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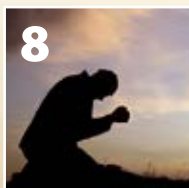
FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

The Biblical Mandate and Motive for Separation



The Biblical Mandate and Motive for Separation



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We would like to thank Baptist World Mission for coordinating this issue of *FrontLine* magazine.

The Doctrine of Separation

John C. Vaughn

It has been said that a biblical Fundamentalist is someone “who believes the Bible, obeys the Bible, proclaims the Bible, and defends the Bible.” The logical consequence of that sequence is biblical separation. But biblical separation is more than that—it is a biblical doctrine itself, to be believed, obeyed, proclaimed, and defended. Some fear that an emphasis on separation should be avoided because it is unpopular and divisive, but therein lies a great danger. Silence on any doctrine is a death spiral. Nearly seventy years ago “Neo-Evangelicalism” proscribed the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation. Today, silence on separation is a common denominator of more recent expressions of Evangelicalism such as the Gospel Coalition. Worse, some who still call themselves Fundamentalists are becoming averse to biblical separation.

Fundamental Baptists have separation in their theological DNA. Accordingly, those of us in FBFI like to connect ourselves to the driving principles of those Baptists who identified themselves as the “Fundamentalist Fellowship” nearly one-hundred years ago. Admittedly, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International does not have exclusive claim to that heritage, but we unashamedly identify ourselves as a “Fundamentalist fellowship” in the spirit of our forebears. Without question, the family tree of both FBFI and Baptist World Mission (BWM) can be traced to the same group of men. Because both groups share the common heritage of standing for biblical separation when other Evangelicals reject it, it was natural for this issue of FBFI’s *FrontLine* to be compiled by a team of leaders from BWM.

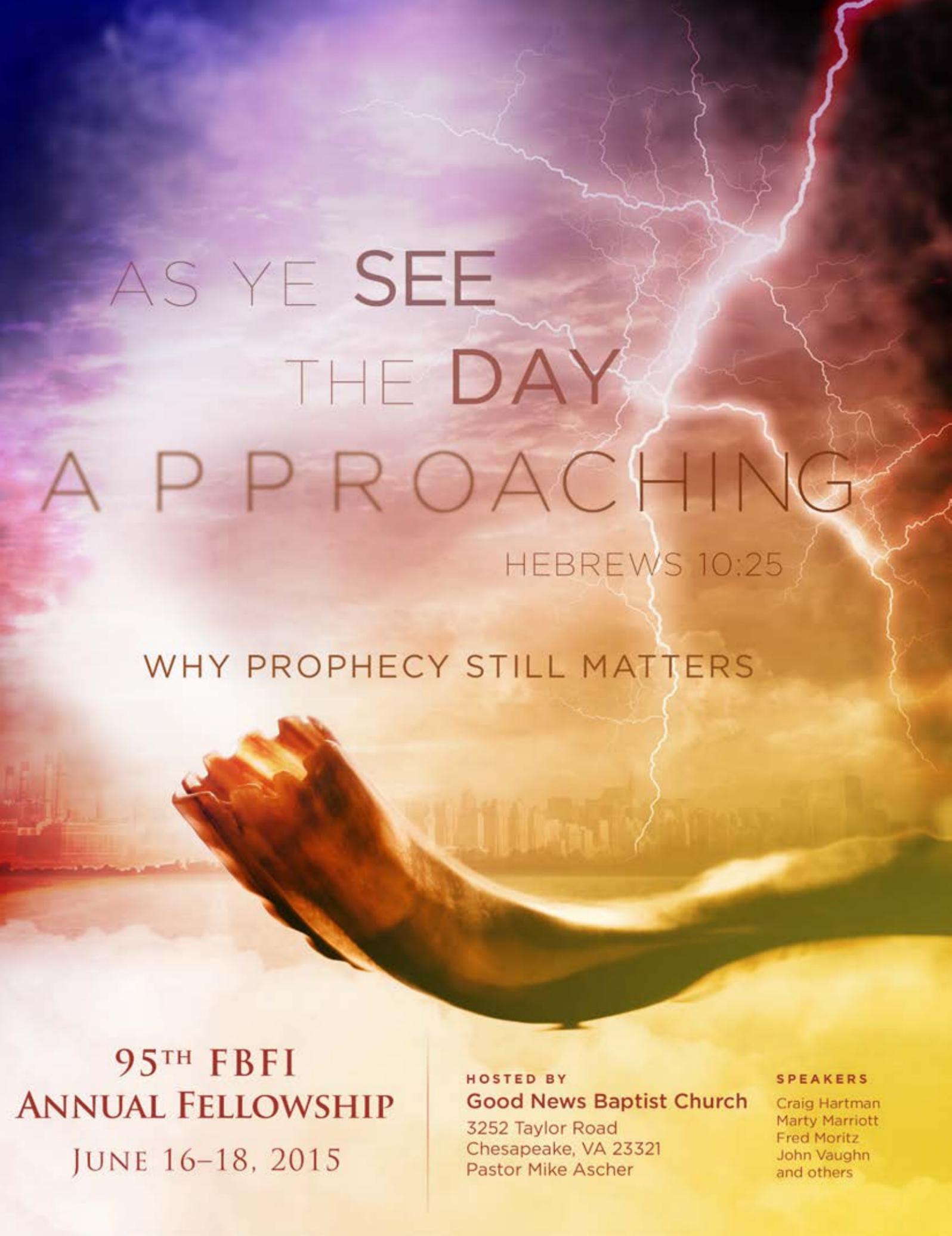
To begin, the Editor provides a sampling of texts to provide a practical foundation for “The Biblical Mandate* and Motive for Separation.” Then Dr. Steve Hankins argues that “Biblical Separation [Is]

A Fundamental Doctrine Mandated by the Nature of God and the Nature of the Gospel.” As he does best, Fred Moritz provides “a brief apologetic for the convictions about biblical separation and the historical context that brought [BWM] into existence” in his article “The Mooring of Biblical Separation.” Bud Steadman explains why separation is “Foundational to Missions” and therefore foundational to biblical evangelicalism itself. Kevin Brosnan answers two critically important questions: “How can the missionary church planter establish churches cross-culturally that are both doctrinally sound and culturally appropriate? And are these two goals necessarily at odds with each other?” To underscore the dangers of seeking, again, an evangelicalism apart from separation, Dan Greenfield presents a critique of the Gospel Coalition, which identifies itself as “a fellowship of evangelical churches deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures,” yet which, as Greenfield states, “nowhere advocates the necessity of ecclesiastical separation . . . as an essential principle.”

Combined, these articles present a cogent argument for the biblical mandate and motive for separation in the context of modern ecclesiastical and missionary history and, based on that argument, an implicit appeal for Fundamentalists not to repeat the mistakes that required Francis Schaeffer to ask in “The Great Evangelical Disaster” whether Evangelicalism itself had sold out to the world.

* The Editor presents a threefold mandate, referring to three specific situations in which separation is required in Scripture. Dr. Hankins’s article speaks of a “fourfold biblical separation” to explain how “the thirst for holiness drives us to a decisive separation.” The reader should note the context in which these terms are correctly used.

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THE DAY
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HEBREWS 10:25

WHY PROPHECY STILL MATTERS

**95TH FBFI
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JUNE 16–18, 2015

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SPEAKERS
Craig Hartman
Marty Marriott
Fred Moritz
John Vaughn
and others

I was recently given an issue of your magazine from a missionary. I just wanted to express an appreciation for the careful consideration of Scripture, the expression of a balanced view, and the helpful tone of the articles. I found the articles mentally stimulating, and the topics relevant.

*Rey Martinez
Missionary to the Sioux*

Editor's Note: *Bluelick Bible Church, Lima, Ohio, sends gift subscriptions to their missionaries. One of those missionaries passed on a recent issue to his ministry partner, which resulted in the letter above.*

I am happy to tell you that I have heard from Pastor [Israel] Akande from Nigeria a number of times. He and my husband, Gary, have also cultivated a friendship. . . . He has talked to Israel twice so far, and wants to encourage him in any way that he can. So that is a big answer to prayer. They are located in different cities, though, but can talk by phone. . . .

We are receiving his ministry newsletter too. God is using him and his family in Nigeria. I am so glad that we can have rich fellowship with those of a different skin color and from a different culture! What a blessing!

*Annetta Small
Liberty Fundamental Baptist
Lynden, WA*

News from All Over (Continued from right)

as in family, school, and youth camps in forty-one states and three Canadian provinces. Mike can be reached at evangelist-shrock@gmail.com or at 864.918.7851.

Last month, **Dr. Vaughn and his daughter, Becky,** traveled

to Hermosillo, Mexico, to minister to the families who had lost small children in a daycare fire back in 2009. Many of these

families are not saved, and Dr. Vaughn and Becky had the opportunity to minister personally to them while there. At least one person accepted Christ.



Shepherd's Bethel Baptist Mission was founded in 1970 by Pete and Marge Weiss. Several years after Pete's homegoing, his youngest son, Michael, received the call to take over the



administrative duties. Since 1990 **Susan and Michael Weiss** have been overseeing this missionary retreat. Missionaries may stay in these fully furnished homes up to three years on deputation and one year on furlough, paying only utilities. Six newly constructed frame-built duplexes offer a safe, comfortable environment.



Harry William Hart, a dear friend to the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, went home to be with the Lord on December 20, 2014. Harry traveled in evangelism for over thirty years, preaching and teaching all across the country. He was a true Fundamental Baptist and will be greatly missed by those he ministered to and served.

Phil Golden has retired from pastoring the Bible Baptist Church of Pittsburgh after twenty-four years of ministry there. He plans to do interim and pulpit supply work in the future. His son, Phil Jr., has been called as the new pastor. Phil serves on the FBFI Executive Board. He can be contacted at pgolden213@gmail.com.



Armed with his Bible and trumpet, **Mike Shrock** has been kept busy in the Lord's vineyard since his first evangelistic meeting in Palmer, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1997. During these past eighteen years the Lord has enabled Mike to log 640,000 miles in proclaiming the good news of redemption in 550 settings—revival campaigns in churches as well

Continued at left

The Biblical Mandate and Motive for Separation

For many believers, “separation” seems to contradict

God’s command to love your neighbor. Clearly, the Bible requires believers to seek and maintain unity. Therefore, the reader may wonder how it can be that Fundamental Baptists argue for separation. The better questions are, “Is there a biblical mandate for separation?” and, if so, “What is the biblical motive for separation?” In brief, there is such a mandate, and the motive is love for and loyalty to Christ, as a sampling of texts will show.

In its simplest form, the biblical mandate for separation is threefold. Separation from the world, from false teachers, and from blatantly disobedient brethren is clearly taught in the Bible. First, we learn from 1 John 2:15–17 and 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 that love for the world is in direct conflict with love for God: “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.” Physical indulgence, visual indulgence, and the arrogance of ungodly self-reli-

ance are spiritual adultery (1 John 2:16; James 4:4). Can we love that which hates Christ (John 15:18)? Just as the Lord is not of this world, neither should we be (John 17:16). Indeed, we are commanded, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). Because your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, your most intimate fellowship is to be with Christ (2 Cor. 6:15–16a), not with the harlot of worldliness.

Second, we learn from Romans 16:17–18, Galatians 1:8–9, and 2 John 9–11 that separation from false teachers is clearly taught in the Bible. Unquestionably, doctrinal modification of the gospel is an intolerable offense. Apostolic doctrine admits no alteration. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). Paul instructed Timothy to withdraw himself from those who taught perverse applications of doctrine (1 Tim. 6:3–5). Giving aid and comfort to false teachers, or even wishing them well in their efforts, makes one a “partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9–11). The biblical mandate is to “mark them which cause divi-

sions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

Third, we learn from Matthew 18:15–18 that separation from blatantly disobedient brethren is clearly taught in the Bible. A similar command is given in 1 Timothy 5:22 regarding the public rebuke of spiritual leaders, lest he who fails to do so "be partaker of other men's sins." Even if we were to grant (which we do not) that these passages may only be applied within a specific local church, they certainly refute the false claim that it is never right to separate from a brother. Biblically, disobedience must be lovingly confronted, with separation following if no repentance is forthcoming. In the case of spiritual leaders, when sin is properly in evidence, public rebuke is required. In fact, unrepentant disobedience is an indication of a false profession of salvation.

Thus, the Bible provides a process of restoration that changes fellowship into evangelism (Matt. 18:17) in the spirit of Galatians 6:1. To reiterate, unrepentant disobedience is a practice of rebellion that contradicts the claim of salvation (1 John 2:19; 3:6–10). Further, refusal to separate from blatant disobedience is disobedience itself, leading to eventual separation from new disobedience. Some call this "secondary separation," an unhelpful term because it implies that levels of contamination require degrees of separation, whereas biblical separation is always for a direct cause. Obviously, discipline of members in local churches is biblical separation. Churches that will not discipline the blatantly disobedient are not scriptural churches. Therefore, worldly churches and those who teach false doctrine as well as those who refuse to practice separation in necessary church discipline are themselves appropriate objects of biblical separation. The biblical language tells us to "put away" (1 Cor. 5:13), "withdraw . . . from" (2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15) and "reject" (Titus 3:9–11).

In addition to these passages that provide a biblical mandate for separation, we find primary support in the classic text on the doctrine of separation, 2 Corinthians 6:1–7:1. There we find not only what to do but why we are to do it. As Christians we are the subjects of a spiritual kingdom; we are to be ambassadors representing that kingdom while living in hostile territory (2 Cor. 5:20–21). Our role as ambassadors is stated after the explanation that we persuade men to be reconciled to God because "the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5:11–19). The command and promise of 2 Corinthians 6:17–18 are unequivocal: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The reason we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers is that there is to be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness (2 Cor. 6:14). Christ's love for us must produce within us love for and loyalty to Christ. Thus, the supreme motive for separation from all unrighteousness is love for and loyalty to Christ.

If you truly love Christ, you must be working to win souls (2 Cor. 6:1–2). That expression of love for Christ has been called "evangelistic unction." Men are saved to glorify God, and salvation is God's gift to men through Christ. In

that context, Paul's motive is our example: we are "workers together" in cooperation with God! Paul's appeal is critical; he implores us to "receive not the grace of God in vain." Quoting Isaiah 49:8, Paul explains that now is the time for us to concentrate on offering salvation to others through Christ, just as Christ offered salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. Biblical separation occurs within the mindset that we are not here merely to enjoy the world but to reach the world. The young theologian who seeks purity of doctrine must employ the power of doctrine, using "evangelistic unction to make orthodoxy function."

It follows that the one who is working to win souls will be willing to make sacrifices (2 Cor. 6:3–10). He will focus not on what he has the right to do for his own enjoyment but on what he has the responsibility to do for God's glory. He will do nothing that could cause anyone to reject the ministry of the gospel but will demonstrate that he is an ambassador of Christ. He will not succumb to mental or physical pressures but will work hard, at times losing sleep or nourishment, enduring every kind of hardship, to serve as a loyal, faithful servant. To be in the world but not of the world requires discipline. The minister who would excuse himself from the rigorous discipline and great sacrifice required may argue, "I can't be like Christ!" Then be like Paul.

