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FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME



Past, Present, Future
Has Missions Philosophy Changed?

Past, Present, Future



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Kevin L. Brosnan

Has Missions Philosophy Changed?

The theme of this edition of *FrontLine* takes the form of a question: “Has missions philosophy changed?” And there is no doubt that it has. The real question is, “Are the changes beneficial or detrimental to the cause of New Testament missions?” Much of the change we see in our culture broadly—and in our churches more specifically—alarms us. There is an undeniable trend of moral and theological decline. This trend directly impacts the progress of missions in our generation. A general dissatisfaction on both the political and religious landscapes in recent years has at times embraced change for the sake of change. Such reckless reaction also spreads havoc on the work of missions.

But I would be remiss in not also emphasizing the very positive progress in twenty-first-century missions philosophy. Continued study of Scripture and lessons from twentieth-century missions have contributed to a better understanding of how the modern missionary can accomplish the mission mandate and have resulted in beneficial tweaks to modern missions philosophy.

One of our key concerns in addressing this subject is to highlight the vital connection between churches and missions. The slow drift in many churches can be nearly indiscernible to church members, but it is shockingly stark to the furloughing missionary who sees the direction of the church after a few years of

absence. There is a trend toward using fashionable terminology such as “missional” or “intentional,” often coming across to the missionary as a mask for declining commitment. There also seems to be a reactionary trend to more narrowly define missionary work to exclude single women and other legitimate missionaries. Again, in some cases, missionaries see this as a cover for trimming down the missions budget.

Missions has also been negatively affected by a de-emphasis on evangelism and dispensational eschatology in many churches and by the growing impact of Neo-Calvinism. Missionaries are also disillusioned by the worldliness that now characterizes so many churches. The question is not *if*, but *when* missions will reflect the state of the churches.

The six articles to follow address the theme from various angles, and our purpose is two-fold. First, we do need to decry the current situation, addressing it from theological and historical perspectives. Second, we need to present biblical alternatives to the pervasive pragmatism in church ministry and missions philosophy. I found these articles enlightening and encouraging. They enthusiastically prescribe remedies and strategies for helping missionaries, strengthening churches, and pointing the way forward toward a great twenty-first century of New Testament missions.



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Focusing on Genesis 1-11

Featuring
Dr. John Whitcomb
Author of the Genesis Flood



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Brother Vaughn:

... Here are a couple thoughts I jotted down while the [FBFI Winter Board] Meeting was going. If I understood the question right, it was, "Why should I join the FBFI?" I understand this was proposed in reference to the upcoming generation. Here are a couple ideas I wrote down.

Why should I join the FBFI?

With the constant pressures in ministry to compromise, no man standing alone will stand long. Therefore the FBFI has developed a vehicle to provide that support. This is done by

- Regional networking pastors
- Regional fellowship meetings that biblically address current issues in that region
- The publication of an intellectual and relevant magazine, *FrontLine*
- A relevant blog and/or forum with easy access to informative online articles

Charlie England
Maranatha Baptist Church
Anchorage, AK

Just the idea of how desperate the Air Force is for chaplains. I think the Reserves have 110 empty slots and the Guard has about 20 or so BEFORE [a recent] ... memo went out. This effectively adds another 83 Air National Guard chaplain slots. So, effectively the Air Force is saying they have 200 empty slots in the Guard and Reserve.

Chaplain Col Mike Sproul
ANG Assistant to the Command Chaplain
United States Air Forces Europe and Air Forces Africa
Ramstein Air Force Base

Editor's Note: The letter below is from the wife of FBFI-endorsed Chaplain Daniel Roland, who is presently at Ranger School.

Dear praying friends,

Daniel ... is required to stay at Ft. Benning with still very minimal communication, but he mentioned three things we can pray specifically for:

1. Good health: There are 80-90 soldiers ... in one barracks, so pray that sickness will stay away.
2. Patrolling classes: The soldiers ... will be getting some patrolling classes. This is Daniel's weak point, since he has never before had this training, so pray that the classes will be beneficial and he will be able to grasp the concepts in a way that enables him to execute them well. ...

Continued at right

Jason Wermager has been assistant pastor at Northwest Valley Baptist Church in Glendale, Arizona, for the past eighteen years. His ministry includes follow-up with visitors, hospital visits, overseeing the adult Bible studies each Sunday, and wearing many other hats. For the past sixteen years NWVBC has had double services, but on April 3 the church will break ground for a larger facility to bring the church body back together in one service.



