!” and “How was your Christmas?” The gospel hasn’t changed, but why is there a change in people’s emphasis on the word lately?

The word “gospel” in its noun and verb form deals with “good news” or the proclamation of good news. God declares to us His gospel in Romans 1:1–17. The word “gospel” in a particular context most frequently occurs eight times in 1 Corinthians 9:8–18, dealing with the relation of Christian liberty to the gospel. We find the second most frequent usage of the word “gospel” in a particular context in Galatians 1:6–9 (five times). It is interesting to note that the contexts of 1 Corinthians 9 and the book of Galatians both deal with liberty. Galatians 1 will help us understand why there is so much emphasis on the gospel.

Galatians 1:1–10 affirms in two statements that God’s gospel is right: (1) Paul asserts the gospel in a somber greeting (1:1–5), and (2) God curses perversions of the gospel in a strong pronouncement (1:6–10).

God asserts the origin of the gospel in 1:1, 2 and the nature or content of the gospel in 1:3–5. God sustains the churches through the message of the gospel in 1:3, 4. What is the message of the gospel? The results of the gospel are grace and peace (1:3a). The source of the gospel is from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (1:3b). The ground or heart of the gospel is Jesus, who gave Himself for our sins by His life, death, and resurrection (1:4a). The purpose or objective of the gospel is that He might deliver us from this present evil age (1:4b). And the cause of the gospel is according to the will of our God and Father (1:4c). Not only are the churches sustained by this message, but God is glorified forever because of the motive of the gospel: God’s glory (1:5).

We find here (and in Rom. 1:1–17) the entire New Testament truth that the gospel consists in objective elements about the Person of Jesus, to whom Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John introduce us in their Gospels. What truth is that? Who Jesus is and what Jesus does. Who is Jesus? He is perfect God and perfect man. What did He do? He lived the righteous life that we could not; He died a substitutionary death; He rose again, ascended, intercedes, and is returning to reign visibly.

Jesus is the Messianic Prophet, Priest, and King. His name “Christ” points to a life lived perfectly representing God to man as a perfect Prophet. His name “Jesus” points to a sacrificial death perfectly representing man to God as a perfect

Priest. His name “Lord” points to His entire life of victory over all sin and sin’s effects, evidenced in His resurrection and His returning to reign visibly as a perfect King.

This gospel not only contains objective elements about Jesus, but it also contains subjective elements. This answers the question, “So what?” All that this Jesus is can be ours if received through faith alone by God’s grace. This faith is more than pure knowledge of the facts and believing that the facts are true (James 2:19). It also includes such a commitment to these facts that the facts change a person’s life, just as a floating life preserver changes a drowning man’s life when the man clings to it in trust. A man cannot be saved if He rejects the priestly work of Jesus, the prophetic word of Jesus, or the kingly reign of Jesus.

God tells us in Galatians 1:6–9 that seeking a false gospel with men and not God’s truth is a matter unworthy of true servants. Deserting to falsehood is a source of sad amazement in 1:6, 7. God mentions twice in Galatians 1:8, 9 that a substitute gospel other than what God prescribes brings damnation. There is no other passage in Scripture that is so strong concerning the gospel. In God’s eyes, deserting to a false gospel is worthy of being condemned to destruction. The man-centered approaches of Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and easy-believism are not good news. They leave a person struggling to please God through good works or they abandon a person to the same lifestyle as before his “profession.” These substitutes are horrible news and serious aberrations of eternal consequence! Obviously, the right gospel deserves careful emphasis!

Why so much emphasis then? It is of utmost importance! Who is the gospel concerning? It is all about Jesus. We could say that the gospel is Jesus. It is noteworthy that the fundamentals of the faith as declared in the late 1800s to the early 1900s all revolve around Jesus. If a person denies miracles, he denies Jesus. If a person does not believe in the Word of God, how can he believe what it says about Jesus?

Jesus is the reason for such emphasis on the gospel, for He is the gospel. May our love for Jesus abound more and more so that our lives are further committed to proclaiming to all the world this good news: the Lord Jesus Christ! ☞

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

“I must have Mansoul at any cost,” said the giant Diabolus. “I will settle for nothing less.” He was sitting on his haunches, pushing up little mounds of brimstone as he spoke. His warlords sat around him in a circle in one of the private conference caverns of the pit, eyeing the mounds of brimstone (Ethel Barrett, *The War for Mansoul*, Harrisonburg, PA: Christian Light Publications Inc., 1998).

This passage from Ethel Barrett’s retelling of John Bunyan’s famous allegory paints a vivid picture for us of how the world postures itself for war against humanity.

The world is at war with God, His plan, and His people. Its primary goals in opposing God are twofold: (1) hindering unbelievers from ever coming to Christ for salvation, and (2) somehow rendering Christians ineffective by distracting or discrediting them. Kenneth Meyers wrote,

It might seem an extreme assertion at first, but I believe that the challenge of living with popular culture may well be as serious for modern Christians as persecution and plagues were for the saints of earlier centuries. . . . Enemies that come loudly and visibly are usually much easier to fight than those that are undetectable The erosion of character, the spoiling of innocent pleasures, and the cheapening of life itself that often accompany modern popular culture can occur so subtly that we believe nothing has happened (Kenneth A. Meyers, *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1989, xii-xiii).

Samuel Rutherford conveyed a similar thought in a letter written to a young man named William Livingstone. Rutherford wrote, “I recommend to you prayer and watching over the sins of your youth; for I know that missive letters go between the devil and young blood. Satan hath a friend at court in the heart of youth; and there pride, luxury, lust, revenge, forgetfulness of God, are hired as his agents” (*Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, PA: Banner of Truth, reprinted 1996, p.66).

This warfare is also depicted in Bunyan’s classic *The Pilgrim’s Progress* when Christian and Faithful enter the town called Vanity Fair.

It beareth the name Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is lighter than vanity; and also, because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither, is vanity . . . as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures; and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants . . . and what not (John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour and Company, 1990, p. 98).

When Christian and Faithful entered the town, “the people of the Fair made a great gazing upon them. Some said they were fools; some they were bedlams; and some they were outlandish men” (ibid., p. 100). Christian and Faithful were incarcerated by the townspeople and brought to trial. The jury’s animosity toward Faithful was apparent when “everyone gave in his private verdict against him amongst themselves. . . . Mr. Blindman the foreman said, ‘I see clearly that this man is an heretick.’ Then said Mr. No-Good, ‘Away with such a fellow from the earth.’ ‘Ay,’ said Mr. Malice, ‘for I hate the very looks of him’” (ibid., p. 108). Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

Poison Ivy or Buttercup?

It’s important that Christians view the world accurately. For many believers, the world is like a poison ivy plant. They think that if they keep a safe distance, they will be protected from its effects. They may even wander closer to the plant from time to time, ever careful not to touch it, maybe even admiring the early redness of the leaves and the cluster of small white berries, without concern for the plant’s toxin. This approach would be fine if the world was like a poison ivy plant, but it is not.

The USS *Buttercup* is a training simulator used by the US Navy and Coast Guard to train sailors and guardsman for shipboard damage control. After a day of classroom training the students are brought to the *Buttercup* for “hands-on” experience. The *Buttercup* is actually a large steel box placed in a large pool of water. The inside of this vessel replicates a ship’s interior with hatches (doors), portholes (round windows), and pipes crisscrossing through the compartment. The training begins with methods of patching broken water pipes, plugging holes in the side of a ship, shoring up bulkheads (walls) that are buckling under pressure, and dewatering the compartment. These methods are taught inside the *Buttercup* in a dry, well-lighted area.

After this training, the students are brought back up topside to begin the exercise. The instructor yells, “Battle stations, battle stations!” as the students run back down into the compartment to “save the ship.” The difference this time is that *Buttercup* is actually sinking. As the sailors enter the compartment, they are met with copious amounts of water spraying from many different sources. The *Buttercup* actually begins listing to one side, and they are in complete darkness. As the water rises to the waist, then to the chest, then to the

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

Charles Spurgeon

neck, the sailors struggle to remember their lessons and put them to practice to keep the water out of the ship. The forcefulness of the water, attempting to enter the vessel through every available breach in the hull's integrity, is an accurate illustration of the world's efforts to infiltrate Christians' hearts. When we view the world as a poison ivy plant, passive and safe-at-a-distance, instead of viewing it as pressurized water trying to force itself into every gap of our character, we make ourselves prone to compromise, which has been an evident consequence in the contemporary church.

Dr. Jim Berg writes,

A most puzzling phenomenon is growing in Christian circles today. Following the world's decline, many believers have the idea that restraint, self-denial, and discipline are passé. In the name of "Christian liberty," they indulge in all sorts of flesh-feeding activities, scoffing at the idea that any behavior could be considered "worldly," while at the same time claiming a new freedom in Christ. The final result is always tragic: destruction (Jim Berg, *Changed into His Image*, Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1999, p. 102).

Kent Hughes observes,


The contemporary evangelical church is not lacking for moral and spiritual instruction. It is lacking in its ability to remain uncontaminated by the unchristian thinking and morality of contemporary culture. It is doubtless true that there has been too much cultural criticism and not enough gospel content in theological liberalism. But in contemporary evangelicalism there has been a deficiency of

cultural awareness and a resulting lack of discernment regarding how the world has overwhelmed the thinking and behavior of Christians (R. Kent Hughes, *Set Apart*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003, p. 10).

A Diabolical Conversation

It would be wise for us to remember the conversation between Diabolus and his minions as they plotted against the city of Mansoul. One of the underlings of the Wicked One suggested not that they take the city by force, but that they would make the city want to let them in.

"Want to let us in!" they all cried at once. "Who would want to let us in?" "We look pretty seamy, M'Lord," Apollyon finished lamely. "I know," said Diabolus. "I'd thought of that. A scrubby lot, all of us, a scrubby lot indeed. One look at us and the whole town would be on high alert. And that is just my strategy. They will not see us. We will be invisible. And they will not see our intentions either." "Our intentions will be invisible too!" said Legion. "We'll cloak them with lies and deceit!" said Apollyon. "And flattery!" said Beelzebub. "Yessss," said Diabolus. "We'll cajole them, delude them, pretending things that will never be and promising things they shall never get. Lies, lies, lies—the only way to get Mansoul to let us in. And so our intentions will be invisible and we will be invisible—that is, all except one of us. And I suggest—" he looked around the circle of faces, "I suggest that I be that one" (Barrett, p. 4–5).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). 

Pastor Mike Jones is the pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Oakdale, Connecticut. You may contact Pastor Jones at cbcmikejones@att.net.