If you truly love Christ, you will discern and maintain wise motives in biblical separation (2 Cor. 6:11–7:1). You will have a right attitude toward those who are sincerely trying to help you, listening to the earnest pleas of those whose hearts overflow with concern for you (2 Cor. 6:11–13). You will love those who love you by loving what they love. As well, you will have a right attitude toward those who are trying to corrupt you. You cannot cooperate with God while cooperating with His enemies. You cannot be an ambassador for Christ while living like an idolater (2 Cor. 6:14–16a). Finally, you will have a right attitude toward the One who paid the price to save you, standing in awe of His promises to you and in obedience to His command to you (2 Cor. 16b–7:1). The effective ambassador is to stand up, clean up, and grow up!

In summary, the Bible clearly presents a mandate for separation. The mandate requires us to separate from the world, from false teachers, and from blatantly disobedient brethren. In doing so, we are to maintain the biblical motive for separation: love for and loyalty to Christ.

A helpful illustration of biblical separation is observed in the medical practice of a surgeon vigorously scrubbing his hands before a life-saving surgical procedure. He does not scrub so that he may parade through the hospital halls holding his clean hands up for all to admire. He scrubs to protect the one whose life he is committed to saving. He separates himself from every contaminant, enabling him to fulfill his critical mission. Separation is to the ministry as sterilization is to surgery. Of course, questions remain regarding when, how, and from whom, exactly, but there can be no doubt that the mandate and motive are in the Bible.

In addition to his extensive evangelistic ministry, Dr. John C. Vaughn is president of Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International and pastor emeritus of Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina, where he served as senior pastor for thirty years.



Biblical Separation

A Fundamental Doctrine Mandated
by the Nature of God and the Nature of Gospel

The first great truth that should compel all believers in fellowship, worship, and service is the gospel of God—Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection for the redemption of sinful man. What honest, believing reader of the New Testament does not bow before the Sovereign Savior in abject spiritual poverty, knowing that apart from His grace made available through the gospel we would have nothing of God, know nothing of God, enjoy nothing of God, and would be forever lost? We are blessed beyond measure in Christ alone. Our position is secure and it is glorious by Him alone. We long to see His face, to be with Him, and to serve Him unhindered forever.

All true followers of Christ embrace these truths with joy and proclaim them boldly. They are radically “God centered” and “gospel centered” but in a way far more profound than using these popular descriptive phrases simply as code for adherence to a Reformed theology, coupled with cutting-edge cultural accommodation for the sake of evangelism. *True disciples of the Master believe that the nature of God*

and the nature of the gospel set them apart to a life of dedicated uniqueness for His glory, a life of holiness achieved only by a biblically mandated separatism.

A Fundamental Doctrine Centered in the Nature of God

God Is Holy. God is in His very essence holy, set apart as perfect in every way from the mundane and evil and unto the eternal and the good. Both the Old Testament and New Testament terms translated “holy” in the English Bible mean “set apart, dedicated, pure and complete” (Hebrew, *qadōsh*; Greek, *hagios*). This is the clear truth of Scripture; there is no dissent among interpreters of the Word on this point. As Isaiah recorded, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. 57:15). Fortunately, God’s holiness moves Him toward us in love, not rejection.

Holiness Requires Separatism. The thirst for holiness drives us to a decisive separation for His glory in four ways. (1) Since He who commands believers is holy, our love for Him should compel our obedience to Him, causing us to separate from all sin, as taught in 1 John 3:4 and 5:3. (2) Since He who speaks the truth is holy, our love for Him should compel us to embrace that truth, causing us to separate from all falsehood, as taught in 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1. (3) Since He who is eternal is holy, our love for Him should compel us to reject the temporal world, causing us to separate from its wrong values and behaviors, as taught in 1 John 2:15–17. (4) Since He who is the Head of the Church is holy, our love for Him as His body should compel us to corporate purity, causing us to separate from all that threatens the spiritual health of the church, as taught in Ephesians 5:25–27, 1 Corinthians 5:1–11, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6–15.

This fourfold biblical separation is implicit in a God-centered life; you cannot have the one without the other. The doctrine of biblical separation is inherently God-centered and without question a fundamental of the faith. For the serious disciple, it can never be viewed as peripheral to faithfulness to Christ.

A Fundamental Doctrine Centered in the Gospel

Holiness Is a Central Purpose of Christ’s Redemptive Work. As believers we have been saved to be holy like Christ; we are “called to be saints” (Rom. 1:7, i.e., “holy ones”).

In addition to deliverance from eternal condemnation, this was the great purpose of Christ’s redemptive work through the gospel, bringing ultimate glory to God. This is central to all personal spiritual life and godliness. It is part of the gospel message and gospel living.

For the Church as a Whole. Paul saw the gospel as directly impacting the separateness of the people of God from the world. He wrote of Christ to the church in Galatia in Galatians 1:4–5, “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world [age], according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

While writing of the love of husbands for their wives, Paul used the analogy of Christ’s redemptive work for the church. What is striking about it is how frequently he presents the purity and holiness of the church, her separateness from evil, as the purpose of His redemptive work for it as a whole. The italics that follow are mine to show the emphasis Paul is giving to this idea in Ephesians 5:25–27: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*” Three times in this short statement, Paul stresses the purpose of His redemptive work—separateness from evil and sin, for holiness, and for God’s glory.

For the Individual Believer. Nowhere in the New Testament does any author focus more clearly on holiness as a great goal of Christ’s redemptive work in the believer’s life than Peter does in 1 Peter 1:13–16. Remember, implicit in the holiness achieved through redemption is the idea of biblical separation. Peter unfolds an array of details concerning holiness with remarkable compactness and crescendos his remarks with a pivotal Old Testament quotation from Leviticus 19:2 about holiness in verse 16 (also found in 11:44), saying, “Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

Essentials for Attaining Holiness

Leading up to this command, Peter presents the essentials for attaining holiness and urges us as believers: (1) to prepare our minds for action (“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,” v. 13a); (2) to discipline ourselves (“be sober,” v. 13a); (3) to hope for grace to be given us by Christ through the Word to help us (“and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” v. 13c); (4) to obey God as is children (“As obedient children,” v. 14a); and (5) to not conform ourselves to our former fleshly desires, as we did in our past spiritual darkness (“not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance,” v. 14b).

Reasons for Pursuing Holiness

Peter then presents *compelling reasons for pursuing holiness* for the glory of God. First, the One who called us to salvation is holy and is our model for life (“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,” v. 15). Second, holiness has been God’s will for His people in every era; it was written as a command to Israel, and it is repeated as a command to us in the church, the Body of Christ (“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy,” v. 16). The holiness of God and the holiness of His people are not archaic Old Testament ideas fit only for ancient Israel. They are for all believers, always.

Extremes Required in Holiness

The holiness we are commanded to attain is daunting, even extreme. It is to be demonstrated in *all* of our behavior, in every circumstance. It is *extensive* (“in all manner

The Mooring of Biblical Separation

Baptist World Mission was born out of a theological battle, and much of the conflict concerned the issue of biblical separation. The founders of this agency were possessed with the conviction that separatism is anchored in Scripture. More than fifty years later, Baptist World Mission remains committed to those principles. Its leadership firmly believes that those biblical principles guide matters of association and cooperation in the present theological situation.

The Necessity of Separation

The Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society (CBFMS) came into existence in 1943. The impetus for its formation was the “Inclusive Policy” adopted by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. This policy led to the appointment of orthodox, Bible-believing missionaries along with the appointment of others who deliberately denied the great doctrines of Scripture. CBFMS was originally committed to a separatist position.

The clear dividing line between biblical Christianity and theological Modernism was gradually blurred in the ensuing years. In May of 1957 Billy Graham began his sixteen-week meeting in New York City. That was the first ministry in which he included both Bible-believing ministries and theologically liberal leaders. In December of that same year Harold John Ockenga formally introduced the New Evangelical movement. Some years later, Ockenga would call the introduction of that movement a repudiation of separatism.

The Conservative Baptist movement experienced debate over the philosophy of the New Evangelicalism. Biblical separatists objected to compromise with unbelievers on the part of leaders in the organizations within the Conservative Baptist movement. Some leaders participated in prayer meetings that involved both Jewish and Roman Catholic religious leaders.¹ Many other leaders embraced and supported the ecumenical evangelism that Graham practiced.²

The separatist leaders in the Conservative Baptist movement strenuously objected to these kinds of compromises. Bruce Shelley was critical of Baptist World Mission’s founders, but he accurately described their position:

But why was neo-evangelicalism considered a compromise of fundamental Christianity? To these men Christianity had to be pure, undiluted by any taint of evil or error. To guarantee this purity they felt several things necessary. First, a true believer must adhere to an orthodox confession of faith. Second, he must have no religious association with unbelievers. Third, and perhaps most important for them, a true believer must rebuke, warn, and eventually separate from any believer who is linked in any way religiously with liberals, neo-orthodox or other deniers of the faith.³

I cite Shelley in my history of Baptist World Mission. Immediately after that quotation, I make this statement:

Those in the Conservative Baptist movement who stood against the separatists viewed them as divisive. Shelley either missed the fact or neglected to say that the “hard core” leaders held those convictions because they believed (and their heirs still believe) that in an unequivocal manner Scripture teaches those separatist principles. Shelley resists the position that they, along with succeeding generations, affirm. We believe that God has revealed a body of truth in Scripture and that truth must be earnestly contended for (Jude 1–3); false doctrine is to be avoided (2 Tim 2:15–26; 3:1–5); believers are not to fellowship with those who openly advocate the denial of Christ (2 John 7–11). With regard to Shelley’s third point of emphasis, it must be said that Paul’s instruction to the Roman church applies to doctrinal deviation by believers who are part of a local assembly (Rom 16:17, 18). Those within a local church who promote false doctrine and cause division are to be marked and avoided (Rom 16:17); and heretics are to be instructed, warned, and rejected when they continue to embrace their schismatic teachings (Tit 3:10).⁴ As biblical separatists we affirm that Scripture likewise instructs us that our contending for the faith must not be quarrelsome or contentious, but must be characterized by gentle, patient teaching (2 Tim 2:24–26).⁵ We are unyielding in these convictions. The separatists who brought Baptist World Mission into existence and those who have been honored to be part of its ministry up to this point will gladly admit their desire to obey those biblical injunctions.⁶

This is a brief apologetic for the convictions about biblical separation and the historical context that brought Baptist World Mission into existence.

BWM: Founding and Purpose

Baptist World Mission came into existence on September 15, 1961. On that day the founders adopted a Statement of Purpose that 53 years later remains the “mission statement” for BWM. It reads:

WHEREAS, we recognize the need of a Conservative mission organization which is *strictly Baptist* and committed to local church ideology, *biblically missionary* and dedicated to the establishment of kindred Baptist churches on the foreign field; and *unquestionably separatist* in affiliation and practice; *unashamedly fundamen-*

talist in recognition of the sole authority of the Word of God [emphasis mine].⁷

Most of the leaders who were influential in the founding of Baptist World Mission are no longer on the scene. Bryce Augsburg, Earle Matteson, Monroe Parker, Earnest Pickering, Wayne Van Gelderen Sr., and Richard Weeks are all with the Lord. Ed Nelson served on the BWM board for fifty years and holds the title of board member emeritus. A new generation of board members now set policy for the mission. Lee Long, Monroe Parker, and Fred Moritz served as executives with the agency, and now Bud Steadman leads the ministry.

After more than a half century Baptist World Mission remains on the same foundation as when it was founded. This agency remains committed to the same goals and continues to chart its course in a way that is consistent with those founding principles.

Apostasy assumes different forms and faces over the years. Evangelical compromise has also operated by differing methods in these decades. The board and administrative leadership of Baptist World Mission have necessarily changed with the passing of time. But leadership has continued to chart its course and direct its ministry according to the biblical principles of Baptist, church planting, separatist, and Fundamentalist convictions upon which the ministry was founded.

I was providentially allowed to watch the founding of Baptist World Mission as a college student in 1961. I was profoundly influenced in my training and early years of ministry by men such as Parker and Pickering. It was a privilege to serve on the board for nine years. It was a great honor to have served in the administration of the mission for twenty-eight years. I now have the delight of watching the ministry progress as new administration leads it.

The principles that brought BWM into existence are clear and biblical. The courageous men who led in the formation of this agency were committed in their souls to those principles. Most of those dear brothers are now with the Lord. The heirs of their heritage remain committed to the biblical principles of separation that compelled the founding of the ministry. These biblical, separatist principles have kept the ministry on its consistent course. We stand on these scriptural commitments and seek to serve churches and missionaries who embrace those convictions.

Dr. Fred Moritz served in three pastorates and on the board of Baptist World Mission before assuming the position of assistant to the general director of BWM in 1981. He became the executive director of BWM in 1985 and the director emeritus in 2009. He has served as a professor at Maranatha Baptist Seminary since 2009. Dr. Moritz holds a BA from Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, an MDiv from Central Baptist Theological Seminary, a DMin from Bob Jones University, and an honorary DST from Maranatha Baptist University.



¹ This particular incident involved Russell Pavy, president of the Conservative Baptist Association of America. A picture of this event appeared in an FGBMA publication in November 1962. Accessed January 25, 2011, from the Weniger files at the Fundamentalism File, Bob Jones University.

Continued on page 28



Planting Biblically Separated, Culturally Sensitive Churches

Baptist World Mission's emphasis on "planting churches worldwide" is more than a slogan; it encapsulates our understanding of mission theology and praxis in the New Testament. It is the outworking of the Great Commission, as demonstrated by the apostle Paul's tireless efforts to plant and mature churches on the mission field. But how can the missionary church planter establish churches cross-culturally that are both doctrinally sound and culturally appropriate? And are these two goals necessarily at odds with each other?

Distinguishing Compromise from Culture

Just as pastors in America must vigilantly counter the eroding effects of moral decline in their culture, so missionaries must distinguish between moral and amoral aspects of culture if they hope to plant indigenous churches that will remain faithful to their founding principles. This distinction is the difference between pragmatic capitulation and legitimate acculturation. While missionaries justifiably fear culture as a potential pathway to syncretism, they must also understand the necessity of acculturation. Adapting in matters of dress, food, language, and customs is an external starting point, not an ultimate goal. The most effective missionaries understand how the people of their culture think. They study their worldview, religious concepts, lifestyle,

traditions, language, values, manners, and customs and are able to interact with the indigenous people on these levels.

Failure to plant culturally appropriate churches violates the principle of indigenity by ignoring legitimate cultural norms. At the other end of the spectrum is compromise under the banner of cultural relevance, which ultimately results in syncretistic churches that no longer hold to the "faith . . . once delivered" (Jude 3). Additionally, failure to plant self-sustaining churches violates the principle of autonomy. Failure to plant churches that are both indigenous and autonomous will result in short-lived ministries.

The tension of this dichotomy between cultural compromise and cultural assimilation relates to the outworking of what missiologists have long called the "indigenous principle." By the later nineteenth century men on both sides of the Atlantic were alarmed by the long-term dependency (paternalism) of foreign churches on missionary personnel and funds and by the erosion of doctrinal fidelity in nationalized works. They took a fresh look at Scripture, and men such as Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in England and Rufus Anderson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) independently began promoting indigenous principles, which Melvin Hodges later formulated into the well-known "indigenous principle." Hodges' threefold expression of the indigenous principle states that the mission church should be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing.