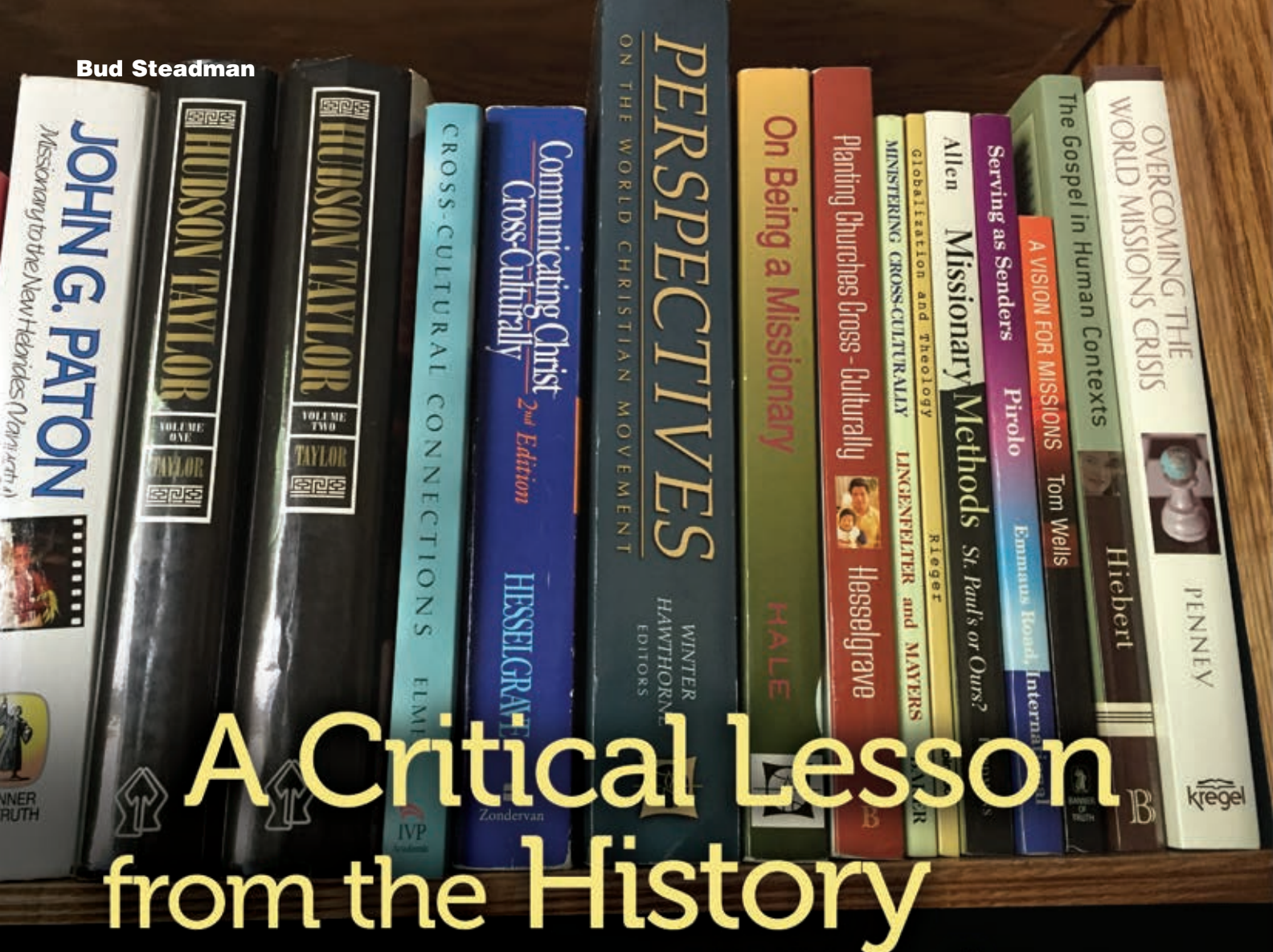
God has called **David and Tiffany Deighton** and their six children to Lima, Peru, to work in MK education and church planting. People asked why they would leave a great career to move to a tropical desert in a Third-World country. Their reply was that God called them, so they must go. They are excited to see how God has uniquely prepared them over the last fifteen years for this exact ministry.

David Karmokar was born in Bangladesh, one of the largest Muslim countries in the world in the 10/40 Window. He was saved at eighteen, and when he was twenty-four, God called him to serve in Bangladesh. Both he and his wife (Rei Tomioka Karmokar) graduated from Bob Jones University and are currently on full-time deputation with Baptist Mid-Missions. Faith Baptist Church, Taylors, South Carolina, is their sending church. David is praying that God would allow them to be partners with like-minded churches who have a burden to reach Bangladesh. He may be contacted at rtomi500@gmail.com.



3. Ministry opportunities: Daniel has been given permission to hold services on Sunday for any of the soldiers who want to come, so he asked us to pray for those to go well and also for day-to-day opportunities as there are many hurting soldiers with spiritual needs.

Audrey Beth Roland
Wife of CH (CPT) Daniel Roland



A Critical Lesson from the History of Baptist Missions

The abundant fruit of Fundamental Baptist missions around the world in the twentieth century can be directly related to the separatism of that movement, which spawned a number of biblically based mission agencies. A critical lesson concerning the core of a scriptural mission philosophy can and must be learned from the history of modern Baptist missions.

To set the context it is necessary to define historic Fundamentalism. David O. Beale gives one of the best summaries of the movement: "Ideally, a Christian Fundamentalist is one who desires to reach out in love and compassion to

people, believes and defends the whole Bible as the absolute, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God, and stands committed to the doctrine and practice of holiness. . . . Fundamentalism is not a philosophy of Christianity, nor is it essentially an interpretation of the Scriptures. It is not even a mere literal exposition of the Bible. The essence of Fundamentalism goes much deeper than that—it is the unqualified acceptance of and obedience to the Scriptures."¹

Fundamentalism as a modern identifiable movement can be traced to a reaction against liberal theology coming out of Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century. True believers were faced with a number of critical issues, all of

which had a profound effect on the entire theological landscape:

- Philosophers began to elevate reason and materialism above the objective revelation of the Bible.
- Naturalistic science rejected the traditional biblical concepts of the world and humanity. The primary manifestation of this unbelief was Darwinism.
- Historical and literary criticism as systems began to reinterpret traditional Christianity by the new parameters of the Enlightenment.
- Higher criticism, typified by the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher, sought to re-interpret Scripture. There was a distinct emphasis on humanism, elevating man rather than God. Revelation was “not an in-breaking of God, but an upsurging of divine humanity.” Religion was not an objective truth but more of a subjective feeling.²

In the first three decades of the twentieth century Fundamentalists primarily practiced biblical separation by attempting to purge their denominations of liberal theology; the publication of a twelve-volume series of articles called *The Fundamentals* (1910–15) illustrates this point. The authors, mostly Bible-believing Presbyterians and Baptists, hoped *The Fundamentals* would win over those sitting atop the theological fence and convince the liberals of the error of their ways. Though the writers were interdenominational in their perspectives, this series is viewed as the starting point of Fundamentalism as an identifiable movement. Early historic Fundamentalism was therefore interdenominational in scope and intradenominational as to separation.

Beginning in 1930 and continuing to the present day, however, Fundamentalists have practiced separation by removing themselves from liberal and apostate churches and denominations. A study of the battle in the Northern Baptist Convention relating to missions illustrates this point and teaches an important lesson for us today.

The Northern Baptist Convention Missions Controversy

In the early 1900s theological liberalism spread from the schools to the pulpits of the Northern Baptist Convention, and likewise spread to its mission societies. One of the great battlefronts in the conflict was the missions controversy. “It was the most important issue in the Northern Baptist Convention in 1924 and 1925.”³

In 1920 the Fundamentalists within the Northern Baptist Convention were so deeply concerned about the liberalism in that group that they called for a meeting of Bible believers before the next annual meeting of the convention. Those who met in advance of the convention meeting organized the National Federation of Fundamentalists of the Northern Baptists. It was the first Fundamentalist movement to be organized within the convention.