International Baptist Missions

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

We emphasize
Evangelism
Church Planting
Baptist Beliefs
Family



Mike and Lisa Redick, Southeast Asia



Josiah Wambua, Kenya

IBM is currently supporting
28 missionaries
in **9 countries**
with an extended ministry of
200 churches in
11 countries.

www.tricityministries.org ■ 2211 W Germann Rd Chandler, AZ 85286 ■ 480.967.8783 ■ ibm@tricityministries.org

THE PRIMACY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Visible, Invisible. Local, Universal. These adjectives are used frequently in an attempt to define the church or the various kinds of churches that exist. A few years ago, a leading evangelical Baptist suggested that a profession of Christ and infant baptism should be considered sufficient for membership in a Baptist church. One line of defense went: "Should the front door of the local church be roughly the same size as the door to the universal body of Christ?" The premise underlying this question, and any answer given to it, centers on the relationship between the local church and the universal church. Is there a difference between these "churches"? Is one more important than the other? Does membership in one take precedence over membership in the other? The purpose of this article is to identify how these terms are used by theologians and, more importantly, to argue for the primacy of the local church.

Historical Usage

History does not offer much help in an understanding of *ecclesia* ("church"). The early church fathers viewed the church to be the local congregations. Even when they spoke of the "catholic" (universal) church, they were speaking more of a universality of theology, not of ontology. That changed when Augustine tied the church to the kingdom, resulting in the Roman Catholic view of the church as universal and visible, the sum of all "true" churches in association with Rome.¹ Luther held to both an invisible and visible church, not as two churches, but as two aspects of the same Church.² Calvin used the term "church" in two distinct ways. He spoke of the invisible church, consisting of all the elect (in agreement with Augustine and Luther) and of the universal visible church, which is the "whole multitude

of men spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ."³ Anglicanism rejected an invisible church. Article XIX of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* states, "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments by duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." There is no reference to the invisible Church. "The opening words, when taken in conjunction with the title, imply that there is only one Church, the visible. Moreover, Article XXVI (7) shows that 'faithful' must mean professed believers, not those whose faith is known to God alone."⁴

Early New Evangelicalism was just as diverse. Harold Ockenga identified two kinds of churches—the universal church and the local church. He identified the universal church as "the ecumenical church, the catholic church, the church which constitutes His body. . . . It is not identified and coterminous with any organization as such which exists."⁵ The local church referred both to individual churches as well as to the denominations to which they belonged.

J. I. Packer viewed the universal church to be the one true church, with local congregations being extensions of the true church. Any group of believers "are the church in the place where they meet. Each particular gathering, however small, is the local manifestation of the church universal, embodying and displaying the spiritual realities of the church's supernatural life."⁶ The invisible church is the church on earth as God sees it over against the visible church, which is the church on earth as man sees it. The two are closely related, for when the church meets it becomes visible. However, the visible church is a mixed body.

Carl F. H. Henry accepted Marcus Loane's definitions of the invisible church as "the blessed company of all faithful people" and the visible church as "the society of all professing Christians, organizing for worship, orthodox in doctrine, and open to observation by all." A person could be a member of a local church while not a member of the Church. He based this understanding on the parable of the wheat and the tares: "The Church in its visible character in this world must always be a mixture of the true and the false."⁷

This discussion of the church was an important distinction between the Evangelicals and the Fundamentalists. Evangelicalism's emphasis on the universal church was significantly greater than that of the Fundamentalists, who placed their emphasis on the local church.

Generally following the free-church model, Fundamentalists and especially Fundamental Baptists concentrated on the local church. Baptists generally have viewed the local and visible church as identical and the invisible and universal church to also be the same. Fundamental Baptists have been critical of Evangelicalism's emphasis on the universal church: "[Christians] can claim membership in the true church, while refusing to face up to their responsibility to be a part of a local New Testament church. Belonging to the true church, they say, justifies holding membership in false local churches."⁸ Some Fundamental Baptists have altogether denied the existence of any universal church.

Biblical Usage

Ecclesia is found 114 or 115 times in the New Testament.⁹ Except for Matthew 16:18 and 18:17, it does not appear in the Gospels. It occurs twenty-three times in Acts, three of which refer to its original pre-Christian meaning of a town meeting (Acts 19:32, 39, 41) and one occurrence which refers to the nation of Israel as an assembly or congregation in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). Everywhere else it refers to the Christian church. Paul used the term forty-six times (twenty-two of which are in 1 Corinthians). While Jesus introduced His disciples to the coming church and the Book of Acts recorded activities of the early church, Paul was the revealer of the mystery and most of the doctrine of the church. There are numerous other references to the church using terms such as "flock," "building," "body," "bride" and other metaphors.

Ecclesia is used most frequently for a local church or group of churches, individual Christian congregations which can be distinguished from others based on their location. This is sometimes called the *concrete* or *particular* use. Paul's first letters, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, were addressed to "the church of the Thessalonians." First and Second Corinthians were written to "the church of God which is at Corinth." This concept of a local congregation is more fully demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 where Paul identifies the church as the "body of Christ." This body contains individuals with specified spiritual gifts, which function within the congregation (14:4, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33). In addition to these references to individual churches, there are twenty times that *ecclesia* occurs in the plural, routinely referring to numerous churches within an area.

There are times, however, when *ecclesia* is viewed as something more than a local congregation. Sometimes the word is used in a generic sense, where the singular refers to a collection of all or many individuals. This is not the same as a universal church (i.e., all believers). Paul spoke of persecuting "the church" (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6). In reality, he persecuted several local churches and was saved on his way to persecute another one. In Ephesians 5:23, Paul declared, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." This is not a reference to the universal church, for the parallel is "the husband" and "the wife." There is no universal husband or wife, so the concept is really, "For each husband is the head of each wife, even as Christ is the head of each church."

There is also a universal concept in some passages such as Matthew 16:18; John 10:16 (using the term "fold"); Ephesians 1:22, 23; and Colossians 1:18, 19. While some would argue that this may be generic, with Christ building each church, functioning as the shepherd of each flock or being the head of each church, it seems to go beyond this. The concept of all believers as members of God's family, brothers and sisters in Christ and sons and daughters together of God, communicates the idea of an entity which consists of all believers. This entity is a universal body or family that serves as a precursor to the future relationship of all believers in Christ. Most argue that this is a present reality. Others, based on Hebrews 12:22, 23 and Ephesians 5:27 argue that the universal church is *prospective*, *triumphant*, or *glorious*; in other words, it will not exist until all believers are in Heaven.

Primacy of the Local Church

While there are passages that refer to something more than the local church, the clear majority of references to "church" refer to the local congregation. This implies priority.

The practice of NT believers, as seen in Acts, demonstrates the importance of the local church. In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost some three thousand new converts were "baptized" and "added unto them" (Acts 2:41), while a few verses later, people were being added to the church daily. The next few chapters describe the activities taking place in the local church in Jerusalem. In Acts 11:26 Saul and Barnabas served in the local church in Antioch for a year before being sent out from that same church (Acts 13:1, 2). In Acts 18:27, the local church in Ephesus sent a letter to the local church in Corinth encouraging that church to receive Apollos. The pastors of the church at Ephesus were encouraged by Paul to carefully shepherd the local flock, the church, "over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28). The local church is the only place of service seen in the NT. Except for the Ethiopian eunuch, there is no record of a believer not becoming a part of a local church (and church history implies that this eunuch started a church when he got home).

The local church was the place to be on Sunday in the early church (1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7). First Timothy 3:14, 15 teaches that the local church is "the pillar and ground

of the truth." John described Jesus as walking among the candlesticks (Rev. 2:1), which had already been identified as seven local churches (Rev. 1:20). In chapters 2 and 3, individual local churches were given specific messages from God. The implication from the fact that the last book of the Bible addressed seven specific local churches, rather than a single universal church, cannot be ignored.

In addition to the Biblical data, there are theological and practical reasons for the primacy of the local church. The universal church cannot meet, cannot baptize, cannot celebrate the Lord's Supper, has no officers (unless one considers Jesus the pastor, but He does not function as a human pastor does), does not have a teaching ministry, and does not, as an organized body, evangelize. The universal church also has no means for the discipline of wayward members. Discipline and ecclesiastical separation are decisions largely limited to local church relationships.

Practically, the multitude of "one another" passages in the NT are specifically targeted toward the membership within local churches. Believers can encourage one another in the universal church; believers in America can weep with or rejoice with believers in China in their difficulties and joys, but we generally do not know each other nor do we speak with one another. Though it is understood that Christlike conduct should be manifested to all, the NT addresses the performance of interpersonal responsibilities primarily within a local church context.

The church, in this dispensation, is the very center of God's work in and to the world. Every *obedient* believer will be a part of a local church, for it is the local church that is God's institution in this age.

Brian Trainer serves as chairman of the Department of Bible and Church Ministries at Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Watertown, Wisconsin.

¹ Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1937; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 236.

² Martin Luther, "On the Papacy in Rome," 70.

³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Allen, tr. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, n.d.), 4.1.7.

⁴ Leonard Hodgson, "The Doctrine of the Church as Held and Taught in the Church of England," in *The Nature of the Church*, R. Newton Flew, ed. (New York: Harper, 1952), 133.