Distinguishing Function from Form

That expression focuses on three aspects of the *function* of the mission church. While *function* is a vital emphasis, the concept of indigenuity must also relate to the *form* of the mission church. Although missionaries often use the two terms synonymously, the concepts of indigenuity and autonomy relate more directly to *form* and *function* respectively. A mission church may function autonomously but not be culturally indigenous in form. The missionary cause benefited greatly from the contributions of the aforementioned men and from the resultant corrective measures, which missionaries took with respect to the *function* of the mission church.

Perhaps we could suggest that our generation of independent Baptist missionaries would also benefit from a greater focus on the *form* of the mission church, because the establishment of an autonomous church is not the only essential goal of the church-planting missionary. It is entirely possible and in many cases, probable, that the self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating church will apostatize. What has the missionary accomplished in such cases?

While doctrinal drift may result from any number of root causes, failure to plant culturally appropriate churches is a major cause of failure among mission churches. This oftentimes is because of issues that confront the national pastor after the missionary leaves. On the one hand the national pastor may be left with a “foreign” or “Americanized” church. While the church may have appeared healthy under the missionary’s leadership, its nonindigenous *form* presages its decline under national leadership.

On the other end of the spectrum, the missionary may have unwisely welcomed cultural elements into the church under the banner of indigenuity that are either inherently unscriptural or dangerously suggestive of a path to compromise. In this context doctrine is not only creedal but also the practical living of those beliefs, including a willingness to live biblically separated lives that embrace the necessary alienation from aspects of popular culture. In such a case it is unlikely the national pastor will recognize the danger or have the power to change course. Thus, the importance of indigenous policy, the missionary’s approach to culture, can hardly be overemphasized.

This question not only relates to distinctions between ministry in one’s own culture and cross-cultural church planting, but it also correlates to how servants of God conduct ministry within their own cultures. This is because all culture, whether native or foreign, contains many unbiblical values and practices from which an obedient Christian must separate. This is exactly Paul’s point in Romans 12:2, “Be not conformed to this world.”

Distinguishing Doctrine from Culturally Shaped Biases

This brings us back to our second question. Are the two goals of doctrinal fidelity and cultural appropriateness necessarily at odds with each other? Yes! Every honest missionary who has carefully considered the implications of indigenous policy will admit that he sometimes struggles to distinguish between his own culturally shaped preferences as to the *form* the church should take and his identification of genuine collision points between culture and Scripture. Not only is the missionary obligated to be faithful to God’s Word, but he also needs to understand that doctrinal compromise for the sake of cultural acceptability will ultimately result in a syncretistic church—one that blends non-Christian tenets with biblical truth. Neither can the missionary afford the luxury of rejecting culture “out of hand” for the sake of protecting the church against doctrinal compromise, because doing so violates indigenous policy, which is essential to successful church planting.

A good biblical definition of syncretism is found in 2 Kings 17:33: “They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.” “Idolatry” is the Old Testament word for syncretism when it includes the blending of rites associated with other gods with the worship of Jehovah.

The question arises whether cases of idolatry represent apostasy, polytheism, or syncretism. Rejection of Jehovah in favor of false gods is apostasy. The inclusive worship of

Jehovah and pagan idols is a conversion from monotheism to polytheism and serves as a case of multireligion. The incorporation of pagan rites into the worship of Jehovah is syncretistic idolatry. Jehovah’s condemnation of Israel’s syncretistic idolatry provides a theological answer to today’s syncretism. Insulating mission churches against syncretism is a challenge because syncretism is sometimes difficult to distinguish from mere cultural expressions. Identifying syncretism is a theological, cultural, and academic exercise that the missionary must master and mentor because seemingly innocuous seeds will grow into truth-choking weeds.

If the ultimate goal of New Testament missions is the multiplication of indigenous churches to the glory of Christ, then the successful development of national church leadership must be of paramount importance. The New Testament bears this out with much emphasis on the development of God-called pastors. It is not the establishment of a church but the grounding of it that occupies the most attention in the New Testament. Study of New Testament methods should not distract one’s attention

Continued on page 28

It is entirely possible and in many cases, probable, that the self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating church will apostatize. What has the missionary accomplished in such cases?

Biblical Separation Foundational

“Biblical separation” is a phrase that often evokes a demonstrative response from the individual who hears it. In our American context those who are opposed to the concept of a distinctive Christianity are prone to get their dander up when they hear the phrase used. Believers who are committed to faithfulness to Christ and His Word rally around the concept with zeal that is evident.

The foundation of Biblical separation is the holiness of God. “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). To be separated is to “touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:17). The application of such holiness should impact the man of God in every area of his life and ministry. Biblically we must not divorce what a man is from what a man does.

Too often in the cause of Christ around the world, foreign missionaries are put under great pressure to compromise their obedience to the Word of God. A philosophy of conciliation is frequently promoted by such clichés as “Cooperation for the cause of Christ” or “All that really matters is the gospel.”

According to the example established in the calling and sending of the first two missionaries in the Book of Acts, it is obedient believers who have a heart and a hearing for God’s high calling to missionary service. How can we justify obedience to the call of God to foreign missions while at the same time sanctioning disobedience to God’s clear commands concerning holiness and practical separation?

As we consider the matter of biblical separation and missions, it is important to reflect on the source and the strength of the missionary as presented in the New Testament model.

Separation Is Foundational to the Source of the Biblical Missionary

The story has been told of Lawrence of Arabia visiting Paris after World War I with some Arab friends. As they toured the city, the thing that fascinated them most was the faucet in each of their hotel rooms. They spent hours turning the faucets on and off, commenting on how wonderful it was to be able to simply turn the handle and get all the water they desired. When the time came for their departure, Lawrence found them trying to detach the faucets. They explained, “It is very dry in Arabia. What we need are faucets. If we have them, we will have all the water we want.” Lawrence had to explain that the effectiveness of the faucets lay in their connection to the pipeline, that the supply was inseparable from the source.¹

Some Christians with whom I have been acquainted remind me of those Arabs when it comes to their understand-

ing of the source of missionaries. It apparently has never occurred to them how one comes to be a missionary. They seem to think that there surely must be an unending supply of servants going to foreign lands, since the pastor is always speaking about the large number of calls he receives from missionary candidates on a weekly basis. Just turn on the spiritual tap and well-prepared missionaries will appear.

Just as with Lawrence’s explanation, it is good for us to be reminded that the supply of missionaries is inseparable from the source. That source is twofold—God Himself, for any missionary must be God-called, but also the local church as presented in Acts 13, the *a priori* argument for missions. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus” (vv. 2–4).

Such were the conditions in this church at Antioch that God was able to make clear to the leaders and members of this assembly the work He was doing in their midst. The construction of the text indicates that God had at some point previously called Barnabas and Saul, and now the



to Missions

church was hearing the Holy Spirit speaking to them concerning setting aside those men to that call.

While some may debate how the Holy Spirit spoke to the church, the important truth presented is the fact that the church was so spiritually attuned to the voice of God that the people did not fail to hear the voice of the Spirit when He spoke.

Let's consider for a moment what type of church this was that heard the voice of God's Spirit and became the first great missionary pipeline. In this consideration, we will discover the importance of separation as it relates to the source of the missionary commission.

A Spirit-Filled Church. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers" (13:1). The phrase "in the church" sets the stage for everything that will follow in missions. God did not call men to vocational ministry who were disengaged from local church service, but rather their call came in the context of the institution that He has ordained for this age. We must remember, however, that this was not just any type of church—it was made up of Spirit-filled members who were serving and listening to the voice of God.

One reason it is so difficult for many local churches to discern the will of God and to send out missionaries is that

the Spirit of God is not bearing sway in individual hearts. Such flesh-dominated churches are full of confusion, division, and self-will; ultimately, they have little vision for biblical outreach, discipleship, and holiness.

A Serving Church. The verb translated "ministered" was commonly used in both the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament to describe the work of priests and Levites in the temple (Luke 1:23; Heb. 8:6; 9:21). Its later New Testament usage was connected with the observance of the Lord's Supper and referred to the pattern of worship. In practical terms, it summarized all Spirit-controlled work being done by these prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch and included all that Luke wrote about in the opening chapter of his record when the disciples "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).² Notice that their ministry was "to the Lord"—He was the focus of their service, and obedience to Him was the catalyst for their labors. The point of this verse is very clear—God was calling individuals to broader opportunities of ministry after they had demonstrated faithfulness and effectiveness in the local church. The same is true today—the local church is the training ground for New Testament ministry!

A Seeking Church. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted" (13:2). This word "fasted" indicates that, as they submitted to the Holy Spirit, there was a willingness among the leadership and membership of the church to forgo such things as food, sleep, and social activities in order to give time to prayer and waiting upon the Lord.³

This was a holy church, a separated church. It was Spirit-filled in its service and in its seeking. In such a climate, God made known His will concerning the calling of Barnabas and Saul. The same pipeline principles apply today. Biblical separation is foundational to the source of the biblical missionary, because holiness is the foundation to true New Testament ministry.

Separation Is Foundational to the Strength of the Biblical Missionary

As is true of most words, the idea of separation takes on a differing meaning depending on the person who is using the term. Even among those who are committed to the practice of biblical separation, there are differing views of how it should be played out. Our Lord gives wonderful guidance to us in His intercessory prayer in John 17, directing us to understand that biblical separation is not isolation, but insulation.

What do I mean by "not isolation, but insulation"? Some who seek to genuinely honor the Lord believe that the proper application of separation involves removing themselves from any contact with the world. A few years ago a man told me that he was leaving the church that I



pastored because he did not want his children to be tainted by contact with the bus kids who came to our assembly. Though a motive of purity is a necessary and honorable one, that purity is not to be exercised in a vacuum but in the midst of ministry to a lost world.

In John 17 our Lord used several phrases that point out that we are not to isolate ourselves from the world but rather to insulate ourselves in distinctive Christianity. Notice the relationship of the believer with the world in His prayer: "These are in the world [v. 11]. . . . They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world [v. 14]. . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [v. 15]. . . . As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world [v. 18]."

Perhaps an illustration will help us understand that our Lord is teaching insulation, not isolation. Electricity is a wonderful energy source that has been designed by God for our good. When a generator produces electricity, the current is sent from the generator to the object of the power's application through an insulated wire. If the wire loses its insulation, the power shorts out and is lost, rendering the object of the energy without benefit. If the insulation is maintained, the application of the power is dynamic.

Jesus Christ has given us spiritual power for ministry, but that power flows through us effectively and efficiently only as we are insulated from the world and its draining influence. The object of Christ's power is ministry to a lost and dying world, that men might be saved and discipled

and churches planted. A biblical practice of separation is a major part of that insulation.

Isolation means shutting ourselves off from the world in which we live. Insulation means having the power of Christ flow through us to the lost around us. The first is a clear violation of John 17. The latter is Christ's model for ministry.

Biblical separation in our theology and methodology is foundational to New Testament missions. Obedient believers respond to the call of God and carry out that call. Obedient believers model lives of holiness before the world whom they seek to reach for Christ.

Let's commit ourselves afresh to purity and holy living, to biblical separation and distinctiveness from the world system, in order that the power of Christ may rest upon us and that we might be conduits of His salvation for those to whom we aggressively reach out with the gospel.

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¹ <http://standingforgod.com/tag/lawrence-of-arabia/>

² Stephen L. Olford, *Expository Preaching Outlines*, Volume 1, Quarter 3, Outline 27, 2010 Wordsearch Corp.

³ Ibid.



The Gospel Coalition

Christians need and enjoy fellowship for mutual encouragement and effort for the cause of Christ. The most basic and essential institution for Christian fellowship is the local church. Sometimes believers, churches, and Christian ministries join together in associations, formal fellowships, or organized denominational structures. When considering a formal, organized fellowship, agreement in doctrine and practice is essential for there to be true fellowship; remember that because of mutual influence, you become like those with whom you fellowship.

New organizations are often exciting and attractive, especially when their key figures and those promoting such organizations are respected, notable individuals. Recently a new organization called the Gospel Coalition (TGC) was established within Evangelicalism. TGC has momentum, important Evangelical figures leading and associating with it, and has accomplished many beneficial things.

What is TGC? Who leads and is associated with it? What do they believe? TGC has detailed answers to these questions in their doctrinal statement, *Theological Vision for Ministry*, and a series of fourteen booklets.¹ This article will base its assessment of TGC on these foundational documents.

What Is the Gospel Coalition?

"The Gospel Coalition is a fellowship of evangelical churches deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures."²

In 2005 TGC cofounders D. A. Carson and Tim Keller were concerned with contemporary problems in Evangelicalism. They sought to establish central ground that avoided both Fundamentalism and liberalism, as post-World War II Evangelicals had done in their time. In addition to Carson and Keller, key members include Danny Akin, Thabiti Anyabwile, Voddie Baucham, Alistair Begg, Bryan Chapell, Mark Dever, Kevin DeYoung, Ligon Duncan, Kent Hughes, Erwin Lutzer, Al Mohler, Darrin Patrick, John Piper, Philip Ryken, Sam Storms, and John Yates.

The groups represented by these include the Acts 29 Network, the Baptist General Conference, *Christianity Today*, the Anglican Church, the Evangelical Free Church, Moody Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Southern Baptist Convention, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Wheaton College.

What Does the Gospel Coalition Believe?

Doctrinally, TGC is consistent with most Protestant and Evangelical confessions. Specific detail is given to the believer's election to salvation in Christ, the person and work of Christ (primarily His substitutionary, propitiatory sacrifice), justification by Christ's active and passive obedience, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God existing as "already," but "not yet" (following George Ladd), and the church proclaiming and living the gospel in service to others.

TGC sets forth in its "Theological Vision for Ministry" what "gospel-centered ministry" looks like, involving the following: (1) Truth is what corresponds to reality; truth is given in Scripture but not limited to that source. (2) Scripture has one purpose and message—to tell about Jesus and His salvation. All Scripture must thus be understood and interpreted. (3) Christians must neither be isolated from nor imitative of culture. The church must "do good to the city" by being active in social involvement and justice. (4) The gospel is about what God has done in Jesus Christ, not what individuals have done. The gospel moves believers to holiness and service.

Practically, this means that church worship services must be "gospel focused" in their worship, prayer, and preaching. In personal living, Christians must show love without prejudice to believers and unbelievers, demonstrating "a radically generous commitment . . . to social justice and the needs of the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, and the economically and physically weak."³ Christians must *engage* the culture, not *withdraw* from or *compromise* with it, but seek to *impact* it for the common good. "We should be neither separatist nor triumphalistic in relationship to our culture."⁴ "Churches must work for justice and peace in their neighborhoods through service even as they call individuals to conversion and the new birth," working for "the eternal and common good" of society.⁵

TGC believes this view of ministry is scripturally mandated, that "it is the only kind of ministry that simultaneously addresses human need as God sees it, reaches out in unbroken lines to gospel-ministry in other centuries and other cultures, and makes central what Jesus himself establishes as central."⁶

Assessment of the Gospel Coalition

There are a number of positive things about TGC. They have a commitment to the core gospel message. Their doctrinal statement overall is good. They do address

theological and practical problems in Evangelicalism, rejecting theological liberalism, the prosperity gospel, the seeker-sensitive movement, homosexuality, a second-blessing post-conversion work of the Spirit, annihilationism, and those who deny inerrancy. In contrast to much of historic New Evangelicalism, there is a much better emphasis on the local church. TGC effectively uses media for the accomplishment of its purposes, providing a number of resources (sermons, books, blog posts, and their theological journal *Themelios*).

Despite these positives, there are significant problems with TGC.