In 1922 the Northern Baptists met in Indianapolis. The National Federation of Fundamentalists attempted to move the various convention organizations to a biblical position by securing the adoption of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as a doctrinal standard. The attempt failed. Jasper C. Massee led the Fundamentalist cause during the floor debates. “Many felt that he had, in his willingness to compromise, betrayed them.”⁴ Following the failure of the Fundamentalists at Indianapolis, some leaders in the convention determined to form a new group, naming it the Baptist Bible Union. Those involved indicated that the BBU “was originally a separatist movement.”⁵ A loose fellowship of Fundamentalists from across Canada and the United States, the organization survived functionally only until 1931; the ultimate impact of the Baptist Bible Union was the subsequent formation of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches in 1932. This association of churches led in the formation of the earliest separatist Baptist mission agencies, such as Baptist Mid-Missions.

The Inclusive Evangelical Policy

At the core of the debate relating to liberalism and missions among the Northern Baptists was the position which became known as the “Inclusive Evangelical Policy.” It directed Bible believers and modernists to work together in the same organization, especially on the mission fields of the world. This term found common usage for about forty years in the struggle over biblical separatism.

The inclusive policy was reaffirmed and clarified at the 1924 Northern Baptist Convention meeting in Milwaukee. The Board of Managers announced that “it would appoint and retain missionaries of varying theological beliefs provided they came within certain limits which the Board regarded as ‘the limits of the gospel.’”⁶

From this point through the 1940s the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society sent out missionaries of liberal theological persuasion. All of this greatly disturbed Bible-believing people within the Northern Baptist constituency. They decided a mission board was needed that would send out only evangelical missionaries to the field. Thus, the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society was organized in 1943. The Conservative Baptist Association came into being as a national fellowship of churches in 1947. In 1950 the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society was born.

Around this same time the historic National Federation of Fundamentalists, also known as the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, changed its name to the Conservative Baptist Fellowship and, along with the other entities mentioned, became a part of the Conservative Baptist movement. It was not long before the movement began to show signs of strain. There actually existed within the Conservative Baptist framework two distinct groups.

Continued on page 33

The Future of Missions

Drawing from the Wells of the Past

Genesis 26 records the Lord's command to Isaac to sojourn in the land of Gerar and His promise that He would perform the oath that He swore to Isaac's father, Abraham, to make of him a great nation. Verse 6 tells us, "And Isaac dwelt in Gerar." As God fulfilled His promise and Isaac became "very great," "the Philistines envied him," so King Abimelech compelled Isaac in verses 14 and 16 to "go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." Isaac and his household departed and settled in the valley where Abraham once lived. After Abraham's death, out of spite, the Philistines stopped up the wells he had dug for his household. Upon settling in the valley, "Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father." These wells again yielded water, and he called them by the same names his father gave them. Once this was accomplished, Isaac's men dug three new wells, two of which had to be abandoned while the third

was successful, and he named it Rehoboth. Isaac explained, "For now the Lord hath made room for us."

Isaac's first action when moving to the land of his father was not to seek out new places to dig his own wells. Instead he sought out and unearthed the same wells that had proved to be trustworthy supplies of water during Abraham's generation. Isaac did not send for the diviners to locate new water sources. No, he returned and redug his father's wells. Isaac valued and protected the wells of the past. They provided for him a sure platform from which he could extend his territory. He dug three new wells, but only one ultimately became useful to him. The wells of the previous generation proved to be his greatest source of water.

As I consider the future of missions, I am reminded of Isaac's experience. Perhaps we should remember the benefits of the "old" ways of doing the work of missions as we look to the future of missions. The general outlook of the church in the mid-1900s was that the world was changing quickly and that in order for the church to stay relevant

and able to reach it, the church needed innovations, fresh ideas, and new strategies. The old was passé, outdated, and broken. Men thought that the old ways did not fit their modern world. In 1959 Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached a series of messages during the one-hundredth anniversary of the great 1859 revival in which he stated,

We look to the scientists, we look to philosophy. . . . We call for the latest knowledge and learning, we want the very last advance in science and in culture in every shape and form. The whole idea is that the world is in a very serious predicament and therefore it behooves all men of understanding to come together and pool their resources, call a congress of world faiths. . . . "It's this atomic age we're in," they say, "we must have a message for it." . . . The basic assumption is that our problems are new, that they are quite unique, and that the Church and the world have never been confronted by such problems before.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones encouraged studying the past and said, "Nothing, surely, is more important for us at this present time than to read the history of the past. . . . The man who experiments in the midst of a crisis is a fool."

Going back to the "old wells" is like hitting the reset button on a computer—there are times when going forward is benefitted most by going back to an earlier setting. We may benefit from looking to what God has blessed and used in generations before us and using the light gained from former ages to guide in moving forward—such as fervent evangelism, purposeful discipleship, church establishment, leadership development, and the command to protect and extend the saving message to all people. Old methods to accomplish timeless purposes might be "wells" worth re-digging. Fresh ideas are necessary as a part of each new generation's work of accomplishing the Great Commission in reference to the challenges they face, yet every generation needs to consider the "old wells" when venturing out to discover "new wells."

For example, the Lord is using the multitude of short-term missionaries to fulfill a valuable role around the world. These servants are to be commended and highly honored for their service, but the promotion of short-term service must not overshadow the lifelong commitment of career missionary service. We run the risk of weakening the future effectiveness of any given field when short-term workers become the long-term strategy for our ageless commission. Language aptitude, cultural adaptation, gaining the respect and confidence of the people on a particular field, and the continuity of the work require long-term

commitment. Yes, the relatively new "well" of short-term missionary service is a great addition to modern-day missions as a valuable extension of the gospel, but it shouldn't be allowed to overshadow the crucial need for career missionaries.

Deputation is another "old well" of missions that still has merit. We often hear that deputation is "broken" and must be replaced by better methods. Tentmaking is, of course, legitimate, but when promoted as a way for missionaries to avoid deputation and support themselves by employment on their fields, it can be a time-consuming distraction on the field. Another innovation in missionary support is to focus outside the local church's involvement and accountability by going directly to individuals and businesses. Though these may have merit, they should not replace the responsibility of God's people to corporately sustain His work through the local church.

An illustration from the business world may be helpful, however. Consider the missionary deputation model in the context of a secular business. If a person begins a new business, he will likely dedicate three or four years to acquiring clients, or "customers," as well as some initial "investors." Thereafter, these relationships can continue for the next twenty, thirty, forty years, or more. In the 1980s missionaries invested two to four years to raise their support. Today although support levels in some cases have

tripled, the time to raise missionary support continues to be about two to four years. Deputation to raise long-term support is hard work. But it does work! Improvements can be made, but it is one of those "old wells" that still has an important role in missions.