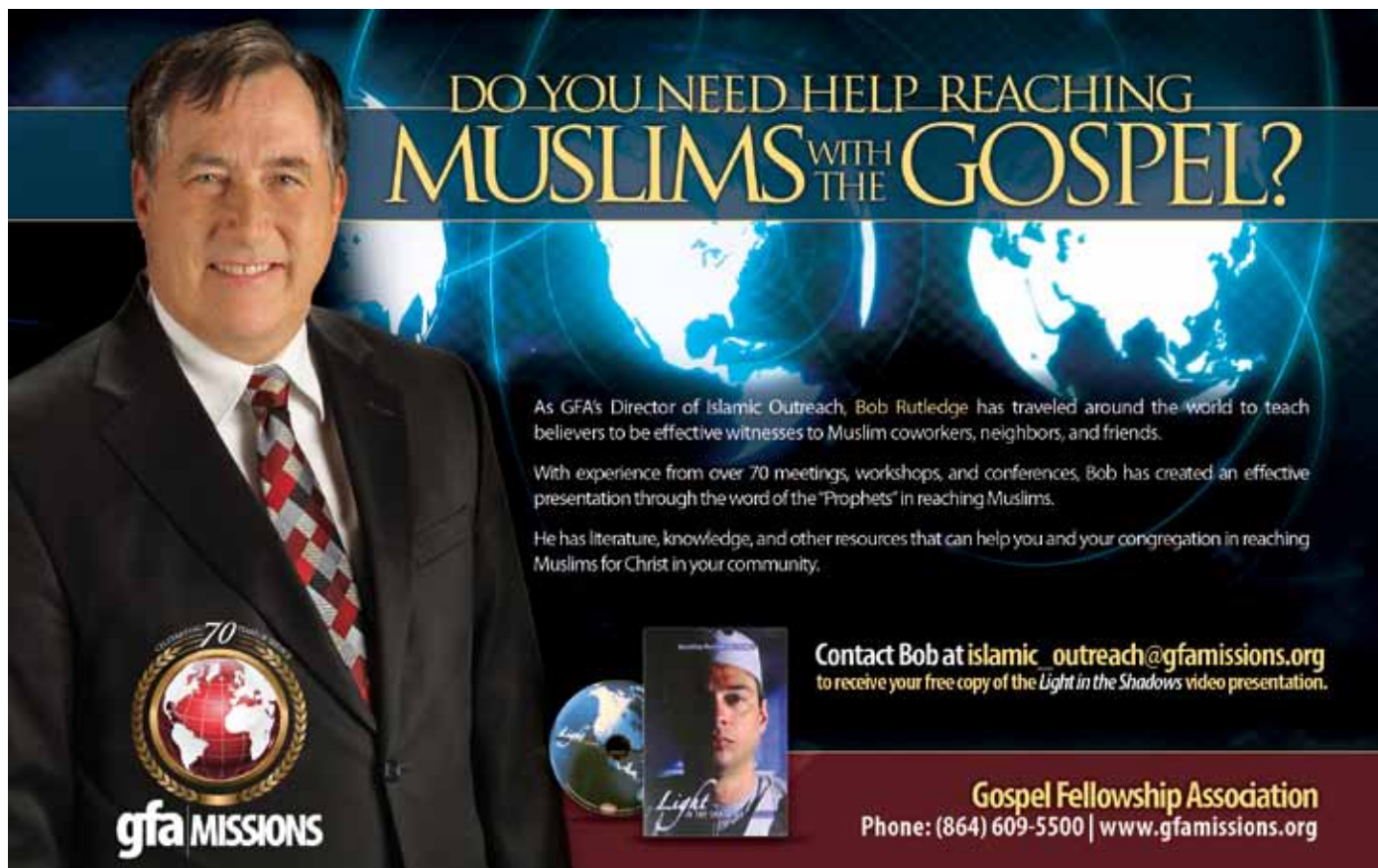
⁵ Harold J. Ockenga, *The Church in God* (Westwood: Revell, 1956), 328–30.

⁶ James I. Packer, "The Nature of the Church," in *Basic Christian Doctrines: Contemporary Evangelical Thought*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 246.

⁷ Marcus L. Loane, "Christ and His Church," in *Fundamentals of the Faith*, Carl F. H. Henry, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), 177–85.

⁸ Chester Tulga, "Fundamentalism: Past and Future," *Sword of the Lord* 23 (4 October 1957): 12.

⁹ *Ecclesia* is omitted in Acts 2:47 in most critical texts.



DO YOU NEED HELP REACHING MUSLIMS WITH THE GOSPEL?

As GFA's Director of Islamic Outreach, Bob Rutledge has traveled around the world to teach believers to be effective witnesses to Muslim coworkers, neighbors, and friends.

With experience from over 70 meetings, workshops, and conferences, Bob has created an effective presentation through the word of the "Prophets" in reaching Muslims.

He has literature, knowledge, and other resources that can help you and your congregation in reaching Muslims for Christ in your community.

Contact Bob at islamic_outreach@gfamissions.org to receive your free copy of the *Light in the Shadows* video presentation.

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

The church is God's institution for this age." We hear this often, and the vast majority of those reading this article would give a hearty amen to the statement. The church, however, is not an "institution" in the modern sense of the word. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines "institution" as a large organization founded for a particular purpose, such as a college, bank, etc.; an organization providing residential care for people with special needs; an official organization with an important role in a country; or an established law or custom." While some pastors might think that the second definition fits their ministry to a T, it is clear that the church is not an "institution" in this sense of the word. The purpose of this article is to examine the New Testament metaphors used for the church and demonstrate that the church is a living organism, linked organically to Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

There are church models that focus on business, with the desire of making the church comfortable for the business world. The pastor is the "CEO," the deacons or elders are the "Board of Directors," and the people are "clients." The building is designed *not* to look like a church. In more traditional churches, we are reminded frequently that the government, our bank, and the businesses who serve our needs view us as an "institution," and we need to make sure that our churches use good "business practices."

We acknowledge that some of the metaphors used for the church tend toward this idea of "institution." Paul speaks of the church as a field in 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 and then switches to the referring to the church as "temple." First Peter 2:5 uses the temple or building idea, but emphasizes that the members are living stones built upon Christ, who is the cornerstone. First Timothy 3:15 continues the building concept, seeing the church as the "pillar and ground of the truth." Other metaphors for the church are more personal. In 1 Timothy 5:1, 2 Paul views the church as family, with the older to be treated as fathers and mothers, the younger as brothers and sisters.

One of the more spiritual metaphors is found in 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:31, 32. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul used the image of an engagement of the church to Christ: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Paul as a father expressed his concern for the spiritual purity of his daughter, the church at Corinth. When the Corinthians responded to his gospel preaching, he gave them to be the future bride of the heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. As a result, he also "committed himself to guarding her virginity—her undivided loyalty to Christ—until the consummation of her marriage at Christ's appearance from heaven."¹ This imagery is carried forward by Paul in Colossians 1:22 and especially Ephesians 5:27 and 32 where the church moves from the betrothed to the bride. This takes place in the future,

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE CHURCH



Larry R. Oats

as spoken of by John in Revelation 19:7–10. Paul describes the church as "glorious," a word which speaks

of the eschatological radiance and brightness of God's presence on the final day. . . . This glory is the radiance of God, the shining forth and manifestation of his presence. The immediately following statements in v. 27, which depict the church as "free from spot, wrinkle or anything of the sort," amplify and explain what is meant by "glorious," and, in the light of

the following purpose clause (that the church "might be *holy* and *blameless*"), are best taken as referring to the spiritual and ethical perfection on the last day. The glory is "the perfection of character with which the Lord has endowed her."²

More significant than the imagery of the church as the bride of Christ, however, is the metaphor of the body. Paul alone of all the NT writers speaks of the church as the "body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:5; see also 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 12:12, 13) and as a body of which Christ is the "Head" (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:12–16; Col. 1:18; 2:19). These are two slightly different metaphors, for in the first the whole body is the metaphor. Paul speaks of the members of the church being eyes, ears, and noses. Christ is the Lord who is outside this body and is the One whom this body worships and serves. In the second the church is the body of which Christ is the Head. The church is the body distinguished from the head.

First Corinthians 12:27 is an example of the first metaphor. Paul declares simply, "Ye are the body of Christ." The church of Corinth, as a whole, was considered to be Christ's body.

They are the people who have been made holy in Christ Jesus and are called to be holy (1:2). Yet these people quarreled, caused divisions, failed to expel an immoral brother, brought lawsuits against fellow brothers, criticized the apostles, and did not properly observe the Lord's Supper. In spite of all these shortcomings, Paul tells the Corinthians that they are the body of Christ.³

"Body" does not have the definite article. Paul may have been saying, "You are a body, one of many," or you are "body," the one and only one. Either way, this body exists in Christ and belongs to Christ. It is genuinely united with Christ, for every individual member is included in Christ.⁴ Paul's following statement, "and members in particular," identifies the individuality of the members inside the unity of the body. In the context, each of them received a gift by means of which each member of the body contributed to the well-being of the body and thus of Christ.

Romans 12:4, 5 is very similar. There is a spiritual unity in the church which is possible because the individuals are

“in Christ.” In the New Testament those who are joined to Christ become part of the body of Christ. When we are one body in Christ, we are also then “members one of another.” Christianity, ultimately, is a corporate experience. “Although each member has come to faith by a separate and individual act of faith, the believing community lives out its Christian experience in fellowship with one another. John Donne’s ‘No man is an island’ is true of the church of Jesus Christ. ‘Lone Ranger Christianity’ is a contradiction in terms.”⁵

Ephesians 4:16 (very similar to Col. 2:19) is an example of the second metaphor, in which Jesus is the Head and the church is the body. This passage demonstrates the intricate connection that the church has with the head. “From whom [Christ] the whole body fitly joined together and compacted [knit together] by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” This verse is “as grammatically difficult as it is uncommonly rich in meaning.”⁶

The verse begins with two participles that begin with the preposition *sun*, “with, together with”—“joined together” (*sunarmologoumenon*) and “compacted” or “knit together” (*sumbibazomenon*). “Joined together” (“fitly framed together”) was used in Ephesians 2:21 in an architectural image of a building, but here it pictures the organic growth of a body. These two occurrences, however, are not completely different. In 2:21, the building, when it is properly “joined together,” grows into a holy temple. Thus, in both uses, the idea is that when a church is properly joined together, the result is spiritual growth.

“By that which every joint supplieth” can be translated “by every supporting ligament.” This refers to the role of the individuals in the body. The body grows as each part does its duty. We know that spiritual growth ultimately comes from Christ. Nevertheless, “the body grows as *each part* does its apportioned building work in love (reaffirming v 7, and clarifying that it is not just leaders who build the church). All along, that upbuilding and growth is held in unity and cohesion by *every supporting ligament* (echoing the role of the teaching leaders).”⁷ While the focus here is on the church as a whole, the individual is still important.

The church is joined together and knit together as each individual completes his responsibility “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.” This can be translated “according to the energy that corresponds to the capacity of each individual part.” This is a continuation of the emphasis on the members of the body, but it also recognizes that members are not equal to one another. Their gifts are different, and thus their activities differ. Every member performs his ministry “in accordance with his God-given ability.”⁸

The end result of the church joining and knitting itself through the work of each individual for the purpose of increasing the body unto the edifying of itself in love. The church is now “*building itself up in love* as it becomes more and more Christlike (the identical *eis oikodomēn* is used in 4:12).”⁹ This completes the image of the organic growth of a body.

This complex passage teaches us much about the church. “Grammar is evidently the small price paid for

such a successful compression of central themes and imagery.”¹⁰ The significance is that Christ, as the Head, gives the church, as the body, all that it needs to grow into Christlikeness. “Paul’s focus is on the growth of the body as a whole, not on the need for individuals to become mature in Christ, however necessary this may be.”¹¹

The end result of the paragraph that begins in Ephesians 4:7 and runs through verse 16 is that the exhortations in chapters 5 and 6 are addressed to the whole church as a corporate reality. Unity is both the underlying basis and the final goal of the exhortations. This can only be accomplished, however, when each member of the body hears and responds to the instructions which Paul directs to the whole body.¹²

Christ, as the Head of the church, causes the body to live and grow. Christ, as the Head over the church, exercises authority over the church. While the images are somewhat different, both of these concepts are undoubtedly present when Christ is called Head of the church.