First, TGC is very weak on biblical creationism. They ambivalently say that the days of Genesis 1–2 may or may not have been ordinary twenty-four-hour days: “The stakeholders of The Gospel Coalition are not on the same page with respect to all the details.”⁷ Indeed, one of the cofounders, Tim Keller, advocates theistic evolution.⁸ By interpreting Scripture in light of science, whatever peace of mind thus satisfactorily gained is lost by the resultant biblical and theological problems.

Second, TGC’s statement on the Holy Spirit consciously allows for charismaticism, as beliefs about miraculous gifts are not seen as central to the gospel. TGC says, “We should be open to the Spirit working in nondiscursive [nonrational] ways, whether that’s called ‘prophecy,’ ‘illumination,’ or something else.”⁹ “One of the encouraging signs in the evangelical world is how cessationists and continuationists have been able to partner and worship together in recent years, realizing that their commonalities in the gospel are far greater than the issues that separate them with regard to spiritual gifts.”¹⁰ By granting legitimacy to charismaticism, the authority of Scripture is surrendered to experience, thus diluting the gospel. This does not mean that TGC denies the authority of Scripture, but the potential for such is present because of its allowance of charismatic gifts.¹¹

Third, TGC wrongly applies their belief about the Kingdom of God to social effort. TGC is *not* a dispensational-friendly group, despite the presence of a few dispensationalists. It is clearly committed to covenant theology and consciously follows George Ladd’s “already/not yet” eschatological model (just as New Evangelicalism did). The overall message TGC communicates is that covenant theology is essential to being gospel-centered.

Regardless of one’s views about the Kingdom of God, the emphasis on social transformation is wrong. Jesus did not give the church a social mandate or agenda. When this is insisted upon and implemented, history details undeniably tragic results—from social involvement taking the place of gospel proclamation to the development of massive programs that weaken or jettison the gospel.¹² TGC makes clear that social effort is essential to gospel-centered ministry and that social effort is not *a means to an end* (opportunity to preach the gospel), but is *an end in itself*.

Fourth, TGC views culture as morally neutral (neither good nor evil), as seen, for example, in its advocacy of “gospel hip-hop.”¹³ This fails to recognize that *culture* is the expression of humanity thoroughly corrupted by sin, under Satan’s dominion and at enmity with God. This is

a failure of gospel proportions (cf. Rom. 12:1–2; Gal. 1:4; James 1:27; Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:14–16; 4:1–2; and 1 John 2:15–17). The testimony of the gospel and its transformative power are unwittingly corrupted. When TGC speaks of being “gospel-centered” in life and worship, this is a significant issue.

Fifth and last, TGC nowhere advocates the necessity of ecclesiastical separation. TGC occasionally addresses error, and one may even hear a call to separate from a liberal church, but ecclesiastical separation is not viewed as a stated, working, and essential principle of gospel ministry (cf. Rom. 16:17–18; 2 Cor. 6:14–18; 2 Thess. 3:6 and 14; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:19; and 2 John 10–11). TGC has the same basic policy as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)—if you are in agreement with TGC, you are welcome to join, regardless of your ecclesiastical affiliation. Indeed, many of those within TGC belong to churches, fellowships, denominations, and organizations that are NAE members.

TGC consciously and positively looks back to New Evangelicalism as worthy of emulation. Some have objected to seeing parallels between TGC and New Evangelicalism, but TGC adherents draw such parallels themselves. They view this heritage in a good light, connect themselves with it, and endeavor to emulate most of its principles.

While TGC seeks to make some corrections to Evangelicalism and does provide some helpful material, there are sufficient serious problems that one should not join with them for fellowship.

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¹ TGC’s doctrinal statement and Theological Vision for Ministry are available at <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org>.

² <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>

³ <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents>

⁴ D. A. Carson and Tim Keller, *Gospel-Centered Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), p. 12.

⁵ <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents>

⁶ Carson and Keller, *Gospel-Centered Ministry*, p. 15.

⁷ Andrew M. Davis, *Creation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), p. 12.

⁸ http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/Keller_white_paper.pdf

⁹ Kevin DeYoung, *The Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), p. 22.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mark Snoberger, “Who Needs Fundamentalism When We Have T4G and TGC? A Continuing Fundamentalist *Raison d’être*,” <http://www.dbts.edu/pdf/macp/2009/Snoberger%20Who%20Needs%20Fundamentalism.pdf>, p. 7.

¹² Ibid., p. 5.

¹³ <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/healing-hearts-with-hip-hop/>



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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

A Qualified Minister's Character

Many years ago the popular author Warren Wiersbe dedicated one of his books to the memory of Theodore Epp, the founder and Bible teacher of the widely known *Back to the Bible* radio broadcast. Wiersbe's dedication commended him as *A man of the Word* and *A man of integrity*.

By far the largest category into which the ministerial qualifications fall is that of ministerial integrity, or character. The unarguable necessity for this has been exposed repeatedly and shamefully in recent church history. Scandals due to reprehensible ministerial character are epidemic. The scriptural standard is, *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed*, that is, that the ministry not be mocked or laughed at (2 Cor. 6:3). But the widely publicized offenses of high-profile pastors and evangelists feed the scurrilous scandal of newspaper headlines and the ribald humor of talk shows, comedy clubs, and countless water-cooler conversations. In many embarrassing ways the oft-repeated story from the life of the Italian artist Raphael is true of the churches today. He was said to be painting Vatican frescoes when a few Roman Catholic clerics stopped to observe and comment. "The face of the apostle Paul is too red," one remarked. "He blushes," the artist replied, "to see into whose hands the church has fallen."

Into whose hands is the church supposed to be entrusted? Among the other descriptions of her leaders, there are at least ten that fall into the category of character, five positive and five negative.

In character, a minister must be . . .

Positively:

vigilant (1 Timothy)
sober (1 Timothy, Titus)
of good behavior (1 Timothy)
holy (Titus)
temperate (Titus)

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

Negatively:

not given to wine (1 Timothy, Titus)
not greedy of filthy lucre (1 Timothy, Titus)
not covetous (1 Timothy)
not self-willed (Titus)
not soon angry (Titus)

Our present consideration will concentrate on the positive character traits of a qualified minister. As we work through the list, the terms will change to reflect a more accurate understanding of their meanings.

In character, a minister must be, positively, . . .

vigilant (1 Tim. 3:2)
sober (1 Timothy, Titus)
of good behavior (1 Timothy)
holy (Titus)
temperate (Titus)

This qualification was fleshed out at length in the last issue of *FrontLine*. But it's helpful to what we'll be considering in a moment to repeat here that this adjective (*nēphalios*) occurs only two other times in the NT, both in the pastorals (1 Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:2), and both times it is translated *sober*. The verb occurs six times, and in four of these it is also translated *be sober*.

The reason it is generally translated *sober* is that in the first century it referred to someone who was not intoxicated by wine. He wasn't inebriated. He was *sober*. But the application of the word here is probably much broader, since Paul used the word figuratively when he told Timothy to *watch* (to be *sober*) *in all things* (2 Tim. 4:5), and especially since there's another qualification, *not given to wine* (1 Tim. 3:3), that addresses the issue of drunkenness explicitly.

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So men serving as elders (3:2) or deacons (3:10) are not to be intoxicated with anything, even lawful things. Our best English word for this is probably the word *temperate*. If people who know us well almost immediately think of some obsession, indulgence, imbalanced fascination, or impairing preoccupation when our name is mentioned, we may be eroding our qualification for an office that demands sober, vigilant temperance.

J. Graham Miller, a missionary to the New Hebrides during the Second World War, tells in his autobiography of a tribal chief on Tongoa who made a tough decision about this after he had come to Christ. His name was Fandanu. In the South Pacific there is a plant name

Trench concluded that to be sober-minded is to possess a habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires. We need an English word for this self-government that communicates that the mind is involved. Prudent may be our best option.

kava, whose roots have been used for perhaps centuries to produce a nonalcoholic drink with a mildly sedative effect. The old folks first chew the roots, spit the juice into coconut shells, and then dilute it with fresh water. The chiefs in particular are expected to drink this. But Fandanu came to Mr. Miller one day and related to him that he felt that the Holy Spirit had been showing the danger of his indulgence in drinking kava. The reason he gave was, *When I drink kava, I want to go off to sleep. I am in no condition to conduct family worship in my home. If I lose one night of family worship, who is to say whether I shall make a habit of this? The lost days may extend into lost weeks until my spiritual appetite is lost and I find that this one indulgence has brought on serious backsliding and a fall from grace.*¹

That's a man concerned to be *temperate*. And understanding that his decision about kava was an application of this qualification provides a helpful point of reference for grasping the point of the next one.

In character, a minister must be, positively, . . .
temperate (1 Tim. 3:2)
sober (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8)
of good behavior (1 Timothy)
holy (Titus)
temperate (Titus)

Here is the word *sōphrōn*. Because, like the previous word, it also is translated *sober*, we may confuse the two. They certainly overlap in some ways, but there is a difference between them.

This word has the components of *sōs* (safe) and *phrēn* (the mind). Gilbert Murray, a secular authority on ancient Greece wrote, *There is a way of thinking (emphasis mine) which destroys and a way which saves. The man or woman who is sōphrōn walks among the beauties and perils of the world, feeling the love, joy, anger, and the rest; and through all he has that in his mind which saves.*²

Murray speaks of this word as referring to a man's thinking. He thinks in a way that keeps him safe. That kind of thinking is called *sōphron*. The King James describes it as *sober*, the NASB calls it *prudent*, and the ESV refers to it as *self-controlled*.

This is why the verb of this adjective is so appropriate for describing the new mental state of the maniac of Gadara. He was *in his right mind* (Mark 5:15). The noun of this word served Paul well when Festus protested Paul's preaching with the mistaken assessment that the apostle's *much learning* had made him *mad*. But Paul replied that he was speaking *the words of truth and soberness*. That is, his words were the reflection of a sound mind, a safe mind, a prudent mind.

No wonder that Jeremy Taylor called this *reason's girdle and passion's bridle*.³ R.C.H. Trench concluded that to be sober-minded is to possess a *habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires*.⁴ We need an English word for this self-government that communicates that the mind is involved. *Prudent* may be our best option.

Here, then, is a good way of assessing oneself by both this qualification and the former one. The former word describes a minister's freedom from the dominion of any outer intoxicant (wine, kava, etc.). When it comes to these influences, he is *temperate*. This qualification points to his similar freedom from the dominion of any *inner* appetites. When it comes to these, he is *prudent*.

One might almost say that the first governs his relationship to the world around him, whereas the second keeps a check on the "world" within him. Or to think of it in relationship to spiritual warfare, one could say that the first quality, *temperate*, says something about how victorious a man is over what the New Testament calls *the world*, whereas the second, *prudent*, describes how victorious he is over what the New Testament calls *the flesh* or even more specifically, *the desires of the flesh and of the mind* (Eph. 2:3).

Perhaps the most significant fact for stressing that a minister be known for this virtue is that it is not only expected of those in spiritual leadership, but also of every age group of believers within the church: older men (Titus 2:2), younger men (Titus 2:6), and older and younger women (Titus 2:4–5). It is also one of the fundamental characteristics taught by the grace of God to all believers (Titus 2:12). So it would be difficult to underscore too boldly the criticality of its presence in pastors.

In character, a minister must be, positively, . . .
temperate (1 Tim. 3:2)

prudent (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
of good behavior (1 Tim. 3:2)
holy (Titus)
temperate (Titus)

Charles Jefferson, the early twentieth-century pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City once observed, *Many a man in the ministry fails, not because he is bad, but because he has a genius for blundering.*⁵ Often that blundering stems from a serious deficiency in this next area. It logically follows the two words which we've seen have to do with a qualified minister's ability to govern the outer and inner influences that render other men unequipped for pastoral leadership.

Here again, cross-referencing is important for arriving at a right conclusion. We have only one other occurrence of this adjective (*kosmios*), but thankfully the verb (*kosmeō*) is used by New Testament authors nine times. Some of those usages will turn on the lights for us.

For instance, this is the verb our Lord used to describe a house that is swept and *garnished* (Luke 11:25), that is *put in order*. It is also the verb used repeatedly for beautifying or adorning things. The Herodian temple in Jerusalem was *adorned* with beautiful stones (Luke 21:5). The holy city, the New Jerusalem, comes down out of Heaven like *a bride adorned for her husband* (Rev. 21:2). In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, God says that He had *decked* or *adorned* Jerusalem like a woman, with ornaments and with gold and silver (Ezek. 16:11, 13).

These usages are in keeping with the conclusion that the word refers to *putting in order, arranging, and adorning*.⁶ The commentator I. Howard Marshall writes that the word was *especially used by philosophers to convey the sense of orderliness, discipline, and decorum. . . . From this it has the sense of well-mannered and honourable. The impression is of a character which is tidy and neat, not slovenly nor showy.*

You can see, then, why 1 Timothy 3 may sequence the first three character qualifications the way it does: (1) temperance in regard to potential intoxicants, (2) prudence in regard to inner passions, and (3) an orderly life that testifies to the presence of both.

Scripture warns that *he that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls* (Prov. 25:28). The imagery would have been vivid to someone in the ancient world, but it's not hard for us to imagine such a sight. It's the picture of a man who is neither (1) temperate nor (2) prudent. So (3) his affairs are a shambles: disordered, disorganized, and messy.

Overseeing a church of any size challenges a man's abilities to manage. Are we capable of doing so in a way that will adorn the ministry? The answer is not hard to find. Let's take a look at the way we order our own affairs—the management of our money, the care of our automobiles and homes, the stewardship of our time. Does it all look *broken down and without walls*?

Everyone has his messy moments. Most of us have

closets or desk drawers or garages or attics that get away from us. Almost no one can stay on top of all the details of life all of the time. Who doesn't bemoan the quagmire of unanswered e-mail? I suppose there are a few rare souls whose inbox stays clean.

But there's a level of being constantly at loose ends that exposes the inner character flaw of being unable to govern oneself. Solomon related having seen a field all grown over with thorns and nettles. Its stone wall to keep out varmints was broken down. Solomon said that when he noticed this sight, he considered it well and received instruction. Let's do the same. Should its owner be placed into leadership in a local church? Well, Solomon says that the field belonged to a *sluggard*! To a man *void of understanding* (Prov. 24:30–32). Can we expect such a man to govern a church well?

We can assign almost anyone to a leadership position. But leadership is a function, not a position. Leadership is *leading*, not occupying a slot on an organizational chart. And leaders must be able to lead themselves first, both internally and externally.

When we assess our fitness for ministerial office . . . we're actually examining the degree to which we're Spirit-controlled men.

The orderliness of their lives attests to their ability to do this.

But where does this ability come from? This leads us to a fundamental virtue found in the list in Titus.

In character, a minister must be, positively, . . .

temperate (1 Tim. 3:2)
prudent (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8)
orderly (1 Tim. 3:2)
holy (Titus)
***temperate* (Tit. 1:8)**

If we're looking for a character quality from which the three previous ones might stem, this probably comes as close as we're going to find. The word is *engkratēs*, and it has as its root a word for power, force, or strength (*kratos*). *It accordingly denotes a man who has power. . . . It then means self-control.*⁷ That is, it refers to someone who has power over himself. The word *disciplined* is sometimes used to express this word. That's why athletes come immediately to mind. In fact, Paul uses the related verb of athletes when he notes that every one of them is *temperate in all things* (1 Cor. 9:25). They are *disciplined* or *self-controlled* in all things. That is, they attempt to be.