As we chart the course for the future, we need to understand the lessons and perspectives of the past. In the storms yet to come, we can be confident when we are anchored to the basic elements of the Lord's message and work that are founded on God's Word. In the dry spells ahead, we can benefit from redigging the old wells, those methods blessed and used by God throughout past generations to accomplish His work. How has God worked through mission endeavors in the past; which methods have worked over the generations; which methods were not effective over time? These questions should guide our forward vision, keeping us on track in the present as we move into the future of missions.

Since 1977 Dr. Mark Batory has served as a missionary through Gospel Fellowship Association Mission. He has planted Hispanic churches in Mexico and in the United States. For the last twenty-five years he has served as the executive director of GFA.



Making Much of



A good friend of mine who has served the Lord in full-time ministry for nearly forty years remembers a time in his youth when he heard a veteran missionary publicly bemoan the difficulties of serving the Lord. With a forlorn drone the missionary said something like, “You all pray for us. Serving the Lord is so hard. We’re barely making it.” This ministry friend remembers sitting

there as a teenager and thinking skeptically, “Man, that really makes me want to serve the Lord full-time.” Often when I recall this story, I think to myself, “Wow! What a missed opportunity to impact a young life by making much of ministry.” Only by God’s grace was this friend not turned away from full-time ministry. How sad that a veteran missionary is remembered to this day as a wet blanket, when he could have fed a fire! Instead of discouraging young people from full-time ministry, I want

Ministry



to be used of God to encourage them to give their lives to full-time service.

Without discounting in any way the importance of God's specific calling and gifting for full-time ministry, we must never underestimate the power and necessity of that vital human element that influences young people to consider the joys of full-time ministry. I would not only say that there is a biblical precedent for cultivating an atmosphere out of which young people can gladly surrender to full-time ministry, but I would also say that there is a biblical mandate for compelling young people on a regular basis to consider the potential of God's call to full-time ministry in their lives! Of course, our approach in this important work must not be one of manipulation by guilt but rather motivation by grace. It is the privilege and the responsibility of each generation of pastors and Christian parents to use legitimate means to put the "Macedonian call" before the next generation and to cultivate an atmosphere in which young people see their surrender to such a call as a happy and "reasonable service." I readily concede that not every young person is called to full-time, vocational ministry, but I would hasten to say that surely more are being called than are actually surrendering and going. The fields are no less white and the laborers are still few. Yes, it is God who does the calling, but as part of that vital and influential human element, this generation of believers must be asking themselves

what they can do to maximize their influence in making much of ministry to the next generation.

My passion for this privilege and responsibility is rooted in the Scriptures, in my own personal experience, and in my understanding of the role of the pastor and Christian parent. One cannot have even cursory knowledge of the Bible without realizing the scriptural basis for both the divine and the human elements in this matter.¹ In addition to this, I come from a pastor's home and

a local church that made much of ministry. My siblings and I never felt manipulated into ministry; however, an atmosphere was always cultivated that kept the excitement of that possibility before us. Two pastors and two missionaries came out of that home. The two siblings who are not in full-time, vocational ministry are faithful servants of the Lord in good local churches and have never been treated as second-class citizens because of it. The two churches my dad has had the privilege of pastoring during his forty-plus years of ministry have been Antiochs for numerous other young people. In my own fifteen-plus years of pastoral ministry, I've already experienced the joys of 2 Timothy 2:2, 2 John 4, and 3 John 4 multiple times. Young people from each mission trip I've been privileged to lead are either in full-time ministry now or are training for it. As a pastor and a Christian parent, I am continually seeking to cultivate an atmosphere in our church and in my home where the voice of God calling for the next generation of Samuels is not drowned out by the din of this world. My recurring questions, therefore, are, "How can I, for my part in that vital human element, make much of ministry? How can I feed the fire and avoid ever being a wet blanket?"

Five Words

For myself and my ministry I'm answering these questions with the following words. The first word is *intercession*. Jesus said, "Pray . . . the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." I interviewed four evangelist friends in preparation for this article. All four of them have full calendars and are widely used in Fundamental Baptist churches. I asked them to identify common denominators in churches that are producing full-time servants. Nearly every time the immediate reply shooting back at me was "corporate prayer for the Lord to send more labourers." Is the next generation seeing us make much of corporate prayer? Are they convinced by our practice that corporate prayer is a big deal? As much as half of the prayer recorded in the book of Acts is corporate! Furthermore, the things for which our young people hear us praying are the very things that they will conclude really matter. Praying for laborers is a prayer that is often gloriously answered in the asking!

A second word is *inspiration*. Here is that marvelous opportunity where we get to feed the fire! We can inspire by exhortation. Let us make much of ministry by faithfully preaching to the next generation about the need, the

call, the privilege, the fruit, and the rewards of full-time work. Also, we inspire by our excitement. There is joy in serving Jesus. I am happy in the service of the King. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Even at low times in ministry, Paul was rejoicing and Peter was talking happiness! To this day we're being inspired by these men's influence. Inspiration is also passed on through example. Glad servants make a contagious model. Passion in one generation is the glue that sticks truth to the next. We can also inspire the next generation by emphasizing ministry. One veteran preacher friend has frequently said that what a local church ministry emphasizes, it produces. A local church institution that emphasizes sports produces athletes. Entertainment-driven programs produce narcissists. Materialism produces materialists. An emphasis on externals produces hypocrites. But ministries that emphasize sincere, humble service to the Lord produce . . . servants of the Lord!

Investment is a third word that helps us to make much of ministry. Teaching to the next generation the joys of gladly spending and being spent for the souls of both saint and sinner alike is crucial. Rearing a generation of givers in our world of takers from every economic class is challenging indeed, but it is worth the effort. "It is [still] more blessed to give than to receive." Helping young people grasp the truth that the location of their treasures is a litmus test of their hearts cultivates an atmosphere out of which young people will be more willing to invest their futures in full-time ministry. We cannot overlook the implications that Paul's ultimate joy and crown at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be those he won to Christ, discipled, and established into local church ministry (Phil. 4:1).

I'd be remiss if I failed to mention a fourth word that keeps us on track when making much of ministry, and that is *insulation*. I do not mean isolation from the world, but insulation from worldliness! Peter's call for biblical holiness is as clarion today as it was when he first made it (1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2:9; 4:1-2). Biblical holiness, like insulation on electrical wire, helps to guarantee the maximum

impact of the power of the gospel at the point of contact! Each generation must be taught the principles of biblical holiness. A diluted, worldly Christianity ultimately produces a deceptive counterfeit in succeeding generations. Both 2 Peter and Jude illustrate this truth.