These wonderful images of the church teach us many truths. The church is pictured as a structure, built upon a solid foundation. It is a field where laborers work in the harvest. In a more personal view, however, the church is the virgin, pure and chaste, awaiting the coming of her Groom and her wedding to Him. The church is Christ’s body as He directs, empowers, grows, and prospers the church spiritually. In the church each individual contributes to its vitality; no Christian can divorce himself from the church, for the church is God’s organic, living institution for this age.

Larry Oats serves as dean of Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin. He and his wife, Colleen, were married in 1969 and have four grown children.

¹ Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 735.

² Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 425.

³ Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New Testament Commentary 18 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 440.

⁴ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, John Richard de Witt, tr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 375–76.

⁵ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary 27 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 234.

⁶ Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Ephesians*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 189.

⁷ D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Eph. 4:7–16.

⁸ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary 7 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953–2001), 204.

⁹ Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 189.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 313.

¹² Neufeld, *Ephesians*, 190.

Loneliness

Claudia Barba

Loneliness wears many faces, but we know it when we see it coming. Some of us feel lonely unless we're in the middle of a group; others long for just one kindred spirit. Some know loneliness as a constant companion. It walks with them through busy days and silent nights. It escorts them into crowded rooms, where it sits beside them and whispers that they don't belong.

Loneliness may arrive with solitude, for though we all need time alone, we were created to need and enjoy relationships. Ongoing solitude is painful. Solitary confinement, after all, is *punishment*.

If while following the Shepherd, you arrive in a long lonesome valley, you may feel confused and anxious. Has God abandoned you? Has He "forgotten to be gracious" (Ps. 77:7, 9)? Open the Book, and you'll discover that when you're in the land of the lonely, you're in excellent company.

Job suffered the loneliness of ongoing sickness and of the unanswered "Why?" Though present in body, his wife and friends were absent in empathy. Noah endured the loneliness of obedience. While he built the ark, everyone but seven other people thought he was an idiot—for 128 years! Sarah knew the loneliness of leaving home to follow her husband, who followed a voice only he could hear.

Moses experienced the loneliness of public failure, followed by four decades of exile in the desert. When he returned, it was to the loneliness of leadership. Leading a stubborn, whining multitude, blamed for everything that went wrong, he moaned, "I am not able to bear all this people alone" (Num. 11:14). Elijah felt the isolation of standing alone, once complaining that he was the only remaining defender of Jehovah: "I, even I only, am left" (1 Kings 19:10).

Daniel and three other young Hebrews traded all that was familiar for the heathen terrors of a lion's den and fiery furnace. Paul was shunned and mistrusted by other believers, persecuted by his people, and, once, forsaken by all. Jesus wrestled alone in prayer while His friends slept. After they deserted Him, He died alone on the cross, where He faced the loneliness we all whimper about but will never actually know: He was forsaken by the Father. The cross was the loneliest place in history.

In lonely times, you may feel that the door to companionship has been slammed in your face. Stop pounding on the door long enough to look beside you. There you will find your Friend, waiting to teach you what only the solitary can know—that to our lonely places, He comes.

To Job, He came! After a long conversation, Job grasped God's greatness, and his doubts melted into faith: "I know that thou canst do every thing" (Job 42:2)! To Noah, God came with a flood that vindicated him before his mockers and proclaimed him righteous. He came bringing Sarah her long-promised baby boy. God spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exod. 33:11). He located the depressed prophet Elijah sleeping alone in a cave and reminded him that he had seven thousand friends in Israel.

The Angel of God joined Daniel in the lions' den and strolled in the fiery furnace. When friends were few, Paul testified, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me" (2 Tim. 4:17). And the moment Jesus died, the Father came! He hid the sun, ripped the veil, broke rocks, opened graves, and shook the earth, proving that "truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).

It's hard to find anyone God has used greatly who hasn't been asked to travel long stretches on lonely roads. Are you on one of your own? Maybe it's your own fault. (If people run when they see you coming, you might want to ask somebody some questions.) But if you're certain your problem isn't bad breath, bad manners, or self-absorption, then surely the Lord is nearby, ready to do something special for you, with you. Seek Him!

Seek Him hungrily, and He will become your closest friend, "for he satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. 107:9). Seek Him thirstily, "as the hart panteth after the water brooks" (Ps. 42:1), and He will become the companion you crave. Seek Him with the fervor that gets you out of bed early, longing for His Word more than for sleep: "O God . . . early will I seek thee" (Ps. 63:1). Seek Him quietly. Enter your closet, "keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20), and He will join you there. He will satisfy your soul, and in your most lonely place, you will learn that He is all you need.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Psalm 73:25, 26

Claudia Barba assists her husband, Dave, in Press On! Ministries (www.ipresson.com). They travel full time, helping to plant churches in the USA. She also enjoys speaking to women's groups and writing Bible studies, including *Refresh Your Heart* and *When Christ Was Here*, both published by BJU Press.

Rome's most audacious theft was when she seized bodily the Apostle Peter and made him the putative head and founder of her system. —Henry C. Vedder

It is . . . axiomatic to Baptists that no one need have a human intermediary between God and man.
—Edward B. Cole

Augustine's outward view of the church as an earthly organization naturally led him to seek outward material means for preserving, and even compelling, visible unity.
—E. H. Broadbent

The error of the ancient churches (A.D. 100–325) was lessening the demand for repentance and faith, the experimental in religion, and rather to emphasize external signs and symbols. It was imagined that the outward symbol could take the place of the inward grace.
—John T. Christian

A true New Testament witness will always deny "Apostolic succession" of individuals and will always affirm "Apostolic succession" of the institution of the local church.
—Richard V. Clearwaters

In Baptist churches, ordination by a hierarchy of church potentates has never existed. —Edward B. Cole

To speak of "an invisible or a universal body" is an absolute misnomer! A body, by the very nature of its constitution—not to mention its definition—can only be both "visible" and "local"! —John C. Morgan

In the New Testament teaching, this whole question of fitness for the ministry rested with the ascended Lord . . . and with His Body . . . not with examining committees or National Convention officials, nor with Bishops. It was with the church.
—W. B. Riley

Basic to God's plan is the local church. It has the commission to win every individual within the reach of its influence.
—Paul S. Vanaman

Boys, never be afraid to have a little trouble once in a while to avoid bigger trouble later on. —Bob Jones Sr.

Ephesians 1:22 and Ephesians 3:10 indicate that the church is an institution—not that the church is invisible and universal.
—John Halsey

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

Leadership in the Local Church Continued from page 15

¹ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary 26 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 181.

² Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, Holman New Testament Commentary 5 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 91.

³ Philip Schaff, *History of the Apostolic Church*, tr. Edward D. Yeomans (New York: Charles Scribner, 1853), 502.

⁴ William Williams, *Apostolical Church Polity* (Watertown, WI: Roger Williams Heritage Archives, 1880; 2003), 31–32.

⁵ Schaff, *Apostolic Church*, 503.

⁶ Johannes Döllinger, *History of the Church* (London: C. Dolman, n.d.), 1: 242. Quoted in Williams, *Church Polity*, 31. Döllinger was a Catholic historian who taught church history at the University of Munich from 1826–71.

⁷ Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 193.

⁸ Primary sources are John MacArthur, "Answering Key Questions about Elders," <http://www.gtv.org/Resources/Positions/2164> and John MacArthur, "Biblical Eldership," <http://www.gbcmj.com/elders.htm>.

⁹ Not everyone agrees with MacArthur's view, as the following few examples demonstrate. "The congregations have taken the initiative, perhaps at Paul's suggestion, to appoint a person to accompany Titus. The Greek text shows that the term *appoint* means the raising of hands in a congregational meeting. The people understood that not Paul but the churches should be involved in naming a person suitable to the task of collecting funds for the saints in Jerusalem" (Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New Testament Commentary 19 [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997], 294). "The term *chosen* (*charotoneo*) probably connotes choice by an official vote or

show of hands" (Richard L. Pratt Jr, *I & II Corinthians*, Holman New Testament Commentary 7 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000], 402). "However, in some cases the expression used for 'churches' may not fit logically with verbs such as 'choose' or 'appoint.' If this is the case one may have to say 'the people of the churches chose'" (Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians*, UBS Handbook Series [New York: United Bible Societies, 1993], 155).

¹⁰ Again, not everyone agrees with MacArthur. "'To the angel of the church at Ephesus write.' Jesus instructed John to write a short letter addressed to the pastor of the church in Ephesus" (Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Commentary 20 [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1953–2001], 111). "Who were these messengers? The best suggestion is that they were pastors. The responsibility of pastors is to 'shepherd the flock' entrusted to their care. What could be more pastoral than to convey safely a direct message from Christ, the great Shepherd?" (Kendell H. Easley, *Revelation*, Holman New Testament Commentary 12 [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998], 34). "The simplest is the etymological meaning of the word as messenger from ἀγγελλω [*aggello*] (Matt. 11:10) as messengers from the seven churches to Patmos or by John from Patmos to the churches (or both). Another view is that ἀγγελος [*aggelos*] is the pastor of the church, the reading *την γυναίκα σου* [*ten gunaiika sou*] (thy wife) in 2:20 (if genuine) confirming this view" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* [Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997], Re 1:20). "The pastor or messenger of the church was addressed as **the angel** (*angelos*)" (John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* [Wheaton: Victor, 1983], Re 2:1).

¹¹ Information in this section is from Mark Dever, "Elders" in *A Display of God's Glory: Basics of Church Structure* (Washington, DC: 9Marks, 2001), 17–28.

Regional Reports

Doug Wright

Three Rivers Region

The Three Rivers Regional Conference of the FBFI was held April 18–19 at the Calvary Baptist Church of Clymer, Pennsylvania. Pastor Daryl Jeffers and his people did an excellent job in hosting the meeting. The church provided a spirit of warmth and enthusiasm that was contagious. The services revolved around the theme of Redeeming the Time.

The keynote speakers were Dr. John Vaughn, president of the FBFI, and Dr. Rick Arrowood, pastor of the Crosspointe Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. Other speakers included Charles Sprowls, pastor emeritus, Williamsburg Independent Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Pennsylvania; Rob Ingmire, pastor, First Baptist Church, Limestone, Pennsylvania and Tobe Witmer, pastor, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Newark, Delaware.

The music of the conference was a special blessing with Doug and Donna Lowery of Heartlifting Ministries providing soul-stirring specials with a variety of instruments.

Calvary Baptist also ministered with their people's excellent musical talents.