Even highly disciplined athletes find it impossible to control themselves consistently. Anger, arrogance, aggressiveness, belligerence, hostility, sexual lust, stubbornness, self-will, and many other vices not only afflict them but often conspicuously dominate them. In many

respects they lack this virtue of self-control. But to whatever degree they possess it, they tend to possess the previous three virtues as well. They are temperate, prudent, and orderly in their lifestyle.

That's one reason I think that it is possible that *engkratēs*, self-control, is truly the best word for bundling up in itself the previous three requisites for ministerial office. But the main reason is that it's the only one of the four listed in Galatians 5 as a fruit of the Spirit. That doesn't mean that the others are unimportant. They are necessary virtues not only in Christian leaders but in every Christian. Yet none are listed as fruit in Galatians 5 except self-control. And self-controlled people display it in those other ways. So I want to suggest again that self-control is the general qualification concerning self-governance, of which temperance, prudence, and orderliness are the more specific manifestations. In 1 Timothy 3 Paul lists the specific manifestations; in Titus 1 he includes only the generality, just as Galatians 5 does. And that leads to a significant conclusion.

When we assess our fitness for ministerial office, whether it be by the specific standards of sobriety, sound-mindedness, and orderliness, or by the more general qualification of self-control which is the soil from which they spring, we're actually examining the degree to which we're Spirit-controlled men. The first deacons were to be *full of the Holy Ghost* (Acts 6:3). How was the church to know? Here would have been one revealing test: were they *self-controlled*?

In character, a minister must be, positively, . . .
temperate (1 Tim. 3:2)
prudent (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8)
orderly (1 Tim. 3:2)
holy (Tit. 1:8)
self-controlled (Tit. 1:8)

The word translated *holy*, *hosios*, is an uncommon one. The word used most often of something holy, *hagios*, occurs over 230 times. But *hosios* is found only eight times (and five of these are in quotations from the Septuagint), a fact that ought to caution us about assuming that we know what this qualification is just because it's translated with the common word *holy*. That's confirmed by the way the Septuagint distinguishes the two words.

In the Septuagint, *hagios* and *hosios* are not used interchangeably. The former is used to translate the Hebrew word for separateness or consecration, whereas the latter is used to express the Hebrew word for being pious or godly. That gives us a broad hint as to the probable usage of the word by the New Testament authors. Actually, however, there are only five times that this adjective, its noun, or the adverb are used of Christians. Besides here in Titus, the only other use of the adjective to describe believers is in 1 Timothy 2:8, *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands*. The

adverb is used in 1 Thessalonians 2:10, *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*. The noun, *holiness*, is a characteristic of believers only in Luke 1:75 and Ephesians 4:24.

The point of mentioning those facts is to substantiate that this particular word is not used in either the Old Testament or the New Testament as a common synonym for the normal adjective, *holy*. This word holds its own territory.

That territory, when the word is used of people's responses to God, seems to be the field of obligations that they have to Him. Certain things are obligatory in a man, especially a Christian man, as he responds to God. Awe is one. Devotion is another. Conscientious discharge of sacred responsibilities is a third.

This, at least, is how the word tends to be used in ancient Greek literature and in the Septuagint. That's why, to this day, those orthodox Jews who give scrupulous attention to conforming themselves to every jot and tittle of the law describe themselves as the *Hassidim*, the *holy* ones, the ones fulfilling all man's sacred obligations to God. The rest of humanity is made up of the impious, those who neglect or refuse their holy responsibilities.

English words that capture the distinguishing nuance of this virtue are *pious* or *devout*. This is a hard thing to measure in oneself, let alone in anyone else. It certainly isn't an assumed air, displayed sanctimoniously with a morbid countenance and breathy voice. But would it not be a reassuring confirmation if just once in our lifetimes someone might say of us what Andrew Bonar wrote of his friend, Robert Murray M'Cheyne? During one communion season when he was the visiting preacher in the town of Jedburg, *the impression left was chiefly that there had been among them a man of peculiar holiness. Some felt, not so much his words, as his presence and holy solemnity, as if one spoke to them who was standing in the presence of God*.⁸ ☞

¹ *A Day's March Nearer Home* (Banner of Truth, 2010), 65.

² *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (Clarendon Press, 1907), 28.

³ Quoted by William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Westminster Press, 1975), 80.

⁴ *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1975), 72.

⁵ *Quiet Hints to Growing Preachers* (Thomas Y Crowell & Company, 1901), 7.

⁶ *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, 1986), I:521.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I:494.

⁸ *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Banner of Truth, rpt., 1995), 137.

Bring . . . the Books

Samson: His Life and Work
by Thomas Kirk

I recently stumbled upon the author Thomas Kirk while perusing *The Minister's Library* by Cyril Barber (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985). In his section on "Old Testament Bible Characters," Barber rates all four of Kirk's biographies (Samson, Saul, Solomon, and Joseph) with an asterisk indicating that they are highly recommended. Having never heard of Thomas Kirk, I purchased a copy of *Samson: His Life and Work* (Andrew Elliot, Edinburgh: 1891)*. Kirk did not disappoint.

Kirk divides the life of Samson into six lectures covering his birth, marriage, revenge, victory, fall, and death. He includes a supplementary lecture at the end titled "The Mythical Theory of Samson" that argues forcefully for the historicity and accuracy of the biblical account. He concludes the book with an appendix containing notes from each chapter, further explaining points of interest.

At the close of each lecture Kirk summarizes the material into points of application that are relevant for today. These alone are well worth the price of the book.

Interestingly, Kirk declares at the beginning of his study, "Samson, with all his faults, was a truly great man, and did a noble work. . . . He was eminently worthy of his distinguished position as a Judge" (p. 5). As I read the book, I became more aware of Samson's godly upbringing and divine blessing (Judges 13:24ff). Apparently Samson's parents did not flee to the north with the part of the tribe of Dan that stole Micah's god and self-appointed priest. In spite of the difficulties, they chose rather to stay in the land that God had given them. Moreover, they sought to follow the Lord's instructions in rearing their son as a lifelong Nazarite. Kirk observes, "Eminent service for God is allied to eminent consecration to God" (p. 32). God's plan for Samson was that he would "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5). God knew beforehand his limitations. Samuel, his contemporary and close neighbor, would finish the job (p. 47).


In the chapter on Samson's marriage Kirk points out the providence of God. Perhaps the return of the ark of the covenant to Beth Shemesh was at the very same time that "the Spirit of the LORD began to move him [Samson] at times in the camp of Dan" (Judges 13:25). Beth Shemesh was located near the base of the ridge where Samson grew up (pp. 51–52). Furthermore, Samson's stubbornness to marry the Philistine woman from Timnath would be used by God to begin to stir Samson against the oppressor. Kirk comments regarding Samson's rebellion against his parents' advice, "It is a striking illustration of the way in which God brings good out of evil" (p. 59).

When commenting on Samson's revenge, Kirk contrasts Samson's behavior with that of the Philistines. They were a cruel and violent people, even to their own kind, whereas Samson was restrained in his response to his bride and the guests at the wedding (p. 80). In the end, Kirk observes, "Great wrongs have been the means,

not only of giving freedom to the slaves of sin and Satan, but also of purifying and ennobling the people of God" (p. 103).

It is in the chapter on Samson's victory that we see clearly his noble nature. Kirk points out that Samson treats the men of Judah graciously, even though they were behaving cowardly, even treacherously. His own people were willing to sacrifice him in an attempt to placate their oppressors (pp. 115ff). He writes poetically regarding the men of Judah that they had come "to love bondage more than liberty, bondage with ease than strenuous liberty" (p. 118). So, like Jesus, Samson permits himself to be bound by the traitors. He responded in faith that God would deliver him against innumerable odds with merely the jawbone of a donkey, prompting him to later call the place "Jawbone Heights" (Ramath-lehi). Kirk concludes, "The servants of God, when mightily endowed by the Spirit of the Lord, may achieve wonderful successes with the most insignificant and unlikely instrumentalities" (p. 142).

When introducing the chapter on Samson's fall, Kirk maintains that the aforementioned events took place during the first year of his rule and that his immoral relationships took place during the last year of his rule. With this in mind, it is interesting to consider that during all twenty years of Samson's judgeship, he had to fight alone (p. 152). But during that time, he had experienced uniform success. Perhaps the overconfidence and loneliness of his many years of service set him up for a fall. Kirk concludes that the Philistine lords may not have known the secret of his strength, but they discovered his weakness and exploited it. The author observes, "It was through Adam's love for Eve that Satan sought to overcome him; and it was through Samson's love for Delilah that the lords of the Philistines sought to overcome Samson. Woman, indeed, when true to duty, is an helpmeet for man; but, when perverted and false, she is one of his greatest sources of danger. And in seeking to gain the help of Delilah, the lords of the Philistines manifested the wisdom of the serpent" (pp. 164–65).

The author did great research in explaining the life and work of Samson. His observations were fresh and thoughtful. Not only does it function as a conservative commentary on Judges 13 through 16, it also serves as a devotional that challenges the reader in his walk with the Lord. 

*To access a free copy of Thomas Kirk's *Samson: His Life and Work*, go to <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc1.cr59885831;view=1up;seq=277>.

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

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Straight Cuts

Trials: The Great Equalizer (James 1:9–11)

The Book of James begins by dealing with the subject of trials. James provides rich insight into how believers should handle times of testing in their lives. In this insightful section (1:9–11), James reveals how trials become “the great equalizer” for God’s people. They level life for the rich and the poor.

First, trials elevate “the brother of low degree.” Here, James addresses poor brethren. They know Christ personally, but they are financially impoverished. Some writers speculate that their poverty originated through persecution, but the text does not address the origin of their poverty. James simply addresses them as poor. The phrase “of low degree” refers to a person of low status, someone who is poor or undistinguished. In this context, it refers to a believer or group of believers who have very limited financial means.

James instructs the poor believer to “rejoice.” He wants him to boast or glory in his current status. At first, this directive appears shocking. Why would a poor believer glory in his poverty? Humanly, this command makes no sense.

James teaches that the poor believer is to boast in that which exalts him. The phrase “in that he is exalted” refers to a poor believer’s high position in Christ. Even though he has little financial means, his position in Christ greatly exalts him. His current financial status in no way diminishes his position in Christ. In fact, it enhances or elevates it. John MacArthur Jr. writes, “When God, in His wisdom and sovereignty, takes away physical possessions from some of His children, it is for the purpose of making them spiritually mature, a blessing infinitely more valuable than anything they have lost or have wanted but never possessed. The believer who is deprived in this life can accept that temporary and insignificant deprivation because he has a future divine inheritance that is both eternal and secure” (*James*, p. 39).

In short, a poor believer facing persecution should never hang his head in shame or despair. He should not boast in his poverty. There is nothing virtuous about being poor. He should, however, boast in his heavenly calling and rich position in Christ that far exceeds the temporal possessions of any man on earth (Eph. 1:18–21). Even the poorest of believers is a king and a priest unto God (Rev. 1:6). Clearly, there is much in which a poor, persecuted believer can rejoice!


Second, by contrast, trials lower the status of a rich believer. Some writers speculate that James is addressing the unsaved rich in this passage. However, because of its context and the elliptical nature of James’s writing, it appears that James addresses rich, persecuted believers in verses ten and eleven.

How are the rich made “low”? They still possess their riches, but those riches have limited means to sustain or comfort them. In fact, their riches may even bring additional forms of persecution or hardship to their lives. In James’s day, many believed that riches were an indication of God’s blessing. When the rich faced difficulties, some assumed that God had removed His hand of blessing from their lives or was bringing judgment upon them.

Instead, trials can bring blessing to the rich as well as the poor. The poor believer looks beyond his current circumstances to rejoice in his position in Christ. The rich believer recognizes the limits of his wealth and rejoices in his opportunity to value what truly matters. Homer A. Kent Jr. writes, “When trials (including persecution) come to the rich man and threaten his possessions, he need not despair. Rather, he should recognize the temporal nature of wealth in comparison to the abiding values of spiritual life” (*Faith That Works*, p. 43).

James provides a powerful illustration to remind the rich believer of the transitory nature of his life and riches. Quoting from Isaiah the prophet (40:6–8), James pictures the temporary beauty of the Israeli flowers and grass arising in early February and drying up in May. Some interpret the phrase “burning heat” as a description of the sirocco (“blasting, scorching southeast wind”) that brings devastation to the fragile grass and flowers (James Adamson, *The Epistle of James*, p. 63). James uses natural forces to remind the rich believer how temporary and transitory his current status is. The phrase “in his ways” refers to the rich believer’s short journey or trip through life. Similar to the grass or flowers of the field, his journey will soon “fade away” or disappear.

As with a poor believer, a rich believer’s only true security is found in Jesus Christ. Going through trials reminds him of who he is and what he has through Christ. It is a great blessing when the circumstances of life clarify true values.

D. Edmond Hiebert writes, “The rich brother has come to realize that at the cross he stands on a level with the poor brother” (*The Epistle of James*, p. 93). MacArthur adds, “The loss of material things is meant to drive the rich person to the Lord and to greater spiritual maturity, blessing, and satisfaction. And to that point, the rich and poor are exactly alike. Neither material possessions nor lack of them is of any ultimate consequence. What is of significance is a trusting relationship to the Lord, who showers all of His children with spiritual wealth that will never diminish or fail to satisfy. . . . Trials are the great equalizer, bringing all of God’s children to dependence upon Him” (p. 41). 

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

Believers for centuries have been challenged and encouraged by the gripping tale of Christian in John Bunyan's classic allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*. One stop along his arduous journey is particularly instructive. Christian finds himself at the house of the Interpreter where spiritual truths are explained through vivid illustration. In one room he sees a fire in a fireplace and a man pouring water on it. However, each time the water is poured on it the fire burns with greater intensity. Christian is led to the back of the fireplace where he learns the cause of this phenomenon. Behind the fireplace another man is pouring a substance on the fire, but instead of water this man is pouring oil. The unceasing flow of oil ensures that the fire will never be extinguished. Interpreter explains to Christian that the one pouring the water illustrates Satan and his attempts to extinguish a believer's faith. Jesus Christ is pictured as the one behind the fire ensuring its survival, and the oil He is pouring illustrates the grace of God. Bunyan has captured through this simple illustration the powerful truth that grace is God's power made available to mankind. God's grace supplies the power necessary to turn a rebel to repentance, and His grace provides the power that enables believers to persevere along their pilgrimage of faith. It is interesting that Interpreter had one final lesson for Christian before they left the fireplace room. He tells Christian that the man pouring oil is hidden behind the fireplace to illustrate that people are often unaware of how God supplies them with His grace.¹

Although it is true that God sovereignly supplies His grace when and how He chooses, the Scripture does give us a sense of how God communicates His grace to believers. The authors of the New Testament consistently connect three activities with the bestowal of God's grace: the Scriptures read or preached, prayer private or corporate, and fellowship among believers. It is not surprising that these are the very activities that were pursued by the church just after its formation in Acts 2:42. Consider the following additional examples. Paul refers to the Scripture as "the word of [God's] grace" in Acts 20:32; the writer of Hebrews encourages believers to approach the throne of God's grace to obtain "grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16); and Peter tells his readers that they have the opportunity to steward the manifold grace of God as they minister to one another (1 Pet. 4:10). These Scripture passages, and many others, point believers to these three activities as vital lifelines that connect them to the strengthening grace of God. Christians living out their faith over the centuries, some in very challenging circumstances, have found that Bible has not misled them. They have added their voices to the witness of the Scriptures by testifying to the ministry of grace wrought by God through the Word, prayer, and fellowship.