A fifth and final word that answers these questions for me is *involvement*. The cry of so many young people I'm meeting today is for a mentor. Paul could positively say that young Timothy had "fully known" his life and ministry in season and out of season. Not only did the apostle involve himself in Timothy's life, but he also involved Timothy in his life and in the work of the ministry. The words of Kentucky Baptist historian J. H. Spencer are as poignant today as they were when he first wrote them in 1885.

It is a sad truth, that many churches lose the talent, zeal, and influence of a large number of their best young members by giving them nothing to do in the Master's service. Every young member should be proved to ascertain his gifts as soon as he becomes a member, and then be diligently employed in the work of the Lord, in accordance with his gifts. The pastor that fails to do this, is either incompetent to fill his position, or unfaithful to his charge.²

May we see that making much of ministry is a sobering responsibility and yet the most satisfying of all our privileges this side of heaven. Let's feed the fire!

Nathan Deatrick is grateful to pastor Crossroads Baptist Church in Columbus, North Carolina, which the Lord allowed him to plant five years ago. He is also a current board member of Baptist World Mission in Decatur, Alabama. He and his wife, Jenny, are the parents of four children.



¹ 1 Samuel 1-3; 1 Kings 19:19-21; Isaiah 6; Matthew 9:36-38; Luke 9:57-59; John 4:31-38; Acts 13:1-3; 16:1-10; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Timothy 1:3, 18-19; 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 1:3-8; 2:1-4; 3:10-14; 4:1-8; Titus 1:5; etc.

² Spencer, J. H., *History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1885*, J. R. Baumes, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 234.



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The Imperative of National Leadership



Has missions philosophy changed with regard to the priority of national leadership development? Absolutely!

The history of the modern missionary movement demonstrates that missions philosophy has developed an ever greater emphasis on the priority of national leadership. The imperative of leadership development is also emphasized in the New Testament. Today's church-planting missionary understands this dynamic as the key to accomplishing his goals for autonomy and indigeneity.

I began my missionary career with the conviction that leadership development would be a vital component of any church-planting strategy. Years of experience served only to reinforce and validate that conviction. However, the necessity to develop competent national leadership arises from more than experience. It is in fact a repeatedly emphasized foundational principle of missions in the New Testament. Much of the content of the New Testament epistles can be viewed as a missionary's effort to ground leaders and their churches.¹ The Scriptures do provide criteria for defining, conducting, and accomplishing this goal.

The Imperative in the New Testament

The fact that the apostle Paul repeatedly hazarded his life by returning to those dangerous places where he had first sown the seed and reaped a harvest of souls is evidence that he viewed the spiritual development of his converts as a vital component of the Great Commission.² He spent two years at Ephesus in the school of Tyrannus and eighteen months grounding the church at Corinth.³ The specialized attention he gave to the development of pastors demonstrates his understanding of the crucial role those men play in leading their churches to become fully indigenized and autonomous.

In addition to Paul's example, there are many direct admonitions to ground believers in the faith and to develop God-called preachers.⁴ One could easily argue that this mentoring task consumed the greatest proportion of Paul's time and energy. While the time frame may vary, successful planting of indigenous churches always requires thorough development of God-called pastors. This training must include evidence of genuine conversion, doctrinal grounding, spiritual maturation, ministry experience, a divine calling, and giftedness. Shortcuts in leadership development may be expedient, but they cannot be scripturally justified, and they will result in a breakdown of the cycle of self-replication.

The Imperative in Ministry

In light of the scriptural example and instruction, how is the modern missionary implementing a changing missions philosophy that recognizes the imperative of leadership development? As important as all his work is, nothing supersedes the missionary's responsibility to reproduce himself in national men who will inherit the work and carry it beyond his sphere and tenure of ministry. The task at hand will require him to skillfully apply all he has learned and to pour his life into God-called men "who shall be able to teach others also."⁵ What can the missionary do to better equip himself to impact national men? The first step toward more successful leadership development is convincing missionaries of its priority.

Few missionaries would deny that leadership development is a necessary component in the progress toward indigeneity. This is a self-evident point because no church is truly indigenous so long as it falls under the authority of a foreign missionary. Furthermore, churches decline under incompetent national leadership. While most missionaries understand the necessity of leadership development, some may question its priority or whether they have a role in accomplishing that objective. Some missionaries appear to have adopted an approach whereby they restrict

One glaring need in the pulpits of many developing fields is for national men who biblically and skillfully handle God's Word.

their activities to the planting of a local church without thought for its future leadership.⁶ Leadership development is a missionary's single most important work because only such development can ensure that the missionary's effort ultimately fulfills the objectives of the Great Commission. Not all missionaries are educators, but all missionaries need to appreciate the priority of leadership development and should disciple and mentor men for the ministry. Missionaries who are committed to leadership development will help advance that objective even if they are not directly involved in formal training.

It is a mistake to disassociate leadership development from church planting. Missionaries need to view leadership development as a vital, core responsibility of New Testament church-planting

missions. This is a necessary component of their initial field strategy preparation. Just as missionaries survey a field, target a people group, and establish strategies for evangelism and discipleship, they should also settle on a strategy for leadership development before commencing their work on the field.

While there are no failsafe measures to prevent national preachers from forsaking their calling, there are some important guiding principles. Colleges and institutes should require sacrifice and commitment from nationals in training to help ensure that their call to preach is not an escape from less-appealing circumstances. Teachers should take every opportunity to ingrain the indigenous principle upon the hearts and minds of students. Autonomy should become a theological conviction and a practical goal for every national in training. Requiring productive ministry from students in training serves the dual purposes of honing skills and weeding out disingenuous pupils. Missionaries should not entice nationals into the ministry; the results are far more positive when God does the calling.

The Imperative in the Missionary

Effective missionaries model the work of the ministry for men in training. Formal studies in Bible, theology, homiletics, and pastoral work are important, but equally important and often undervalued is the work of mentoring men for the ministry. The missionary should mentor indirectly by example and directly through didactic interaction.⁷ Aspiring national pastors benefit greatly from the example of godly missionaries who combine the qualities of character, spirituality, commitment, and giftedness.