A trip was made to the Johnstown Flood Museum where all were impressed with how fleeting life can be with eternity just around the corner.

It would seem that the time was truly redeemed for God's glory in this Regional Meeting.

Northwest Region

The Northwest FBFI Regional Conference (March 14th through the 16th) hosted by Lincoln Park Baptist Church in Wenatchee, Washington, was a great blessing to those who attended. Dr. Fred Moritz was the keynote speaker. The daily sessions were filled by pastors in the region. This year's theme was Understanding the Times, taken from 1 Chronicles 12:32, "which were men that had understanding of the times." Pastors and other Christian workers, numbering about 30 were in attendance representing some

20 different churches from Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Washington, and British Columbia, gathered together over the course of 2 ½ days enjoying the fellowship in Christ and around His Word. Our high attendance was 73 Tuesday night. This conference is always a highlight of the year for area pastors, and this year was no exception. Drs. Tom Nieman and Fred Moritz set the tone of the conference Monday night from Jude with the thrust to "keep ourselves in the love of Christ." We were challenged to greater fidelity in and for Christ as we live in the midst of the darkening times of the last days.



Stifling the Work of God

In 1 Thessalonians 2:18 the apostle Paul wrote, "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us." Those who are in the service of the Lord know that the greatest hindrance to God's work is the unseen powers of darkness. We read in Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We must realize that the greatest source of stifling God's work is Satan himself and his demons.

Second Corinthians 11:3 says, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." I really want to emphasize that the Devil is extremely subtle. I believe that the unseen powers of darkness have been very effective in stifling the work of God through God's people. It is time we wake up and realize that the internal problems we are facing are slowly destroying what we're trying to do for the Lord. We are fighting each other and are getting so splintered that it is shocking. I want to sound the alarm to God's people so we can see we have been subtly tricked by the Devil. We have fallen into a trap, and we need to get out of it!

I believe there are three methods the Devil has used against us that are stifling our usefulness for the Lord. First, the Devil is dividing us: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 says,

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

We, like the Corinthian believers in Paul's day, are very prone to follow men instead of Christ. The sad thing is that Paul and Apollos didn't want the Corinthians to follow them; they desired that they would follow the Lord. Ephesians 5:1 says, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." And 1 Thessalonians 1:6 states, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord." I'm afraid that too often we stress the first part of this verse instead of the latter part, which is why we have so many different "camps" among ourselves. One person says, "I am of this camp." Another person says, "Well, I am of this camp." This division is so sharp that there are those who will not have anything to do with other believers—they are attacking each other. Paul gave those individuals a certain term. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:3, "For ye are yet carnal; for

whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" Paul emphatically termed them as "carnal."

Recently at a preachers' conference one of the main speakers got up to preach and started blasting a Christian university. After he finished preaching, the moderator of the meeting got up and rebuked him for his vindictive remarks against that school—which was the right thing to do! Can a preacher be carnal? Yes! We are not above the teaching of Scripture. A man is carnal when he causes strife and division among God's people.

Many years ago I faced a grave situation in a northern state in which many pastors were so divided that they were avoiding each other and refusing to speak to one another. They held a pastors' meeting and asked me to be the main speaker for the week. Well, I would not let any of these pastors talk with me for fear it would influence me to side with one group of pastors over another. One night I preached a message that the Lord had specifically laid on my heart. During the message, I made the following statement: "What a shame it is that some of you pastors will not even talk with each other—and you are the leaders of your flock. You have built fences between each other with the barbed wire of sarcasm and ridicule, and you expect the Lord to bless your ministry and your people? You need to get this thing right with each other." When I gave the invitation, the altar was packed with many pastors who were dealing with this divisive spirit. What a wonderful sight to see many of them hugging each other and asking forgiveness. They saw that division had weakened them for the cause of Christ. We need to see this happen across our nation among God's people.

Second, the Devil is stifling the Lord's work through deception. Second Corinthians 2:11 says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." I have known individuals who were fervently serving the Lord; however, they got involved in a business transaction that enticed them to pursue great wealth. They became so consumed with financial success that serving God became last on their list of priorities, and now they are doing nothing for Him. In Mark 4:18, 19 Jesus Christ said, "And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

In my next article, I will discuss the third method the Devil has used to stifle the work of God.

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

COLOSSIANS: LIVING

Colossae was one of a triad of cities (all three about ten miles from each other), along with Laodicea and Hieropolis (2:1; 4:13), located in the valley of the Lycas River (tributary to the Maeander River) at the feet of Mount Cadmus in the southwestern region of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) and along the main Roman road running from Ephesus to the Euphrates River. A city of great importance at one time, its significance had diminished by Paul's day to a small town. Few excavations have been conducted there.

What is most intriguing about this assembly is that Paul had not planted the church at Colossae and apparently had never visited the believers there personally (2:1). The church may have been pioneered by Epaphras (1:7), a native of that region (4:12, 13). In any case, he seems to have been Paul's main source of information about the believers there (1:8), and it was probably through his influence/request that Paul wrote to the believers there.

Epaphras' own story can only be conjectured, but he appears to have been converted through the collateral impact of Paul's lengthy Ephesian ministry (see Acts 19:10)—perhaps on a visit to Ephesus from his home in the tricity region of Colossae-Laodicea-Hieropolis—about five or six years before Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians. He returned with the gospel to his home region, resulting in a church that evidenced solid and significant growth and which he continued to support through an affectionate and energetic intercessory prayer ministry (4:12, 13). That makes the church at Colossae a second generation offshoot of Paul's ministry, Paul's spiritual grandchildren.

Epaphras seems to have made the journey to Rome to seek Paul's counsel regarding a particular doctrinal aberration that had surfaced in his region:

It was a subtle teaching, which [intrigued] and lured the believers, threatening to make havoc of the work that had been accomplished. The new teaching claimed to be Christian but was undermining the Gospel by robbing Christ of His unique nature and authority. Epaphras felt himself unable to refute this heresy effectively. Naturally he had a strong desire to present the problem to Paul and seek his able guidance (Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, 141).

Colossians was one of Paul's "prison epistles" (Col. 4:3, 10, 18), written about the same time as the Ephesians "circular" epistle. It may have been actually penned by Timothy as Paul's amanuensis (cf. Col. 1:1; Philem. 1);

this would help explain some stylistic similarities among a body of Pauline letters in which Timothy's name is conjoined to Paul's (Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, 408). The letter was carried and delivered by Tychicus (Col. 4:7), probably on the same trip as Ephesians (cf. Eph. 6:20) and Philemon.

Content

A simple content outline makes immediately apparent that Colossians is all about the Person of Christ.

Opening: Greeting, Praise, and Prayer (1:1–14)

Centrality of Christ (1:15–29)

- Preeminence of His position (1:15–18)
- Power of His provision (1:19–23)
- Proclamation of His purpose (1:24–29)

Indispensability of Christ (2:1–23)

- Possesses all you need (2:1–7)
- Personifies all God is (2:8–10)
- Provides all you have (2:11–23)

Practicality of Christ (3:1–4:6)

- Our union with Him (3:1–11)
- Our life in Him (3:12–4:6)

Closing (4:7–18)

The major movements of Paul's message can be traced in His imperatives, both positive (exhortations) and negative (warnings):

- *Exhortation 1*—Walk and grow in Christ (2:6, 7)
- *Warning 1*—Beware of being carried away from Christ as a captive by human philosophies and traditions (2:8–15)
- *Warning 2*—Let no one judge you on the basis of legalism (2:16, 17)
- *Warning 3*—Let no one cheat you out of your reward through substitutes for Christ (2:18–23)
- *Exhortation 2*—Seek Christ alone (3:1–4)

Concerns

In many respects Colossians and Ephesians are twin epistles. They have a great deal of parallel material in terms of both doctrinal teaching and practical exhortation. Colossians is unique, however, in its inclusion of arguments targeting a particular heresy threatening the believers there. "We have no formal exposition of what is commonly called the 'Colossian heresy'; its character must be inferred from the counter-arguments presented

LIFE IN CHRIST ALONE

in our epistle" (Bruce, 412). From Paul's arguments in the letter, several features of this teaching and its dangers may be deduced—some of which are strikingly modern and relevant.

It was a teaching that appealed to a higher or special wisdom. "Wisdom" (6x), "knowledge" (4x), and "understanding" (2x) are important concepts in Paul's argument as he contrasts manmade "wisdom" (2:23) over against the true wisdom centered in Christ (1:28; 2:3; 3:16). Gnosticism (from the Greek word *gnōsis*, "knowledge") emphasizes deeper, hidden knowledge as the key to true spirituality and salvation; it became a major heretical challenge to the church. Old as it is, it has seen periodic revivals of interest and credibility. *The Da Vinci Code* triggered a revival of Gnosticism, underscoring the modern relevance of Paul's countering nascent Gnosticism in Colossae. According to Gnosticism, religion is purely internal, immaterial, and intellectual; it is not about objective truth but inner experience and so has no direct bearing on behavior or morals. This is not just ancient ideology; it reflects profoundly modern and Western thought patterns. The Colossian heresy is only a "shadow" (to borrow Paul's term in 2:17) of later, developed Gnosticism. Nevertheless, Colossians furnishes a sonogram of the early shape of Gnostic thinking in its embryonic form.

It was a teaching that appealed to Scripture for its justification—specifically, OT rites and ceremonies. Paul's mention of legal ordinances, circumcision, food regulations, Sabbaths, new moons, etc., suggests a Jewish-oriented teaching—whether promoted by Jews, or by Gentiles who viewed OT rites (the old "shadows") as a means to greater holiness (2:16, 17).

It was a teaching that appealed to worship-enhancing experiences. The "worship of angels" (2:18) has been understood in two ways. Some think it involved engaging in the reverencing of angels themselves, as powerful beings close to God. Others argue, perhaps more convincingly, that it involved imagining the angels' worship of God as a means of heightening one's own devotional experiences. The language seems to imply "entering into heavenly spheres as a sort of superspiritual experience"—a kind of nonverbal charismatic experience that both confers spiritual superiority and indicates a higher plane of spirituality.

It was a teaching that appealed to personal asceticism. This manmade "wisdom" masquerades as false humility and observes ascetic practices of self-denial that supposedly heighten one's state of holiness (2:18–23). Asceticism (2:23

literally refers to harsh or severe treatment of the body), "while parading under the guise of humility" and wisdom, "actually panders to human pride" (Vaughan, *EBC*, 208). In reality, such asceticism is of no value in controlling the proclivity of the flesh to sensual indulgence (see the last phrase of 2:23). Ironically, in spite of all the Colossians' asceticism, Paul still has to address their fleshly tendencies (3:5). *The key to controlling the sensual urges of the flesh is not asceticism* (torturing the flesh, 2:23) *but mortification* (killing the flesh, 3:5). "There is only one thing that will put the collar on the neck of the animal within us, and that is the power of the indwelling Christ" (Alexander Maclaren). It is believing and living out the reality that *we died* with Him and that our life is hidden with Him (3:3).