Scripture

Consider the power of the Bible displayed in the following story told by Dr. James M. Gray. Dr. Gray was one of the leaders of early Fundamentalism, a close associate of D. L. Moody, and an editor for the Scofield Reference Bible. Early in his career as a Bible teacher he recounted that he was struck by the serene and substantive spiritual life of a close friend. Since Gray desired those same attributes in his life, he asked his companion the secret of his vibrant walk with Christ. "It all started through reading Ephesians," said the man. Even as a Bible teacher, Gray was surprised by this response. He had read Ephesians many times and had not experienced such a radical change. Noticing Gray's consternation, the man explained himself. "On one occasion, when I was on a short vacation, I took a pocket edition of Ephesians with me. Lying down one afternoon, I read all six chapters. My interest was so aroused that I read the entire epistle again. In fact, I did not finally lay it down until I had gone through it some fifteen times." He then said, "When I arose to go into the house, I was in possession of Ephesians; or better yet, it was in possession of me. I had the feeling that I had been lifted up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus—a feeling that was new to me." The testimony of this friend and brother in Christ encouraged Gray to master the Scriptures for himself. He began to saturate his mind and heart with God's Word so that he could freely and effectively communicate it to others.² What Gray and his friend had experienced was the grace of God ministered through His Word. That grace equipped and strengthened them to live their lives in submission to Christ.

During the Vietnam War many American officers were held as prisoners of war in the dreadful Hoa Lò prison in Hanoi (dubbed by the Americans "the Hanoi Hilton"). A number of those officers were Christians and relied on their faith during unimaginable hardship. Throughout the early days of their imprisonment, many of them would scribble down on scraps of paper any verses of Scripture that they could remember. Later on, as a propaganda stunt, the prisoners were given a Bible. Eugene McDaniel, a naval aviator, describes their reaction.

We immediately set out to get as much of it copied down as we could. First we took down the whole gospel of Matthew, because it had favorites such as the Sermon on the Mount and the Christmas Story. And once we had it on paper, Ralph Gaither, who had a terrific photographic mind, memorized it all just in case we never got a copy of the Bible again. We finally had to post a reading list for the Bible, each

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

Charles Spurgeon

man taking a certain time; some men had to get up at three a.m. to get their turn, but they never missed.³

They also formed a prayer club and spent many hours pouring their souls out to the Lord in prayer. Often Christians can be tempted to think that the spiritual tools God has provided them are insufficient to meet their daily challenges. However, these men found that they were fully equipped to face even the most challenging circumstances.

Prayer

Not only did the Word strengthen the men in Hanoi, but prayer also became a vital part of their lives. In *My Utmost for His Highest* Oswald Chambers highlights the necessity of prayer by expounding 2 Corinthians 6. This passage serves as a reminder that strengthening grace must be continually appropriated in order to prepare for both routine and challenging circumstances. He exhorts his readers to draw on the grace of God through prayer.

The grace you had yesterday will not be sufficient for today. Grace is the overflowing favor of God, and you can always count on it being available to draw upon as needed. “In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses”—that is where our patience is tested. Are you failing to rely on the grace of God there? It is not a question of praying and asking God to help you—it is taking the grace of God *now*. We tend to make prayer the preparation for our service, yet it is never that in the Bible. Prayer is the practice of drawing on the grace of God. Don’t say, “I will endure this until I can get away and pray.” Pray *now*—draw on the grace of God in your moment of need. Prayer is the most normal and useful thing; it is not simply a reflex action of your devotion to God. We are very slow to learn to draw on God’s grace through prayer.⁴


Fellowship

Finally, believers ought to be drawing on the grace of God through fellowship with other believers. Dr. J. Vernon McGee helps identify the biblical meaning of fellowship, as opposed to what believers sometimes assume fellowship to be.

Years ago I was invited down to Huntington Beach about once a year to give a message at a Rotary Club luncheon. A Christian doctor was chairman of the program committee down there, and he would invite me to come at Christmas time or Easter time and give them the Gospel—both barrels, which is what I always tried to do. Over the speaker’s table they had a slogan: “Food, Fun, Fellowship.” Those three things belonged to the early church, and I didn’t feel that the Rotary Club should have bragged about having any one of the three. For food there would be

embalmed chicken with peas as hard as bullets. For fun they had corny jokes. The fellowship consisted of patting someone on the back and saying, “Hello, Bill. How’s business?” Now that is not fellowship in the biblical sense of the word. Well, the Christian idea of fellowship is not much different. When you hear an announcement of a church banquet, it is almost certain that you will be urged to come for food and fellowship. What do they mean by fellowship? They mean meeting around the table and talking to each other about everything under the sun except the one thing that would give them true fellowship, the person of Christ. *Koinonia* means that which believers can share of the things of Christ. There are three elements that must enter into it: spiritual communication, sympathetic cooperation, and sweet communion. (1) Spiritual communication is sharing the things of Christ. This would be sharing the great truths concerning Christ. (2) Sympathetic cooperation means working together for Christ. That is why, when Paul used the word fellowship, he could be talking about Bible reading or Bible study together or prayer or celebrating the Lord’s Supper or taking up an offering. Paul called all of these *koinonia*—fellowship. The result would be (3) sweet communion. It makes us partners with Christ. This is true *koinonia*. Paul wrote that this church was having fellowship with him. He had communicated to them the Gospel. They had shared with Paul in a sympathetic cooperation. They had sent a gift to him and had ministered to his physical needs again and again. Then when they were together, they had sweet communion.⁵

He correctly identifies fellowship as the commonness that believers have in Christ. This commonness takes many forms but is most easily summarized as the vibrant life of the church. God intends for the Christian life to be lived out in a community with other believers. It is often through this closeness to other believers that we are encouraged, corrected, and built up in our faith.

Believers need God’s grace in order to live victoriously, and they can appropriate that grace through the Word, fellowship, and prayer. There may be some who are tempted to think that is too simple, but the reality is that is how God has intended for His people to be connected to His grace. This is the witness of Scripture, and it is the witness of believers throughout the centuries. 

¹ John Bunyan, *Pilgrim’s Progress* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1844), 111–12.

² *Sermon Illustrations*, http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/b/bible_study_of.htm (accessed October 30, 2014).

³ Eugene McDaniel, *Scars and Stripes* (Irvine, CA: Harvest House Publishers, 1975), 99–100.

⁴ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, June 26 entry.

⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers).



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Truths are not created, they exist. —Joseph Joubert

It is not what you remember but what you decide to forget that will determine your usefulness and ministry.
—Jim Schettler

If you is what you was, you ain't. —John Jasper

When Christians meet . . . to take counsel together, their purpose is not—or should not be—to ascertain what is the mind of the majority, but what is the mind of the Holy Spirit—something which may be quite different.
—Margaret Thatcher

The history of that human ignorance which calls itself “philosophy” is absolutely identical with the history of fools, except where it diverges into madness.
—Charles Haddon Spurgeon

The reason angels can fly is that they take themselves so lightly.
—G. K. Chesterton

Risks are not to be evaluated by the probability of success, but rather by the value of the goal.
—Ralph Winter

God's anger flares precisely *because* of His love, not in spite of it.
—The Apologetics Study Bible

But what is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? It is the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without tuition [discipline] or restraint.
—Edmund Burke

Ah, remember, if lust can work in your heart, and you lie down contented with it, you are none of Christ's!
—Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Toxic people are a necessary component of your desire for holiness.
—Edythe Draper

The fundamental requirement of the Christian leader is not a knowledge of where the stream of popular opinion is flowing but a knowledge of where the stream of God's truth lies.
—David Wells

Where only the light of natural reason is operative, heresy is found. . . . Progress and advance in theology happen where reason is illumined and strengthened by faith.
—Bernard Lonergan

The holy man is not one who cannot sin. A holy man is one who will not sin.
—A. W. Tozer

Holiness is not exemption from conflict, but victory through conflict.
—G. Campbell Morgan

Saying yes to God means saying no to things that offend His holiness.
—A. Morgan Derham

Stress cannot exist in the presence of pie.
—David Mamet

Leaders pour out their puerile pap from their pulpits lest they make their listeners uncomfortable.
—W. Phillip Keller

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



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What's "Fundamental" to "Fundamentalism"?

David C. Innes

The Genius of Apostasy, Part Three

We continue with two remaining issues that make it difficult to deal with apostasy in its inception—in its beginning stages.

The Problem of When to Separate

The genius of apostasy poses a dilemma as to when we should begin to put separation into practice. Perhaps a couple of practical illustrations will be helpful.

When would you make a 911 call to the fire department? Would you wait until your whole house is engulfed in flames? Or just a room of the house? Or would you call as soon as you smelled smoke? Why should we wait until a church, a denomination, a college, or seminary is a long way down the path toward liberalism and apostasy before we sound a warning, especially to those who are sending their money and support to these institutions?

Or when do you want your dog to bark? When the burglar is already in your bedroom? When he is in the living room? When he is at the front door? Or when he is coming down the street? When should a pastor warn his people? At what stage of the development of compromise and apostasy should the warning be sounded? It should be obvious that the spiritual welfare and safety of God's people should be high on a pastor's priority list.

Suppose that you board a train in San Francisco with a ticket taking you to New York City. Suppose that when you arrive in Denver the engineer decides to take the train to Dallas instead of New York. When would you get off the train? When you get to Dallas? Or would you get off as soon as you determine that the train has changed destinations? When should we separate from churches, denominations, colleges, and seminaries? The answer should be the same: as soon as it is determined that they are not going where we are going—that they have changed destinations. We do not get off the train based on personal hatred of the engineer or for any other personal reasons.

We get off the train because we are not headed in the same direction. We are no longer going to the same destination.

The Necessity of Keeping a Cutting Edge on Your Ministry

If you do not keep a *cutting edge* on your ministry, you will ultimately surround yourself with those who join with you not because they share your convictions but because they enjoy the success of what you are doing. Under these conditions you will build an organization that will ultimately repudiate your convictions. Many pastors with good spiritual instincts fail to share and teach what they know and their resulting concerns with their congregations. And with great heartbreak they will witness the deterioration of the strong fundamental testimony of the ministry they had built at great personal cost.

How does love fit into all of this? You can have *law* without *love*, but you cannot have *love* without *law*. Genuine love always imposes limits for the protection of its object. Biblical principles are the enablers of God's love in the lives of men.

Where and how do *issues* fit in? You cannot build a strong ministry by focusing on issues alone, but you cannot build a strong ministry without dealing with and defining issues from time to time.

Genuine, biblical Fundamentalism is very much about the future. We have a biblical mandate to pass on the same biblical faith with which we have been entrusted, both intact and undiluted, to the next generation. May the dear Lord grant us discernment, wisdom, and the grace to do the right thing in the right way for the right reasons—and all of this for the glory of God.

Many pastors with good spiritual instincts fail to share and teach what they know and their resulting concerns with their congregations. And with great heartbreak they will witness the deterioration of the strong fundamental testimony of the ministry they had built at great personal cost.

Dr. David C. Innes has served as senior pastor of Hamilton Square Baptist Church in San Francisco, California, since January of 1977.





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This column has surveyed the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, Kings and Chronicles, and even Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The gap is obvious and the time has come to close it.

Literary Context

The books of Samuel revolve around three central characters.

- Samuel, last of the judges and first of the kingmakers
- Saul, the human ideal king
- David, the divine ideal king

In terms of the larger theological narrative of Scripture, however, the most significant of these is David. It will surely surprise some to discover that David's name occurs significantly more frequently than that of any other human's in Scripture.

Name	Frequency
Abra[ha]m	311
Moses	848
Jesus	983
David	1139

Over 7% of the entire OT is about David. Add to that the portion of Psalms written by David and you have approximately 10% of the OT written by or about David. Of all the material devoted to recording the history of the monarchy (the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles)—which includes, besides the forty-year reign of Saul, twenty kings of Judah and twenty kings of Israel—a whopping 34% of the entire monarchy narrative is devoted to the story of David. He is one of the two or three most dominating characters in the OT. And in terms of individuals who bear not only historical but also prophetic significance, David is in a class of one.

Because of his historical and prophetic importance, David's introduction in the books of Samuel represents a major turning point in the OT's larger theological narrative. David is the initial realization of significant earlier prophetic promises both personally in terms of his role as king (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17–19) and religiously in terms of his role in selecting Jerusalem as the spiritual capital and location of the future temple (cf. Deut. 12:5, 11, 14, 18). But even more significantly, David's reign itself initializes a whole new set of prophetic promises and expectations that culminate in the Messiah (2 Sam. 7). Even such familiar NT Messianic expressions as "throne of David," "city of David," "son of David," "key of David," and "root of David" trace their origins to the one who is first introduced in, and whose reign dominates, these books of Samuel.

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

Historical Scope

The books of Samuel depict an era of national transition and transformation. "Sweeping change is the hallmark of the Samuel narratives—change guided and energized by the Lord himself" (Ronald F. Youngblood, "1, 2, Samuel," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 3:560). That change is apparent in at least three major areas. The first two are described inimitably by Youngblood, so I will simply quote him.

Politically. "Israel at the beginning of 1 Samuel was a loosely organized federation of anemic tribal territories, scarcely able to keep the Philistines and other enemies at bay. By the end of 2 Samuel, however, Israel under David had become the most powerful kingdom in the eastern Mediterranean region, strong at home and secure abroad" (ibid.).

Religiously. The "opening chapters of 1 Samuel find Israel worshipping at a nondescript shrine presided over by a corrupt priesthood. The last chapter of 2 Samuel, however, records David's purchase of a site in Jerusalem upon which the temple of Solomon, one of the most magnificent buildings of the ancient world, would soon be erected" (ibid.).

Revelationally. Early in 1 Samuel we are confronted with an intriguing statement: "the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision" (1 Sam. 3:1). Something is precious—that is, highly valued—because of its rarity. That's the idea of the KJV word "precious" here. The NKJV gives a little clearer sense: "the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation." This began to change with Samuel (see 3:21), and with the introduction of a new class of divine instruments: prophets (see below). By the end of 2 Samuel we find "the sweet psalmist of Israel"—David, whose name is synonymous with the psalter and attached to nearly half of them—testifying, "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:1–2).

Thematic Emphases

The most predominant recurring motifs throughout Samuel revolve around the issue of divine sovereignty.

God's Establishment of the Prophetic Office

The books of Samuel refer to the presence and work of *prophets* 27 times. The significance of this lies not in its frequency (prophets populate the books of Kings in far higher numbers), but in its newness as an established office. Since the time of Moses, the term "prophet" occurred only twice (Judges 4:4; 6:8). Its sudden and dominating emergence in coordination with the institution of the monarchy is not accidental. Prophets were

God's check-and-balance system for anointing, authorizing, controlling, and disciplining the equally new emergence of monarchs. If the kings were God's vice-regents, the prophets were God's vicars to whom even the vice-regents were subject and answerable. In that sense, "kingship in Israel was unique in the ancient world. . . . When Saul presumed to offer sacrifice, when David took Uriah's wife, and when Ahab seized Naboth's vineyard, judgment was pronounced and executed [through a prophet]. The marvel is not that kings in Israel sinned, but that they recognized the right of a Nathan to point the finger of accusation and say, 'Thou art the man!'" (Charles Pfeiffer, *An Outline of OT History*, 60). The emergence of prophets is one more way of reminding the people, including the kings, who is still in charge.