One glaring need in the pulpits of many developing fields is for national men who biblically and skillfully handle God's Word. By setting the example, missionaries help

wean inexperienced preachers away from the tendency to manipulate the Scriptures. It is a mistake for missionaries to “fudge” on the principles of expository preaching. Missionaries may mistakenly believe that the substance of “milk”⁸ sermons is so basic that the sermons’ propositions do not need to be rooted in a text which actually means what the missionary is preaching. While the missionary may preach biblical truth, his mishandling of God’s Word mimics and reinforces an irreverent and subjective attitude toward the Bible. To handle God’s Word as an authoritative source of propositional truth is even more important than the topic of the sermon. Missionaries should preach expository messages that apply biblical truth based on the proper interpretation and true intent of the text if they hope to produce national preachers who will preach with power and graduate from “milk” to “meat.”

Missionaries also model the pastor’s heart for his people. In contrast to culture which places so much emphasis on status and self-promotion, the missionary should exemplify the servant’s heart in his devotion to the flock of God. Men in training need to observe the gracious spirit with which the missionary exercises his authority. They should see him as one who feeds the flock rather than feeding off them, as an example to follow rather than a superior to obey, as one who serves willingly rather than by constraint. The missionary should model the Chief Shepherd.⁹

Character flaws and ethical violations among national pastors are some of the most common causes of disintegration in foreign churches. It is all the more unfortunate when these types of problems manifest themselves among the missionaries themselves. Modeling character and ethics teaches these qualities even more effectively than classroom lectures. Thankfully, this is the exception, and many missionaries by God’s grace do merit the hero status often attributed to their vocation.

The very policies that promote financial independence can also lead to disillusionment and failure when the national pastor is left with no reasonable means to feed his family or operate his church. Missionaries should suggest “tent-making” or other practical means by which the national has some reasonable expectation of achieving financial sustainability. Qualifying national pastors in “tent-making” skills is a legitimate aspect of missionary work.

The Imperative in Conclusion

Producing successful national leadership has always been a key to, if not the paramount challenge of, the Great Commission mandate. It is a complex issue because of the many factors that can contribute to failure. Success is not simply a matter of establishing a Bible institute or instilling indigenous principles, nor is it simply a matter of mentoring a convert or instilling character and ethics. The dearth of biblical, indigenized New Testament churches on the mission field is not due to lack of effort by many committed missionaries; rather, it is a testimony to the task’s complexity and the need for honest evaluation and proven solutions. Equipping nationals for effective long-term ministry in their own cultures is a great challenge that requires

an informed approach and a resolve not to perpetuate the mistakes of the past.

History demonstrates that many churches apostatize under national leadership. Theological, cultural, and historical forces drive this trend and often combine to erode the good work of church-planting missionaries. But missionaries also bear fault. Some of the most detrimental tendencies of missionaries include the following: failure to acculturate; lack of a regional vision; unwillingness of like-minded churches to associate together for the purpose of coordinating church planting; unwillingness to cooperate in the training of nationals for the ministry; and the placing of ill-prepared, untested, poorly educated novices into the ministry. Nonetheless, the opportunity for effective ministry beckons missionaries. A missions philosophy that recognizes the imperative of leadership development will produce enduring New Testament 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 his BA and MDiv degrees from Maranatha Baptist University and his DMin from Bob Jones University.



¹ J. Drew Conley stresses the vital scriptural link between church planting and leadership development. He writes in summary, “The New Testament rises from a culture of aggressive church planting. Its history is full of the establishing of new churches, its epistles rich in apostolic instruction to keep those young churches securely within the faith” (J. Drew Conley, “The Theology of Church Planting,” *FrontLine* 1 [2003]: 6–7).

² David F. Detwiler, “Paul’s Approach to the Great Commission in Acts 14:21–23,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152 (1995): 33–41.

³ Acts 18:1–11; 19:9–10.

⁴ The New Testament instructs missionaries to comfort, commend, commit to faithful men, confirm, continue, endure, establish, exhort, instruct, ordain elders, set in order, strengthen, teach, and wage spiritual warfare. Converts are admonished to be grounded and settled, continue, earnestly contend, hold fast, keep pure, not be a novice, not be moved, observe, refuse the profane, and walk. Key texts include Acts 14:21–23; 15:32–33, 41; 1 Thessalonians 3:2–4; 1 Timothy 1:12, 18–19; 3:2–9; 4:6–7; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2, 24–25; 3:10–14; Titus 1:5–9; Jude 3–20.

⁵ 2 Timothy 2:2. Related passages include 1 Timothy 4:6 and Titus 1:5.

⁶ David F. Detwiler presents Paul’s concept of the Great Commission as encompassing the entire process resulting in well-established autonomous churches (Detwiler, 34–41).

⁷ This oversimplification runs the risk of misrepresentation. The mentoring relationship is a formal arrangement and requires a high level of commitment from both the mentor and his disciple. Anthony and Estep observe five common hindrances to effective mentoring: (1) feeling inadequate for the job; (2) never having been personally mentored; (3) those who mistakenly equate supervision with mentoring; (4) leaders who are afraid to risk being vulnerable; and (5) a misunderstanding between mentoring and discipling (Michael J. Anthony and James Estep Jr., eds., *Management Essentials for Christian Ministries* [Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2005], 314–15).

⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12–14; 1 Peter 2:2.

⁹ 1 Peter 5:2–4.

Encouraging Missions

Reading heroic missions biographies as a modern-day missionary is often surreal.

People called them missionaries; they refer to me that way too. And that's about where the similarity ends. Take the story of twenty-three-year-old Adoniram Judson. In four and a half months he raised his entire support and prepared to go. Then he got married, was ordained the next day, and two weeks later moved to a poor country he had never visited, where he remained for decades before returning. Who today would even consider that as an optional plan; what mission board in their right mind would let someone try it?

But God used him. Missionaries like him were the pioneers—the ones who found a way before anyone worked out how to do it. The results were not just the prodigious work they accomplished but the generations of missionaries that followed after them. That's because every missionary ministers not just in the context of a place but also in a God-given time. The results of successful service should spread across both.

The Relationship of Missionaries and Supporters

It's helpful to start with a broader philosophy of the missionary task. Every Christian is called to share the gospel. Some are called to share it cross-culturally. But if ministry means presenting a life picture that draws others to follow (1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:21), a missionary's task is much bigger than just his new cultural home. A part of his ministry should be self-consciously focused on his original culture—seeking to minister also within the relationships he has with his supporters.

Unfortunately we often badly misunderstand what this relationship means. You can see various goals embedded in the language we use to describe churches and missionaries. The word “supporter,” for instance, solidly places the focus on money. Likewise, we focus on the need for intercessory prayer with phrases such as “prayer updates” and “prayer cards.”