Bruce (414) explains, "All this was presented as a form of advanced teaching for a spiritual elite. The Christians of Colossae were urged to go in for this progressive *wisdom* and *knowledge* (*gnōsis*), to explore the deeper mysteries" in the quest for greater personal fulfillment. Paul's goal for them is, indeed, *perfection* (*teleios*); but this doesn't come through legalism or mystical experiences but through Scriptural teaching (1:28) and intercessory prayer (4:12). Paul wants them to find *fulfillment*. The verb "(ful)fill" also dominates Paul's argument, as he assures them that all fullness and fulfillment are to be found in Christ and in Christ alone (see 1:9, 19; 2:9, 10; 4:12). Ascetic practices cannot make one holier, and mystical experiences do not make one more spiritual. Christ is all there is and all we need. It doesn't get any higher or bigger or better than Him. There is *nothing* "beyond" Him. So, in the words of Samuel Rutherford, "fasten your grip on Christ."

The nature of this "movement" sweeping through Colossae may explain why Epaphras was at a loss to know how to deal with it and appealed to Paul for help. First, *it sounded Scriptural*. Most heresies do on the surface. Its appeal to OT practices was difficult to counter, since those rites were, after all, given by God as observances that would make them distinctive ("holy") among the nations. Second, *it seemed real*. Again, most heresies do; that's how they attract. It was so experience-oriented. How do you counter what someone believes *he* has *experienced* and how it makes him feel? Third, *it appeared righteous*. Most heretics are sincere. These practices were reportedly, reputedly wise (lit., "having a report of wisdom," 2:23), and purport to be "genuine expressions of devotion to God, of humility, and of commendable discipline of the body" (Vaughan, *EBC*, 208).

Continued on next page

Theology

Try reading through Colossians and marking every reference (including pronouns) to God the Father in one color and every reference to Christ in another color. The exercise will help convince you and quantify for you the theological focus of this epistle. Like Ephesians, Colossians places great emphasis on the activity and purposes of the Father. However, Colossians displays a pervasively Christological focus that combines profound theological truth about Him with profoundly practical implications for daily life and relationships.

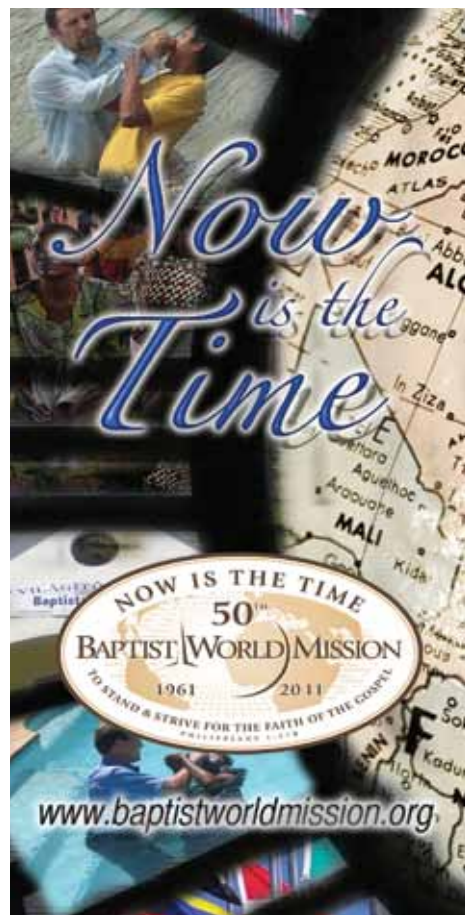
While there is only one reference to the Holy Spirit in the entire book (1:8), there are at least twenty-five references to the Father (by name and pronoun) in chapters 1 and 2. But there are over seventy references to Christ (by name and pronoun) in Colossians' ninety-five verses. Not only does Colossians include some of the NT's most profound insights into the Person of Christ, but it also features a greater concentration of

the "in Christ" motif than any other NT book. All the practical, relational exhortations in chapters 3 and 4 are rooted in the reality of the theological truths expounded in chapters 1 and 2.

Theme

The *theme* of Colossians is *life in Christ* and the central *message* of Colossians is that we are *complete in Him*. All fullness dwells in Him (1:19). All wisdom is hidden and found in Him (2:3). All deity resides in Him (2:9). That Christ is fully God means that to have Him is to have all you need to have and all there is to have (2:10). Indeed, the believer's very *life* is hidden with Christ in God (3:3), and if he wants to find it that is where he will have to look for it. And what we believe about Christ (chapters 1-2) cannot help having a profound impact on how we live, and why (chapters 3-4). The message of Colossians echoes in Charles Wesley's hymn "Jesus, Lover of My Soul":

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find.



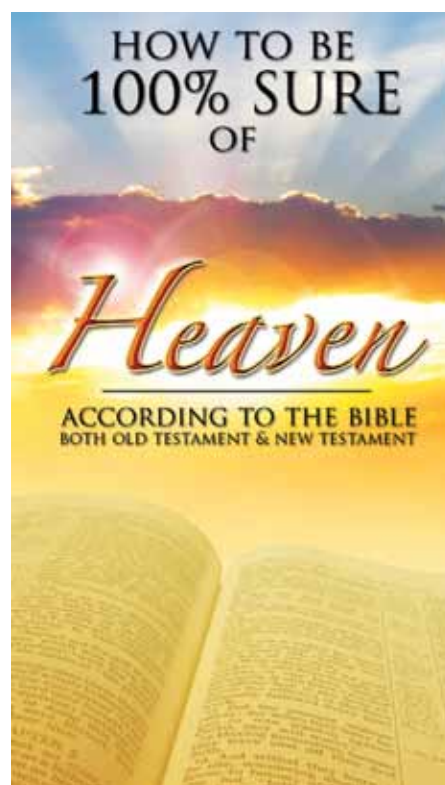
Your Church Finder

Traveling? Vacationing? Moving?

www.findchurch.com

The traveler's church finder.

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



Also, available in SPANISH!

A Gospel Tract for Jew and Gentile

with OLD TESTAMENT verses for
every single point (& N.T.) to
appeal to JEWS and GENTILES

*and a tract that defines and
emphasizes "Repentance"*

*"Jim Bray's tract includes a vital issue...
most others omit...repentance...I appreciate...
that it includes...both the Old and New
Testament...for both Jew and Gentile."*

- DR. RON COMFORT

Chancellor, Ambassador Baptist College

*"Brother Bray's excellent tract...gives
special emphasis to...repentance as a part
of salvation...the emphasis where it belongs."*

- DR. ED NELSON

Evangelist; Bible Conference Speaker

*"This tract is commendable because of
its...call to repentance...a good addition
to the earnest soulwinner's arsenal."*

- DR. BOB JONES, III

Chancellor, Bob Jones University

**For tract wording, prices,
and ordering info, go to
thepoweroftheword.com**

Qur'an Sunday

World News Daily ran a special article outlining the efforts of some Protestant churches to read from the Qur'an from their pulpits on June 26 of this year. The shared faith project articulates its motivation on the first page of its website (www.faithshared.org): "Interfaith Alliance and Human Rights First offer the *Faith Shared* event as a way to engage faith leaders on the national and community levels in interfaith events intended to highlight respect among people of different faiths." A list of participating churches is published on the website. There is a growing trend among Evangelicals to present a more open stance toward Islamists. Brian McLaren, guru of the emerging church movement, planned for an Islamic Ramadan celebration. Evangelical-left leader Tony Campolo has stated, "Even if Muslims do not convert, they are God's people." Rick Warren has agreed to address the Islamic Society of North America, a terrorist organization.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/2011/June24/2453.html>.

Direct Threats

Washington State was able to gather sufficient signatures to place the recently passed gay marriage legislation on the public ballot. The initiative

was rejected by the voters. Now a federal court in Washington is being asked to order the release of the 138,000 signatories. Both KnowThyNeighbor.org and WhoSigned.org are the support organizations for the cause. The stated objectives of these two groups are to "publish their web sites, in searchable format, the identities of every person who signed the petition" that resulted in the state's reversal on the issue.

However, the filing on behalf of the group called Protect Marriage Washington has documented an entirely different reality. The following are some of the documented threats "against those who support traditional marriage":

"I will kill you and your family."

"Someone please shoot her in the head, again and again. And again."

"I'm going to kill the pastor."

"If I had a gun I would have gunned you down along with each and every other supporter."

"We're going to kill you."

"You're dead. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon . . . you're dead."

"I'm a gay guy who owns guns, and he's my next target."

"I warn you, I know how to kill, I'm an ex-special forces person."

"Get ready for retribution all you bigots."

Many more have been documented; vulgarities and profanities have not been included here. Many churches have been damaged with graffiti, windows have been broken, adhesive has been poured into door locks, and packages containing white powder have been received. One homosexual group (Bash Back!) has proudly claimed responsibility for the acts. The case already cites sixty affidavits from people who claimed to have been targeted for their support of the ballot initiative. At the core of this court case is reprisal against those who have dared to confront the homosexual agenda.

This article can be referenced with other supporting links at <http://www.wnd.com/?pageId=317681>.

Appropriate Missionary Behavior

The World Council of Churches has released a document which they claim is a broad consensus on how missionaries are to behave. Brian Tyndall, an officer of Global Outreach International, has highlighted two points of disagreement with the measure. First, the document expects that all missionaries will respect what other religions call to be "true and holy." The WCC also expects that missionaries would consult with other religious groups when establishing a code of conduct.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Church/Default.aspx?id=1380544>

and the full text of their agreement can be read at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/christians-reach-broad-co.html>.

A Change for the PC (USA) and Clergy Standards

In May of this year the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination voted to change its requirements for ordination standards among clergy. The denomination ordains its ministers, elders, and deacons. These would no longer be required to live in "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness." Rather now they should live in "joyful submission to the Lord in all aspects of life." The move was applauded by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

While the general assembly endorsed the new policy last year, the policy could be ratified only when a majority of its 173 presbyteries approved the policy. That is now complete. This policy took hold on July 10 of this year. Already about 100 of the 11,000 PC (USA) churches have withdrawn from the denomination.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2011-07/presbyterians-officially-allow-gay-clergy>.

Bigger in Size—Smaller in Influence

George Sarris lamented in his *Christian Post* article the change in Evangelical

churches. He noted that in 1960 there were no more than 100 churches that numbered 1000 members. Today there are more than 10,000 such churches.