God's Appointment of Leadership

As I already noted, the books of Samuel are organized around three leaders. But none pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps or rose to the top on the tide of popular opinion. Each of them was explicitly appointed by divine fiat. In fact, an unusual amount of attention is given to their divine appointment. Samuel was providentially born (1 Sam. 1:19–20) and chosen by God (1 Sam. 3). Saul was singled out by God Himself (1 Sam. 10:17–24) and later deposed by God alone (1 Sam. 13:13–14; 15:23, 26, 28). David was handpicked by God against all human expectation (1 Sam. 13:14; 16:1–13), scrupulously protected by God (1 Sam. 17–31), uniquely favored by God with the unconditional promise of an unending dynasty (2 Sam. 7), and disciplined by God when he sinned (2 Sam. 12). All this is God's way of asserting that even though Israel has "rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7), He is still King over Israel.

The Lord's Anointed

This title for Israel's king is another way of reinforcing that the monarch reigns at the pleasure of God not the whim of man. We become so accustomed to this way of referring to the king as anointed by God that we may not be aware of just how distinctive it is to the books of Samuel. The specific phrase "the Lord's anointed" occurs *only* in Samuel (10x), and the description of the monarch as anointed by God dominates the books of Samuel (over 30x), in contrast to the equally monarchical books of Kings (12x) and Chronicles (8x).

Lord of Hosts

This is a major title for God, occurring some 245 times in the OT. But it occurs *first* in the books of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:3). Moreover, it occurs more in the books of Samuel (10x) than in the books of Kings (3x) and Chronicles (3x) combined. The title "Lord of hosts" refers to God as Commander in Chief, whether of the human armies of

Israel or the angelic armies of Heaven. In either case, it is a title of supreme power and sovereignty.

Providential Intervention

Another way of emphasizing the Lord's sovereignty over His people is by constantly emphasizing His providential involvement in their affairs—at least seventy-five references in Samuel, by my count. Here is just a smattering of examples from 1 Samuel to get you started on your own exploration of this theme.

- He closed Hannah's womb (1:5–6).
- He remembered Hannah (1:19).
- Hannah's song emphasizes it in multiple ways (2:6–8, 10).
- He visited Hannah (2:21).
- He desired to kill Eli's sons (2:25).
- "I will raise me up a faithful priest . . . and I will build him a sure house" (2:35).
- He called Samuel (3:4, 6, 8, 10).
- "I will do a thing in Israel" (3:11).
- "I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken" (3:12).
- "Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day?" (4:3).
- "The hand of the LORD" (5:6, 7, 9, 11; 6:3, 5, 9; 7:13; 12:15)
- He struck the men of Beth Shemesh (6:19).
- He thundered with a loud thunder (7:10).
- He sent thunder and rain at an unusual and inopportune time (12:18).

Conclusion

All these distinctive thematic threads woven through the tapestry of these books create a unified and dominant theological picture: *the Lord of hosts is King of kings, and leaders serve at His appointment and pleasure.* The books of Samuel emphasize that truth with special reference to the leadership of God's people. But the rest of the Bible extends that divine sovereignty beyond Israel to every nation on earth. Regardless of race or regime, He is the Lord of Hosts, the Supreme Commander, the King over all those currently kinging, and the Lord over all those presently lording (1 Tim. 6:15). Great men who think they are the ones in charge are seriously deluded. The Book of Daniel in particular reinforces that reality (see Dan. 4:17, 25, 32, 34–35). It's a biblical dogma designed to hearten every believer and to remind us that human leadership should never be our confidence or our fear because man is not in charge of the destiny of this world. And the Book of Revelation (19:16) discloses the coming day in which the current divine strategy of control and containment will give way to conquest when the King of kings and Lord of hosts, the Root and Offspring of David, returns to exercise His reign personally from the throne of David.

Planting Biblically Separated, Culturally Sensitive Churches

(Continued from page 13)

from the product of missions: enduring, biblically orthodox churches.

Developing Enduring Churches

That leadership development is the key is almost a moot point. Whether it is couched in academic terms, such as pastoral training or leadership development, or in more personal terms such as mentoring or discipleship, the development and equipping of national leaders is the single most important factor relating to the successful indigenization of any church-planting ministry. Solutions must lie with issues that address this process. National pastors have often waned in their commitment to the theological convictions upon which the missionaries founded their churches. Viable solutions must ultimately redress this shortcoming by emphasizing both function and form when mentoring national leadership.

Churches will not replicate until missionaries replicate themselves in God-called national preachers who, among other things, are committed to biblical separatism. Perhaps an anecdote from my ancient college days can best drive home this capstone truth. I commented, in a paper presented in a missions class, that producing indigenous churches in fulfillment of the Great Commission is “simply a matter of training nationals to carry on the work.” When I examined the graded paper, I noticed that my veteran missionary instructor had circled the word *simply* several times in red ink and had remarked, “Is this really such a simple matter?” The wisdom of that comment became increasingly evident over seventeen years of ministry in South

Africa. Producing successful national leadership has always been a key, if not the paramount challenge, of the Great Commission mandate. It takes biblically separated, culturally sensitive missionaries to mentor biblically separated, culturally sensitive national preachers to plant biblically separated, culturally sensitive churches.

Dr. Kevin Brosnan was a missionary in South Africa for seventeen years. He has served as a field administrator for Baptist World Mission since 2009. Kevin holds BA and MDiv degrees from Maranatha Baptist University and a DMin from Bob Jones University.



The Mooring of Biblical Separation

(Continued from page 11)

² Space limitations prohibit further elaboration on this point. A more complete discussion is found in Fred Moritz, *Now Is the Time—A History of Baptist World Mission* (Ft. Myers, FL: Faithful Life Publications, 2011).

³ Bruce L. Shelley, *A History of Conservative Baptists* (Wheaton: Conservative Baptist Press, 1971, 1981), 95. Cited in Moritz, 52.

⁴ Biblical references to separation are only representative. It is not within the scope of this book to exhaustively treat separation as taught in Scripture. For a fuller treatment of that subject, see Ernest Pickering's *Biblical Separation: The Struggle for a Pure Church* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2nd Ed., 2008), and Fred Moritz, *Be Ye Holy: The Call to Christian Separation* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994).

⁵ The Greek text of 2 Timothy 2:24 is highly instructive. Both books referenced in the above footnote have sections dealing with the spirit of the separatist.

⁶ Moritz, 52, 53.

⁷ “Declaration of Purpose” adopted by the CBF Board September 15, 1961. Copy from the author's files.

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Football or Worship?

The NFL has grown to a cult status here in the United States. LifeWay Research randomly chose 2000 Americans for a survey on how football would affect worship service attendance. From that pool, only nine hundred ninety-four were considered Christian churchgoers.

Eighty-three percent of those respondents indicated they would not miss a service in order to watch their favorite football team play. Fifteen percent of respondents indicated they would skip church to watch football. Men were the highest offenders (twenty-two percent were willing to skip church). Ten percent of women were willing to skip church to watch football. Eight points separate Catholic from Evangelical respondents.

The article indicated that results were different if the local team was doing well or if the games were playoff games, but it did not share the numbers that would correspond.

This article can be accessed at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/would-most-american-churchgoers-skip-service-to-watch-favorite-nfl-team-132240/>.

Religious Convictions Equated with the Holocaust

Colorado baker Jack Phillips is facing fines and much more for his decision not to bake a wedding cake for a gay marriage in 2012. He did offer other baking services to the clients but said that making a wedding cake for them would

be against his own religious convictions.

Colorado Civil Rights Commissioner Diann Rice is on record from the July 25th meeting, which ordered Phillips to “re-educate himself and his employees about marriage.” Among her comments were the following statements: “Freedom of religion and religion has been used to justify all kinds of discrimination throughout history, whether it be slavery, whether it be the Holocaust. . . . I mean, we can list hundreds of situations where freedom of religion has been used to justify discrimination. . . . And to me it is one of the most despicable pieces of rhetoric that people can use—to use their religion to hurt others.”

At the heart of this issue is that citizens are being forced to accept ideas with which they cannot agree with government officials who are supposed to be defending the free speech and exercise of religion rights of America’s citizens.

This article can be accessed at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-cake-companys-refusal-to-bake-pro-gay-marriage-cake-compared-to-slavery-holocaust-by-colorado-commissioner-132480/>.

Ousted Fire Chief

Kelvin Cochran has served the city of Atlanta as the Fire Rescue Department Chief since 2008, but his services were terminated for writing a self-published book and disseminating it among those who worked with him.

The book, *Who Told You That You Are Naked?*, uses

the Genesis narrative of Adam and Eve to teach people about redemption and sanctification. In the book he does indicate that homosexuality is a “perversion” and is “vulgar.” He also likens the behavior to bestiality.

Cochran claims to have received verbal permission to write the book from the city’s ethics officer. Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed terminated Cochran’s employment, citing that he needed to have received permission from him. The termination was not effected until Cochran had been ordered to attend and complete one month of sensitivity training. Cochran also claims that the books were given as gifts to his fellow employees who were also believers.

Cochran is discussing legal action against the city of Atlanta.

This article can be accessed at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/city-officials-might-say-ive-got-to-put-my-bible-under-my-desk-and-keep-my-mouth-shut-about-what-i-believe-says-ousted-atlanta-fire-chief-132351/>.

Church Trends for 2015

Dr. Thom Rainer is president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, an arm of the SBC. He offers the results of his study of trends in US churches and what is likely to be seen in churches during the coming year. He labels some of those trends as “tipping points” to indicate that they will have a serious impact on the lives that those trends touch.

The trends he has identified are small-group

emphasis in larger congregations; increased difficulty in filling vacant pulpits; small-groups ministry (tipping point); stronger prayer movement; increase of multisite churches; plurality of teaching pastors (tipping point); more focus on theological education in local churches; increased cooperation between denominational entities and local churches; continued flow of people from smaller churches to larger churches; congregations will be better respected by their communities; denominational structures will wane and be restructured; growth of “verbal incarnational evangelism”; more emphasis on congregational singing; congregations will continue to eliminate Sunday evening services (tipping point); rapid increase in bivocational church staff.

This article can be accessed at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/church/2015/01/12/15-changes-churches-can-expect-in-2015#.VLVddcbNqJU>.

Millennials and the Bible

Barna Research has teamed with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and the American Bible Society to do a study on Millennials (Americans aged 18–29) and their views on the Bible.

The first part of the study deals with how non-Christians view the Bible. Nearly half of the Millennials viewed the Bible as stories compiled by men. But viewpoints darkened from there. One in five (20%) viewed the Bible as an outdated book

with no relevance for today. Twenty-seven percent viewed the Bible as a dangerous book of dogmatic teachings used to oppress people for centuries. Sixty-two percent of those who considered themselves non-Christians have never read the Bible even though they had a strong opinion about it. Less than nine percent are even curious about what is in the Bible when they see someone reading it.

The second part of the survey covered practicing Christians (people who consider themselves Christians and attend a worship service at least one time in a month). Of that group only eleven percent believe that the Bible contains “factual or historical” errors. The Bible seems to be the most important source of truth (even over the church or parents). Bible reading is seen as the most important Christian responsibility (over worship, prayer, solitude, and acts of Christian service).

Read more at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/church/2014/12/14/young-americans-view-of-the-bible-might-shock-you#.VLVi0cbNqJU>.

Ruling Handed Down

In a case previously reported in *FrontLine*, it was noted that New Jersey substitute teacher Walt Tutka had been fired for failure to be religiously neutral towards students and for handing out religious literature on school property. While the facts of the case were largely overblown, it now appears that Mr. Tutka will be treated justly.

The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruled on December 15, 2014, that the school district violated the law when it terminated Mr. Tutka. The EEOC stated that religion and retaliation played a role in Tutka’s firing.

The case unfolded after Tutka told a struggling student

NOTABLE QUOTES

Much of the singing in certain types of meetings has in it more of romance than it does of the Holy Ghost. Both words and music are designed to arouse the libidinous. Christ is courted with familiarity that reveals a total ignorance of who He is. It is not the reverent intimacy of the adoring saint but the impudent familiarity of the carnal lover.—A. W. Tozer

Oh, there is, in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound; in musing on the Father, there is a quietus for every grief; and in the influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a balsam for every sore. Would you lose your sorrow? Would you drown your cares? Then go, plunge yourself in the Godhead’s deepest sea; be lost in his immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing on the subject of the Godhead.—C. H. Spurgeon

When technology has distracted us to the point that we no longer examine it, it gains the greatest opportunity to enslave us.—John Dyer

Remember that a pretense is a plausible lie, with enough truth to be believable. The lies that capture us as Christians usually seem to fit well within the borders of our Christianity. . . . The redefinition of faith does not happen all at once. It may not even surface in the public theological discussions of the church. Rather, the redefinition is a process of subtle steps at the practical level of the church’s fellowship, life, and ministry. Hope in Christ gets replaced with Christian activity, emotional experiences, Christian fellowship, or something else without anyone consciously redefining or forsaking the faith.—Timothy Lane

Christ chiefly manifests Himself to the Christian in times of affliction because then the soul unites itself most closely by faith to Christ. The soul in time of prosperity scatters its affections and loses itself in the creature, but there is a uniting power in sanctified afflictions by which the soul (as in rain the hen collects her brood) gathers his best affections unto his Father and his God.—Richard Sibbes

that “the last shall be first and the first shall be last.” When the student asked where that quote came from, Mr. Tutka affirmed that it came from the Bible.

When he found out the student did not have a Bible, Mr. Tutka gave him his personal copy.

Evidence was presented that the school had set strict measures to ensure the Gideons not have any access to the children on school property. Added police presence was brought to the school because the Gideons were attempting to hand out Bibles near the school.

This article can be accessed at <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/01/07/eeoc-school-wrong-to-fire-teacher-who-gave-bible-to-student/>.

Christ or Benefits?

The Dalit people of India are on the lowest rung of the caste system. This group has often been called the “untouchables.” This group is now facing yet another form of persecution. National and regional leadership has declared that only Hindu Dalits are eligible to receive government benefits. It is estimated that there are nearly fifteen million Christian Dalits.

The effects of this ruling are disheartening. The article tells the story of a Dalit man’s request of his pastor and the rationalization he gave for his “reconversion” to Hinduism. With Hindu government control, it seems unlikely that the situation for the Dalits will change any time in the near future.

Read more at <http://onenewsnow.com/persecution/2015/01/03/india-s-15m-christian-untouchables-....-deny-faith-or-no-gov-t-benefits#.VNJS7WM5C70>

Newsworthy is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of FBFI.

Compiled by Robert Conduct, FBFI Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

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ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

People of the Word need to know something about words, and in my previous column I introduced you to one very common but (mostly) wrong idea about words: the “etymological fallacy”—the idea that words always mean what they used to mean.

One example I used was the word “fabulous,” which comes from the word “fable.” “Fabulous” can indeed mean “fable-like.” I just read the following recently, an educated British unbeliever’s challenge to a Christian evangelist: “Should not the Bible be rewritten with the object of discarding the **fabulous** and reinterpreting the remainder?” He meant getting rid of Jonah and the whale, Daniel and the lions’ den, and any other stories that seem like mere *fable* (or legend, or myth) to modern people.