Both of these—finances and prayers—are core to the missionary-supporter relationship. But one last focus gets almost no attention at all. It's the need to present to home churches a picture of what God is doing around the world. From Jesus' dealings with Gentiles to the Great Commission to the progress of Acts and theology of Romans, the New Testament is profoundly international. God is working across the world; He is transforming the planet life-by-life; He is saving a people to Himself from every tribe and tongue.

And God's people need to know that. The songs of praise from every people, tribe, and nation begin now. For



believers to know only of God's work among themselves is not merely provincialism; it's actually a theological omission. And reporting what God has done to raise up people for Himself around the world isn't mere fundraising. It's a core ministry addressing a very specific need. Missions completely transcends one culture's exporting its religion to another. Missions is Christian brothers from one place partnering with Christian brothers in another to bring glory to their God. It's believers across the world sharing, rejoicing, and praising together the One who has saved them from their sin. And that circle remains open unless missionaries and churches take specific, intentional steps—

in a Wired World



which points backwards again to the work of Adoniram Judson and others like him.

Presenting Life on the Field

Looking for inspiration about missions, we often turn to classic biographies. Missionary biographies are an excellent way to learn about missions—or at least what missions was once like. Truthfully, I recognize almost nothing about my life in most of these accounts. In fact, the very adventures that make for great reading sometimes also scare people away from being missionaries. More often still, they form

a collective picture of missions in people's minds that has basically nothing to do with reality in 2016.

We certainly still benefit from these historical accounts. But clearly the picture is skewed when people ask, "Why isn't God working any more in the dramatic ways of 'the great missionaries of the past?'" Of course, He is! The same great God is doing the same great wonders through the lives of "the quite altogether normal missionaries of the present."

If anything, believers should be more acquainted with the ongoing work of missions today because it's right in front of us. Don't take for granted the benefits of seeing pictures, videos, and specific updates from the other side of the world, often within hours or minutes of when they happened. If the goal is for missionaries to relate firsthand what God is doing, what of the fact that we can talk with people on the field at negligible costs? This is the open door our place in human history has given us.* We can decry the Internet and social media if we want, but we do better to seize the opportunities they offer and use them for missions.

Seeing Life on the Field

As a child, I wanted to be a missionary because someone at our church presented missionaries as heroes. Children and teens are watching. Effortless consumers of social media and interested in the broader world, they are looking at something. Why not show them something about missions in a firsthand way? But that effort falls not just to missionaries but to parents, teachers, pastors, and any believer with an Internet connection.

There are nearly endless possibilities for bringing missions to life. For starters, connect with a missionary who regularly shares on social media—most networks let you choose to have someone's content always appear in your newsfeed. But go beyond that. Your family will benefit the most from focused efforts. Why not adopt a missionary and pray regularly as a family for their specific opportunities and needs? Interaction is always better when it's active. Comment, encourage, ask questions. Take the time to interact or possibly even get involved in their ministry. Missionaries are busy people too, but hearing from supporters is a blessing, not a nuisance. Even a simple e-mail in response to prayer updates communicates that you read it, you are aware of their ministry, and you are praying. That's a tremendous encouragement.

And best of all, why wait four years for a personal report? One supporting church regularly asks us for a three-minute update during their Sunday services. We're blessed to know they are praying specifically for us with

Continued on page 37

Praying Effectively for World Evangelists

Is your world evangelism outreach a program or a passion?

One way to answer this question is evidenced by the way the pastor and people of the church pray for their missionaries. When missions is merely a program in the church, there seems to be little emphasis on praying effectively for missionaries. On the other hand, when the pastor and people of the church have a passion for world evangelism, there is a deeper desire to be more effective in praying for the missionaries the church supports.

To pray effectively for missionaries means we must learn to pray specifically. To pray specifically we must stay in constant communication with the missionaries the church supports.

During his missionary journeys, Paul asked the churches of his day to pray for him no less than six times in the Scriptures.

1. Romans 15:30–33: “Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.”
2. 2 Corinthians 1:8–11: “Ye also helping together by prayer for us.”
3. Ephesians 6:18–20: Paul asks the churches to pray that he might have boldness “to make known the mystery of the gospel” and to “speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”
4. Colossians 4:3: “Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.”
5. 1 Thessalonians 5:25: “Brethren, pray for us.”
6. 2 Thessalonians 3:1–2: “Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, . . . And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.”

Paul knew the value and power of prayer as he spread the gospel to the world of his day.

A missionary in Vanuatu said in a missions conference, “Without your prayers missionaries have no power.” We pray effectively when we pray specifically. The following are some specific ways to pray for missionaries.

Pray that missionaries **finish deputation**. This is a time of preparation for serving on the mission field; however, the length of time it takes to raise funds to get to the field can be discouraging and cause some to drop out. Since the time to raise sufficient funds has been

extended, there is a greater need to pray for the **protection** of the missionary family as they travel thousands of extended miles traveling from church to church.

Pray that **provision** will be made to meet the many needs while on deputation. One missionary traveled several hours from home to get to a church only to be left at the church after the service with a handshake and a God-bless-you. He did not have enough fuel to get home, so he drove until he had to finally stop at a service station. As he stepped out of his vehicle he found \$20 on the ground. When he went inside he asked the attendant if anyone had lost the money. When the attendant told him no one had been at that pump all night, the missionary knew God had provided for him in a miraculous way. God meets our needs in many ways, but how unfortunate that a church missed out on a blessing by failing to take care of the man of God. The church with a passion for missionaries would never allow this to take place.

When the day the final support level is reached, the next prayer need is to pray for **passage funds** to get the family to the field. There are always last-minute expenses that the missionary family encounters in order to arrive on the field. These expenses include air fare, container fees, visas, passports, and medical exams as well as the expense of renting a home, finding transportation, and purchasing the necessities to set up family living.

Pray for **field needs**. Depending on the difficulty of the language, learning the **language** of the people the missionary is to serve can be a long process that can take up to two years or more. Knowing the language of the nationals will allow the missionary to have a more effective ministry with those God has called him to reach with the gospel.

The challenge of adjusting to the field does not end with learning the language. Missionaries often get to a field only to discover that they will have to deal with **culture shock**. There is no turning back as their new life on the mission field begins. Each missionary must learn to deal with new sights, sounds, smells, stares, social standards, and much more.

In a very short time the missionary discovers that **starting a church** on a mission field is far different from starting a church back home. Now it is up to the missionary to find the necessary building, room, or land to begin his ministry once he has led enough souls to Christ to begin a church. **Facilities** are often in short supply and often come at a high price.