Why the lament? He says that immorality and disregard for objective Biblical truth seem to increase as congregational size—in other words the group is “bigger in size, but smaller in influence.” Sarris identifies what he considers to be the two main reasons: a misinterpretation of the Great Commission and a failure to love one’s neighbors. He argues that the Great Commission is not simply about evangelism but about discipleship and spiritual maturity. Conversion is not the end—discipleship is. Regarding our love for our neighbors, Sarris laments that we have built relationships that were contingent only on a positive move toward the gospel.

This article can be referenced at <http://blogs.christianpost.com/engaging-the-culture/2011/06/evangelicals-larger-in-size-smaller-in-influence-why-22/>.

Islam and Academia

Georgetown University has some explaining to do. The institution recently accepted a \$325,000-grant from the Council of American-Islamic Relations. The FBI has identified this organization as the US channel of Hamas. The purpose of the grant was to organize a symposium on “Islamophobia.” This is not the only grant received by Georgetown. They have received \$40 million from Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal and the Qatar Foundation.

Georgetown is not alone. Harvard has received \$30 million in Arab donations; the University of Arkansas, \$20

NOTABLE QUOTES

God moves in mysterious ways
His wonders to perform,
He plants His footsteps in the sea
and rides upon the storm.
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
in blessing on your head.
—William Cowper

Even in the church we see a custom prevailing against the generality, and men coming in clean garments, and have their hands washed; but how to present a clean soul to God, they make no account. —Chrysostom

When the storms of life beat down on our lives, how important it is to ask God to place His hands on the rudder. He best knows how to guide the ship of life in a straight course, though narrow it may be. —D. Edmund Hiebert

Without living Christ before we preach Him, the judgment of God will be severe condemnation; but if our teaching is motivated by sincere and honest love for the Lord and the edification of those who hear us, then we can welcome this judgment, for it will mean great reward. —Spiros Zodiatas

The people who least live their creeds are not seldom the people who shout the loudest about them. The paralysis which affects the arms does not, in these cases, interfere with the tongue. —Alexander Maclaren

The Church recruited people who had been starched and ironed before they were washed. —John Wesley

We can easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed to it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we carry yesterday’s burden over again today, and then add the burden of the morrow before we are required to bear it. —John Newton

million; Berkeley, \$5 million; Cornell, \$11 million; Texas University, \$500,000; Princeton, \$1 million; and Rutgers, \$5 million.

These scholarship and degree program dollars are what the author calls “the favorite and easiest weapons of Islamist regimes to influence the western academies and their freedoms.” The effect of the funding has been overt hostility to western and Jewish ideals.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/10340>.

Depression and the Ministry

Paul Tripp has written a series of articles on depression in the ministry. It has been estimated that 80% of pastors face the discouragement/depression cycle in ministry. Most believe themselves to be inadequate for the calling. Tripp highlights several reasons pastors tend to ministry burnout: (1) unrealistic expectations, (2) family tensions, (3) fear of man, and (4) kingdom confusion. Yet he offers a cure. It is an issue of the heart. Tripp writes, “Depression in the pastor may be set up by the culture that surrounds him, but it is a disease of the heart.”

Tripp’s articles can be viewed at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2011/07/11/depression-and-the-ministry-part-1-the-setup/>.

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 Two

"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).

We began looking at the command contained in this verse—rendered “make disciples” in some translations—in the last issue of *FrontLine*. We looked at the accompanying participle, which has a force of command, “go therefore,” and its attendant fulfillment in the Book of Acts. We need to be about the work of “going” both near and far as we fulfill the Great Commission.

In Acts we also see fulfilled in their earliest forms, and as an example for us, the accompanying words “baptizing and teaching.” While there is supposedly some debate in non-Baptist circles as to what is meant by “baptizing,” there seems to be little debate about what it means when we see the ordinance take place in the New Testament. The first instance where we see baptism taking place in Acts was in response to Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost. Peter says in Acts 2:38, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,” and then in verse 41, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Clearly, baptism was administered to those who had repented of their sin and believed in the message of Jesus Christ. Also, at the time of their baptism, they were added to a local, identifiable body of believers.

Throughout Acts we see people identified with Christ publicly and with a local church through believer’s baptism. In some cases baptism is assumed, but believers are clearly identified and added to the number in a particular location (4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 11:21, et al.) even to the point the congregation could be summoned together in order to select deacons (6:2) or appoint elders (14:23). One instance of baptism being assumed, then mentioned is in chapter 8 where verse 8 says, “There was great joy,” and then verse 13 states, “Then Simon himself believed also: and . . . was baptized.” Other instances of baptism follow: the Ethiopian (8:36), Cornelius and other Gentiles (10:47, 48), the Philippian jailer and his household (16:31–33), Crispus and the Corinthians (18:8), the Ephesians (19:5),

and others. In fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples, disciples were baptized, identifying them with Christ and with a local church body.

Following the baptisms in Acts 2, we see a very clear devotion to teaching both being given and received. Luke records in verse 42, “And they continued stedfastly in [were continually devoting themselves to] the apostles’ doctrine [or teaching] and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Verse 46 tells us that “they [continued] daily with one accord [or with one mind] in the temple,” giving a fuller picture of the intensive teaching that was taking place on an ongoing basis.

We also see the apostles’ devotion to teaching in many instances. Peter and John were arrested for teaching the people (4:1–3). The disciples filled Jerusalem with their teaching (5:28, 41). In Acts 11:26, Barnabas and Saul (Paul) committed an entire year of their valuable time to meet with the church, most of them believing Greeks, and teach them. In Iconium they taught for a long time (14:3). In Derbe they preached and taught many in the whole city (14:20, 21). Back in Antioch, again, they “abode long time with the disciples” (14:28) teaching them. Paul and Barnabas repeated this pattern on their successive missionary journeys as well, Paul spending two years teaching in the school of Tyrannus at Ephesus (19:9, 10) and two years teaching those who came to him while under house arrest (28:30, 31). The teaching continued by letter as well, as we see in the New Testament Epistles writing from the apostles to churches or pastors on what to believe and how to live in the church and in the world.

Fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples requires us to go both near and far. It requires us to baptize believers who publicly identify with Christ and a local church through their baptism. It also requires a commitment to teach the Scriptures, strengthening the believers and churches in their doctrine and practice. Is your church fulfilling the Great Commission in other places in this way? Is the Great Commission being fulfilled in your community in this way? May Christ be honored as we maintain a great commitment to the Great Commission!

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.

Church Directory



Bible Baptist Church
1237 Paoli Pike
West Chester, PA 19380
(610) 692-4492
Home of West Chester
Christian School
www.bbcwccpa.com



Pastor Mike Archer

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

Heritage Baptist Church
Go West!
Antioch, California
Home of Heritage Baptist Academy (K-12)
www.heritageantioch.com • (925) 757-5242
Jim Oesterwind, Pastor
The Church With A Servant's Heart

Upper Cross Roads BAPTIST CHURCH
2717 Greene Road, Baldwin, Maryland 21013
(410) 557-6963 • FAX (410) 557-7285
www.ucrbaptist.org • ucrbaptist@ucrbaptist.org
All services interpreted for the hearing impaired
Christ is the Answer for the Crossroads of Life



Dr. Robert A. Condict

COLONIAL HILLS Baptist Church
8140 Union Chapel Rd.
Indianapolis, IN 46240
(317) 253-5597
www.colonialindy.org



DR. CHUCK PHELPS
Pastor

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



PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD
in the
Northwest Valley BAPTIST CHURCH
Phoenix Metro Area
623-581-3115
www.nwvbc.org



Dr. Kevin Schaaf

4030 W. Yorkshire Dr. Glendale, AZ

Tabernacle Baptist Church
growing in grace, serving in love...
717 Whitehurst Landing Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23461
www.tabernacle-vb.org
Church - Bible College & Seminary - Academy



Dr. James W. Baker
Pastor

757-424-HOPE

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
833 15th Avenue
Longmont, Colorado 80501
303-776-5655 • Fax 303-776-5723
church@fbelongmont.org
www.fbelongmont.org
Dr. Rick Cross



BOB JONES UNIVERSITY
EST. 1969

The Wilds
EST. 1969

Custom Apparel
No Setup fees
No Minimums
Custom Artwork
Quality Products
7-Day Turnaround

Perfect for
Christian Schools
Youth Groups & Camps
Embroidered Staff Shirts
Church Anniversaries
Special Events

DAPPER INK
CUSTOM OUTFITTERS
www.dapperink.com
864.551.3115



HAMILTON SQUARE BAPTIST CHURCH
A Welcoming and Transforming Church Since 1881
1212 Geary Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 • hamiltonsquare.net • 415.673.8586



Dr. David Innes, Pastor

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



Dr. John L. Monroe, Pastor

Advertise your ministry here.
E-mail info@fbfi.com for details.

Chaplain News

John C. Vaughn

Over the last few years the chaplaincy ministry of the FBFI has become one of the main activities of the Fellowship. The FBFI obtained authorization to endorse chaplains in 1982 in association with the Associated Gospel Churches (AGC). To provide endorsement that applied the FBFI fellowship principle to Fundamental Baptist chaplaincy, the endorsing agency of the FBFI requested separate listing with the Department of Defense (DoD) in 1993. Since then the number of endorsed chaplains has grown from three to nearly sixty. Ecclesiastical endorsement is required because of the "dual role" of the chaplain as both minister and military officer. In a previous issue of *FrontLine*, FBFI-endorsed Navy Chaplain Tavis Long explained the potential for confusion in that dual role, and explained how the FBFI insists on the chaplain's accountability to his local church.*

To aid local churches whose leaders are affiliated with the FBFI in supporting their chaplains, *FrontLine* includes excerpts from the many communications between FBFI-endorsed chaplains and reports on their activities. Realizing the critical role that Fundamental Baptist chaplains play in the uncompromising fulfillment of the Great Commission, an increasing number of local churches are developing

innovative ways to support and interact with chaplains. Christian school classes are "adopting" FBFI-endorsed chaplains and communicating with them during deployments. Sunday school classes are sending packages of materials to chaplains to use in their ministries. Pastors are involving uniformed chaplains in their Missions Conferences or inviting them to speak on special days such as Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. In fact, an increasing number of pastors are seeing the importance of having the chaplains give "missionary reports" to their sending churches when they are at home.

As regular readers of *FrontLine* know, we have dedicated two previous issues of the magazine to chaplaincy. Because of the importance and steady growth of chaplaincy ministry in the FBFI, the next issue will focus on "The Chaplaincy and the Local Church," providing better understanding to promote the extension of Fundamental Baptist local church ministry through chaplaincy.