Though he was wrong to apply it to the Bible, he used the word “fabulous” correctly. But you may never use it to mean “fable-like.” More likely you use fabulous to describe Swiss chocolate. (I do; appreciative readers may send Ritter Sport Alpine Milk to the address below.)

There is a certain brand of person who likes to ferret out rarish historical word meanings such as “fable-like” and use them to parade his superior intelligence before others. These word police insist that “fabulous” shouldn’t be used to describe chocolate at all. “What?” they’ll say, “That chocolate is like a fable? Ha! Let me tell you what that word *really* means. . . .”

Ammon Shea, who has written an excellent book called *Bad English: A History of English Aggravation*, said something perceptive about the word police: “I find the tendency to belittle people for verbal slights to be quite distasteful. I frequently hear people pointedly aver that they ‘care about language,’ which to me is simply a polite way of saying ‘I like to correct the language use of other people.’ We all care about language, some of us more than others, but the degree to which one is willing to humiliate or upbraid others should not stand as an indication of how much one cares” (xiii).

And more importantly, “fabulous” doesn’t “really mean” fable-like. That’s the etymological fallacy. God designed language so that words could develop multiple senses; context tells you which meaning the speaker or writer intends. If the context is chocolate, “fabulous” means “excellent.” If the context is old stories someone finds unbelievable, “fabulous” means “fable-like.” Words can mean what they used to mean, but they don’t have to.

And if you insist on using “fabulous” to mean “fable-like,” what word are you going to use to describe that chocolate you’re sending me?

Dr. Mark L. Ward, Jr. writes Bible textbooks at BJU Press, designs church websites at Forward Design, and blogs at *By Faith We Understand*.



Regional Reports

Northern California Regional Fellowship

Pastors from throughout **Northern California** met for our annual regional fellowship on Thursday and Friday, November 13 and 14. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Kevin Schaal, and our theme was "Developing Worship in Fundamental Churches." The brothers and sisters at Vacaville Bible Church, pastored by Martin Blanton, provided us with a wonderful conference and plenty of opportunity for fellowship.

Dr. John Mincy and Dr. Schaal both provided perspectives on worship and the local church that were quite challenging. Many of the pastors in Northern California received helpful and practical information on God-focused worship on Sunday mornings.



Mrs. Gini Mincy provided help for ladies on the subject of speaking biblically to yourself. Two other Northern California pastors, Kevin Schmidt and Jim Oosterwind, provided workshops that focused upon practical help with corporate and individual prayer.

Many great new connections were made. Highlights included missionary presentations from Clay and Danielle Gibbons, who are going to England; Michael Privett from Gospel Fellowship Association; Ed Scaglione from ARCH ministries; and church planters Javier Caballero and Nathan Bate. The conference concluded with a wonderful banquet prepared by Vacaville Bible Church. —James Oosterwind



Southern California Regional Fellowship

Fellowship with the brethren is vital. The Lord gave those who attended the **FBFI Southern California Fellowship** (November 17–18, 2014) a great time with John Brock, Walt Brock, and Ken Endean, each of whom opened the sacred Scriptures to us. (Please keep Judy Brock and Katelyn Endean before the Lord as they are in the midst of some deep physical waters.) There were a number of highlights during the meeting: Eileen Sneed was able to be with us and share her radiant smile. We love Dr. Sneed! Her good friends John and Gini Mincy, Mike Privett and Dr. and Mrs. John Lewis added to the blessed fellowship. Fifteen ministries were represented, and we had five Brocks in attendance. (You don't have to be a Brock to minister in the Mojave Desert, but it sure helps.) Pastoral age ranged from Kristopher Schaal (age 26) to John Lewis (age . . . well . . . he sailed with Noah). Due to the recent homegoing of our dear friend Tim Sneed this could have been a very "heavy" meeting, but the Lord allowed laughter and smiles to rule. —Ron Smith



Biblical Separation

Continued from page 9

of conversation [life]," v. 15). That means the believer must apply this standard to *everything* in his life, not just those things spoken to clearly and directly in Scripture. This is not an annoying "pickiness" or obsessive concern that subtle evil may rest behind what seems completely benign. In this command is the warrant for a careful scrutiny, a wise diligence in the application of truth to every dimension of life—thoughts, words, actions, and relationships, both personal and ecclesial. It requires a rigorous assessment of every element of the culture in which the believer lives to determine if conformity to it will, in any way, compromise the believer's light and reflection of the glory of God.

This is so central to the life of the disciple that it is described as the very essence of spiritual maturity as explained by the writer to the Hebrews when he says, "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (5:13–14).

The holiness we are to seek is also to be *intensive*—we are to have holiness like God's holiness ("Be ye holy; for I am holy," v. 16). So we must ask, just how holy is God? God's holiness carries with it the idea of completeness—a perfectly balanced personality, absolute purity from evil, and total devotion to what is right and good. We cannot *duplicate* God's holiness as men, but we are to strive to within the limits of our humanity by grace. In the words of Christ, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

A Fundamental Doctrine for the Glory of God

This is the holiness to which we all are called for Christ's glory, no matter how challenging we may find making the right and true applications of it in our personal lives and in church life in a hostile world. The holiness of God manifested through the believer is central to the right exercise of the faith, and that holiness is inextricably bound up with a truly biblical separatism. This is the truth that drives the true biblical separatist—separated from evil and

separated unto God, dedicated wholly to Him, to love Him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Dr. Steve Hankins is the dean of the Seminary and Graduate School of Religion at Bob Jones University. He has been training men for the ministry at the University and Seminary for the last four decades. During that time he has also served as an interim pastor, associate pastor, and senior pastor in Baptist churches in North and South Carolina. Steve holds a BA, an MA, and a PhD in New Testament Interpretation from Bob Jones University.



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Extending Local Church Ministry around the World

Each quarter FBFI chaplains report to the Home Office their extensive ministries. We wish that every reader of *FrontLine* could read all the reports regarding their impact through counseling, preaching, witnessing, travels, activities in their local churches, military training, advanced education, performing weddings, and for some, planning and enjoying their own weddings! Our hearts are warmed to hear of their impact for Christ with their neighbors both here in the US and at their duty stations abroad and with their fellow servicemen and women on remote assignments. We read of hundreds reached with God's Word in informal fellowships, cookouts, and what could be called "table talk" onboard ships, in hangar coffee shops, and military vehicles of every kind. FBFI chaplains are extending the local church ministries of FBFI affiliates around the world.

Future Chaplains and Chaplain Wives

Looking back at the reports from 2014, with a few projections for 2015, we rejoiced to learn of the increased number of young troops joining chaplain families' ranks. At least eight new babies were announced, in one case to a chaplain dealing with heartbreaking losses.. While dealing with three KIA deaths, Chaplain Michael Barnette and Athena welcomed little Benjamin Drew into the world. Josh Cox and Julie, stationed at McGuire AFB, New Jersey, filed a quarterly report on the due date, October 1, of baby number five. Recently approved chaplain candidate Chris

Koehn and his wife, Carly, told us in September that second daughter, Paige, was then 4-and-a-half months old. New Air Force Reserve Chaplain Daniel Llorente, serving at Buckley AFB (when not working at Tri-City Baptist Church in Chandler, Arizona) and his wife, Gini, welcomed little Anyah Marie on August 6. Daniel's pastor, FBFI CH (COL) Mike Sproul, administered the oath of office to Chaplain Llorente. Chaplains Tavis and Trenton Long continue to make chaplaincy history with their exemplary service at the Pentagon and Officer Training Command, Newport, Rhode Island, respectively. In addition, Tavis and Kendal welcomed Tanner Lee on October 4 after Trenton and Ashton had announced the birth of Brantley Everett on May 3.

Congratulations are also in order to Daniel and Audrey Beth Roland, stationed at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, on the birth of Thaddeus Joel, their fourth son, on September 14. Chaplain Christian Torres and wife Brittany are expecting a baby in mid-March. For now, we are thankful for Christian's strategic ministry after the tragic loss impacting twin brothers involved in a serious accident. One was killed and the other seriously injured. As our readers know from regular reports in this space, FBFI chaplains, like their civilian counterparts in the ministry, know both rejoicing and grieving with those to whom they minister on a regular basis.

In addition to the rejoicing of welcoming the new little ones mentioned above, two chaplains announced their own weddings. Matt Myers was married in December, and Seth Weaver, finishing up an MDiv at BJU, is planning to be married in May 2015. Congratulations to both of them. We would be remiss not to honor the wives of all our chaplains who soldier on while their husbands are out to sea or deployed down range or are off to some military school without them—as well as to all those wives who faithfully serve beside their chaplain husbands at home

Chaplain Daniel Llorente and family



Chaplain Chris Koehn and family



and abroad. We love you and appreciate you more than you know.

Speaking of School and Continued Education

Military personnel continue to train throughout their careers. Everyone must stay sharp and advance in his knowledge and skill as he moves through the ranks. Each promotion brings new levels of training and new opportunities to advance or obtain advanced degrees. Several FBFI chaplains completed various phases of military training in recent cycles. Of note is CH (LCDR) Rob Johnson, now completing a ThM at Trinity



Evangelical Divinity School while serving in a local church in Grayslake, Illinois, before taking his next shipboard assignment on the *Nimitz* next December. Kevin Marshman is finishing his MDiv at Maranatha Baptist University and working with Chaplain Trenton Long to get into ODS in Newport, Rhode Island. Veteran Chaplain (MAJ) Roger Rodriquez, featured in the biographical sketch below, is completing a year of resident CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at the Madigan Army Medical Center on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, just outside Tacoma, Washington.

Featured Biographical Sketch

Brief biographies of FBFI chaplains are posted on our website: <http://fbfi.org/currently-endorsed-chaplains/>. From time to time, we feature excerpts here in *FrontLine*. In this issue, we want you to get to know CH (MAJ) Roger B. Rodriquez. (Interestingly, his twin brother is also an Army chaplain.)

CH (MAJ) Roger B. Rodriquez hails from Oroville, California. He graduated from Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in Theology and earned his Master of Divinity Degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2001. He entered Active Duty as a First Lieutenant in January 2002 in the United States Army Chaplain Corps.

His first assignment was with the 2-5 Infantry, 25th ID (L), as a Battalion Chaplain. He deployed to Afghanistan with the 2-5 Infantry in support of OEF V (2004–2005). His second assignment was with the 225th BSB, 25th ID (L). His third assignment was with the 86th Signal Battalion, at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. He deployed to Iraq in support of OIF 06-07 with the 86th Signal Battalion. His fourth assignment was at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, where he completed the Chaplain Captain Career Course (C4) and the Major Functional Area Qualification Course in 2009. Following his professional schooling at Ft. Jackson, he was assigned to the 1st Space Battalion located at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. In 2010 he was reassigned as the 1st Space Brigade Chaplain. In 2012 he was assigned to USAG Stuttgart, Germany, as the Chaplain Resource Manager. He now is attending the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Madigan Army Medical Center (MAMC), Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), Washington.

CH Rodriquez's military education includes Chaplain Officer Basic Leadership Course (CHOBL), the Chaplain Captain Career Course (C4), the Chaplain Major Functional Area Qualification Course, the Chaplain Resource Management Course, and the Command and General Staff Officer Course.

His awards and decorations include

- Bronze Star
- Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster
- Army Commendation Medal with 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
- Army Achievement Medal
- Meritorious Unit Citation with one Oak Leaf Cluster
- Navy Battle Efficiency Ribbon
- Navy Good Conduct Medal
- National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star Device
- Afghanistan Campaign Medal
- Iraq Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star Device
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- National Sea Service Deployment Ribbon
- Navy Marine Corps Overseas Ribbon
- Army Service Ribbon
- Overseas Ribbon

Chaplain Rodriquez is married to the former Jodi Lynn Bell and has three adult children, Sarah, Hannah, and Tabitha.





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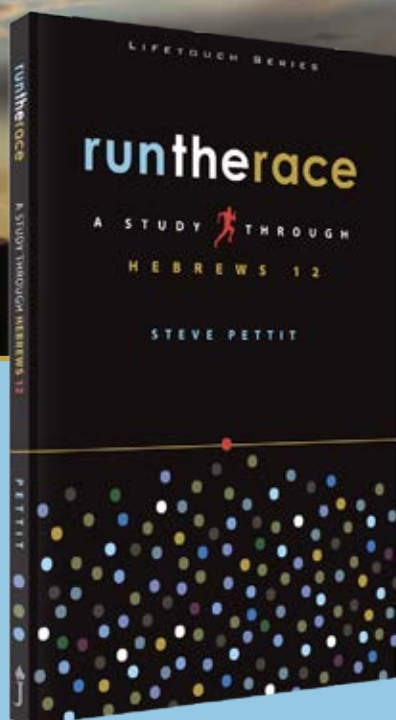


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Can You Help Me?

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. (Acts 3:1-8)

In this passage we have the record of a man who was basically asking Peter and John, "Can you help me?" He wanted some money. That is evident by the response that Peter gave when he said, "Silver and gold have I none."

It has been my experience that many people want money and will scheme, manipulate, and deceive in order to get it. I will never forget the time when I left my family in West Virginia as I flew to a revival meeting. At that time we pulled a thirty-five-foot-long Airstream trailer. It was parked at the church where Jim Efaw was the pastor at that time. I flew back to West Virginia and had just gotten back to my trailer when there was a knock on our door. I opened the door and there stood a man weeping his heart out. I asked him what was wrong. He said that his mother had died and he needed money to buy gas so he could go to her funeral. This man was weeping so hard that I knew this had to be real. It touched my heart so deeply that I pulled out a twenty-dollar bill and gave it to him. He told me that he had sold his watch at the gas station located a short distance from the church, so I thought this poor man was really in a desperate state. After he left, I began to wonder if he really did sell his watch to get gas. So I went down to the gas station and asked for the manager. I asked him if a man had come there and sold his watch so he

could buy gas and food because his mother had died and he was on his way to her funeral. He said, "No! We never sell or exchange gas for items like that. Did he tell you that story?" I tell you, I was so upset. That man was a con artist, a professional thief!

There are many people like that everywhere across this nation. But there are people who truly are in need, and we must be sensitive in helping them. Peter and John couldn't help this man financially, but they could help him spiritually. They pointed this man to the Lord Jesus Christ. This must be our focus also, letting people know that the Lord can help them.

Not too long ago I had a revival meeting in North Carolina. My wife and I were staying in a hotel. One morning as I was having breakfast there, a man came over, sat down beside me, and said, "Can you help me?" The man's eyes were full of tears. I asked him what was wrong. He said, "I have a problem with alcohol and I want to get it out of my life. I am tired of it!" I told him that I was raised with alcohol in my home. As I began to give him my testimony of how the Lord saved me from being enslaved to alcohol, he told me that he was truly saved. I dealt thoroughly with him, and he gave a clear testimony of being born again. I invited him to come to our revival service that night, and he did! He came forward during the invitation. Then he came back the next night. He told me at the close of the service, "You truly helped me. I am so grateful." I told him that it was no coincidence that he came to me and asked for help. Several men in the church are helping him; they are working with him and giving him good, spiritual guidance. I was able to help a man with the same problem that my home had back in the hills of West Virginia.

I trust that many of us will be sensitive to the needs of others. The greatest way we can help others is by pointing them to Jesus Christ.

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



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