In conjunction with the Annual Fellowship, held on the Tuesday through Thursday of the second full week of June, the FBFI offers annual chaplain training required by the DoD. After initial training sessions on Monday, the chaplains and their wives

enjoy a banquet where they renew their friendships. Chaplain training continues through Friday morning of the Annual Fellowship week. In addition to annual endorser training, chaplains participate in formal military chaplaincy training. Since all of the military departments now have their chaplaincy schools at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, which is just over one hundred miles from the FBFI Home Office, we participate in many graduations on behalf of the chaplains' churches.

The Home Office can provide helpful information on FBFI chaplains when pastors and local churches desire to extend their ministries through the strategic ministry of chaplaincy.

*"Since the military positions, pays, and promotes the chaplain, it is easy to assume that he answers primarily to the military, secondarily to the government, and only has a tertiary obligation to his local church. . . . Though the chaplain must receive an endorsement from an ecclesiastical organization (a government requirement), that organization has virtually no authority over the Chaplain [except] the power to withdraw the endorsement, thus legally disqualifying the chaplain from military service" (Tavis Long, "The Military Chaplain: Missionary, Evangelist, or Pastor?" *FrontLine* [November/December, 2009], 6).



Left—2011 Annual FBFI Chaplains' Training. Top Right—CH (LT) Trenten Long and his son Breyton Bottom Right—Matt, Ginger, and Reagan Sprecher at Matt's graduation from the Chaplain Captain Career Course (C4) School

On the Front Line

Continued from page 5

¹ Nancy Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism" in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 8.

² George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 10. There were "evangelical" groups in England and Europe, but the triumph of Modernism in those groups had been so great in the early twentieth century that no one in the United States desired to be called "evangelical."

³ Harold J. Ockenga, "Foreword," in Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 11. Emphasis mine. Lindsell's book is about bibliology, not ecclesiology. Ockenga notes that the move away from belief in an inerrant Scripture is a later development and not part of the original New Evangelicalism. New Evangelicalism departed from the ecclesiology of Fundamentalism. Ockenga had previously declared, "The evangelical and the fundamentalist could sign the same creed," but "an evangelical must be distinguished from a fundamentalist in areas of intellectual and ecclesiastical attitude." Harold J. Ockenga, "Resurgent Evangelical Leadership," *Christianity Today* 4 (10 October 1960): 12-13.

⁴ George Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), 192.

Dispensationalism

Continued from page 12

⁴⁰ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 40.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴² Carnell, *Case for Orthodox Theology*, 64.

⁴³ Harold John Ockenga, "From Fundamentalism," 43.

⁴⁴ Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), 57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴⁶ George Ladd, *Crucial Questions Concerning the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952).

⁴⁷ Millard Erickson, *The New Evangelical Theology* (Westwood: Revell, 1968), 126.

⁴⁸ Henry, *Uneasy Conscience*, 53.


⁴⁹ Carnell, *Case for Orthodox Theology*, 136.

⁵⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, IV. i. 19.

⁵¹ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1137.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1138.

REACHING THE JEWISH WORLD
NEW YORK AND BEYOND



JEWISH EVANGELISM • BIBLICAL STUDIES
CONFERENCES • HOLY LAND TOURS

Shalom Ministries INC.

1421 Sheepshead Bay Road, #300
Brooklyn, NY 11235
(718) 232-8233
www.shalomnyc.org

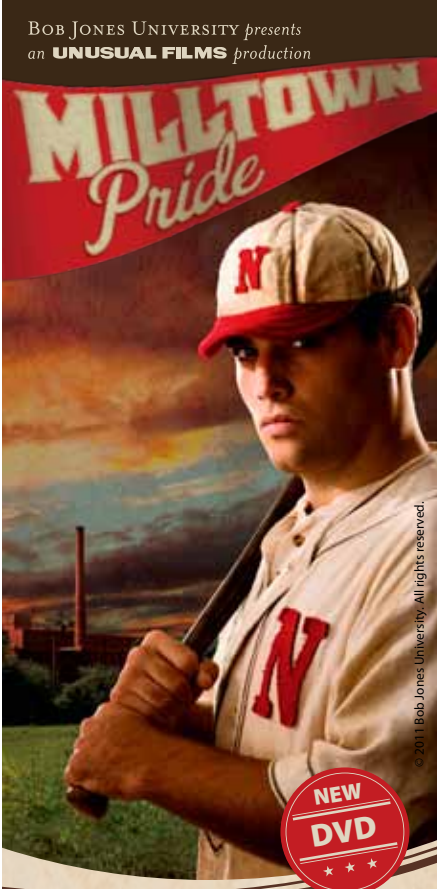
BAPTIST HOME MISSIONS
Founded in 1969

Church Planting in North America

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

For more information contact:
Baptist Home Missions
P.O. Box 17575 • Raleigh, NC 27619
662-275-3806
baptisthomemissions@juno.com
www.baptisthomemissions.org

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY presents
an **UNUSUAL FILMS** production



MILLTOWN Pride

NEW DVD

© 2011 Bob Jones University. All rights reserved.

Making it home is all that matters...

Milltown Pride is a film about a young man's determination to become a professional baseball player and his rise to prominence in a mill baseball league in 1920s South Carolina.

As Will rises to fame, how much will he risk for his chance at the big leagues? And when you hit rock bottom, is there a way up?

MilltownPride.com

- view trailer
- schedule public showing
- order DVD #276923

BJU Press 800.845.5731



Produced by Unusual Films
Distributed by ShowForth

Fundamental Baptist Ecclesiology and the Military Chaplaincy

John C. Vaughn

Today the largest community of young adults under the age of thirty-five in America is the United States Armed Forces.¹ Gary Sanders defends their categorization as a “people group” by pointing out that young people in the military “have a unique lifestyle, language, and culture (and even tribal dress!).”²

Many local church leaders are developed within the disciplined structure of military service, and many pastors know that the chaplaincy is an effective way to evangelize armed service members. Yet many independent pastors are hesitant to encourage young men to consider the chaplaincy. They are concerned about the dual identity of the chaplain as both minister and military officer and wonder how a separatist can serve in a pluralistic environment. They need answers to legitimate questions about the chaplain. If he is forbidden to proselytize, how can he evangelize? Since a military chapel is not a self-governing local church, can we consider the chaplain a pastor? Since he is not planting a church, can he be considered a missionary?

To foster the extension of local church ministry through the chaplaincy, the next issue of *FrontLine* will focus primarily on that theme. It will provide a survey of the history and practical necessity for chaplaincy and will address the problems and potential of separatist ministry in a pluralistic environment. It will explore the nature of the connection between the local church and the chaplain and demonstrate that chaplaincy is a legitimate expression of the Baptist ministry under the authority of a sending church.

Fundamental Baptist ecclesiology provides a great advantage to Baptist ministers who are called to be chaplains. The authority of the autonomous local church is the delegated authority of Christ Himself. This authority is critical to the dual role of the military chaplain. Military authority within the chain of command is well defined, but the question remains, “Who has the authority to discipline the nondenominational or independent ordained minister in spiritual matters?” There is surprising disparity in the answers given to that question. But when Fundamental Baptist chaplains and local church pastors have clarity on this point, they can confidently use the chaplaincy as a Biblical means of fulfilling the Great Commission. They will provide Scriptural spiritual discipline without resorting to the extra-Biblical hierarchy that makes liturgical chaplaincy so compatible with military hierarchy.

Accordingly, the pastor may delegate his authority for local church ministries, but he may not delegate his responsibility. None of his authority is merely in his title; it resides in his teaching.³ To fulfill his responsibility, he partners with itinerant evangelists who proclaim the gospel and

equip the saints specifically in the work of evangelism. Both pastors and evangelists are responsible for teaching the Biblical foundation for missions and leading the missions program of the local church. In fulfilling their Biblical responsibilities, pastors and evangelists perform many similar functions to reach the same goal (Eph. 4:11, 12). The roles of evangelists and pastors are not distinguished by separate functions but by the nature of their relationships to local churches. On behalf of his sending church, the evangelist serves as a missionary to others, preaching the gospel, planting churches, and generally providing itinerant ministry. In contrast, the pastor remains in his local church, teaching the Bible, overseeing the ministry, and caring for the flock. The evangelist is *sent*. The pastor *sends*. As we shall see, the chaplain is an itinerant evangelist who temporarily provides pastoral care, just as the pastor, at times, does the work of the evangelist. Together, evangelists and pastors seek and prepare believers for the ministry and young men for leadership in the ministry, including the chaplaincy.

In addition to their normal administrative duties, chaplains are to serve as a “prophetic voice.” In fact, the prophetic voice is required in Army regulations: “Chaplains, in performing their duties, are expected to speak with a prophetic voice and must confront the issues of religious accommodation, the obstruction of free exercise of religion, and moral turpitude in conflict with the Army values.”⁴ Since Fundamental Baptist churches focus on Biblical separation and balanced Biblical discernment, they emphasize applications of Biblical separation that others avoid because they consider them legalistic. Nevertheless, those applications strengthen the prophetic voice of the Fundamental Baptist chaplain. Just as Fundamental Baptist churches offer a clear, Biblical message in their local communities, Fundamental Baptist chaplains, as agents of those local churches, offer a clear, Biblical message to the largest community of young adults in America, the United States Armed Forces.

¹ Gary Sanders, “The Fourth Journey: The Story of Military Missions from the Book of Acts,” *MilitaryMissionsNetwork.com*, http://www.militarymissionsnetwork.com/client_files/File/fourth_journey_rev_feb_2007.pdf (accessed September 13, 2010), 20.

² *Ibid.*, 13.

³ Through his teaching, he “perfects” (brings to maturity) his church members “for the work of the ministry” and mutual edification (Eph. 4:11, 12).

⁴ Army Regulation 165-1, 3-3, a. (2).

**Fundamental Baptist
Fellowship International**

2801 Wade Hampton Blvd., Suite 115-165
Taylors, SC 29687

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

Address Service Requested

LEARN MEET GROW ACHIEVE IMPACT SHARE

LEARNING THAT LASTS A **lifetime**



Bible-based Christian liberal arts education

- Diverse academic programs centered on a Bible and liberal arts core
- Highly qualified faculty with a heart for mentoring students
- Opportunities to serve in local churches
- Emphasis on spiritual growth, character development, leadership and service

**&come
go**



 **Bob Jones University**
Greenville, SC • 800-252-6363 • www.bju.edu

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY STANDS UNEQUIVOCALLY ON THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

©2011 Bob Jones University. All rights reserved. BJU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, sex, national origin, protected disability or veteran status. (10419) 06/11