Another area of great prayer need is the **family**. When a missionary family has family issues, no one is able to go home to talk to mom or dad. If there is strife in the family there is no escape to neutral ground. Satan can and does use field difficulties to add stress to a marriage and to the family at large. The **children**, some of whom had no desire to go to a foreign field, often have to make huge adjustments. Most mission fields do not provide activities for the missionary kids. Oftentimes there are no parks, libraries, schools, sports activities, shopping centers, or spending money. The reality is that these shortages (for a young person) can cause bitterness, discouragement, depression, and loneliness. Many fields have no moral standards, which can draw young people into many kinds of sin due to boredom and lack of supervision. **Parents** have to become creative in helping to meet the needs their children have for activities, learning experiences, personal time, and development of their spiritual lives. One mom, recognizing the need to provide a fun time for her children, turned her tile floor into a "soapy slide."

Developing **friends** on the mission field can be very challenging to the missionary. This is especially a delicate situation if the missionary family is serving in a closed or limited-access country. Making the wrong friends can quickly end a missionary ministry that is under constant scrutiny by local and state authorities. Being forgotten by friends who promised to keep in touch and pray for the missionary can also be very disheartening. One lady, who had neglected her missionary friend, came weeping because of her neglect. She was heard to say, "I am going home right now and renew my friendship with my missionary friend." Loneliness is a serious problem for missionary wives, as they have been removed from familiar surroundings and many friendships. One missionary wife wrote my wife to tell her that out of fifty to sixty churches supporting them, my wife was the first pastor's wife to write her. A church with a passion for missions knows the importance of keeping in touch with the missionary wife.

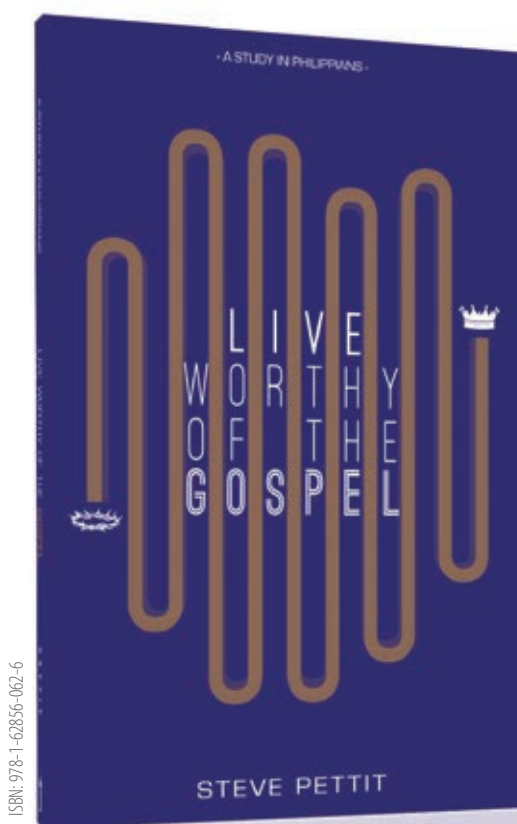
Pray that missionaries will remain **faithful** to God and His Word. Pray that they will allow the Spirit of God to show them how to remain faithful to their calling and to the people they have been called to serve. People are the same all over the world, so there will be many times the missionary will need patience, understanding, and spiritual insight to deal with each person he ministers to.

Missionaries also face many **fears** and **foes** on the mission field. Their fears include health issues, discouragement at the lack of response

from those they are trying to reach with the Word of God, loneliness, depression, godless governments, losing the support of local churches, fear of failure, death of a spouse or child, infidelity, and child kidnappings. Their foes include wicked and ungodly men, animism, perverse satanic attack, sins in the church, immorality, and much more. Only God is able to deliver them from these fears and foes. God's people need to pray specifically so their prayers will be effective.

Last of all, we need to pray that the missionary will grow in his **fellowship with God**. Pray that each missionary will have a consistent daily quiet time to learn from God's Word what God would have him become. Pray that he will allow God's Holy Spirit to be lived out

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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

An Angel, an Interpreter, One of a Thousand

He had been *very wild in his youth*. At Cambridge he was *profane, and prodigal and addicted to drunkenness*. Once he overheard a woman threatening a troublesome child, *Hold your tongue or I will give you to drunken Perkins yonder*. Not a very promising beginning for a man who would become, transformed by God's grace, *the most preeminent English clergyman and theologian of his remarkable generation*.¹

Last summer I had the opportunity to peer down through the display glass into a cabinet holding a rare volume from Charles Haddon Spurgeon's own set of the writings of William Perkins (1558–1602). Even in Spurgeon's day Perkins was difficult to obtain. Yet shortly after his death, Perkins's works had been collected and reprinted more than a dozen times in English. They were translated into French, Dutch, German, Welsh, Czech, Hungarian, Spanish, and other languages. At least fifty editions were published in Switzerland and almost ninety in the Netherlands. The rarity of any of these editions by the nineteenth century, when Spurgeon was blessed to own a set, testifies to the high value their owners placed upon them.

Reformation Heritage Books has launched the massive undertaking of reissuing Perkins in ten volumes in a newly typeset format that updates both spelling and punctuation and includes editorial footnotes. The first two volumes are handsomely completed. I don't know the order in which the remaining eight will be issued, but if it's in numerical sequence there is a brief but valuable work which may not be available through Reformation Heritage for many years yet. Happily, it was

included by Banner of Truth in its issuing of another Perkins title, *The Art of Prophesying*.

The little book to which I'm referring is *Calling of the Ministry* (originally, *The Calling of the Ministry: declaring their Duties and Dignities in two Treatises* [1605]). It consists of two messages based upon Job 33:23–24 and Isaiah 6:5–8. Isaiah 6 we know pretty well. But a text for ministers from Job 33? That's surprising.

But Perkins did indeed find a rare treasure for ministers in Job. His Bible version was the Geneva (which preceded the King James by fifty-one years):

If there be with him a Messenger, an Interpreter, one of a thousand to declare unto man his righteousness: Then will hee have mercie on him, and will say, "Deliver him, that hee goe not downe into the pit: for I have received a reconciliation."

There's no substitute for reading a book in its entirety. Stringing quotations together, even excerpting whole paragraphs, can't carry the mind or convey the mood of getting swept up in the unbroken current of a book. But I earnestly trust that what I've been able to present here will encourage someone. Perkins wrote for ministers and *sons of the prophets*, that is, men in training for ministry. The latter really should consider it an almost vital necessity to read and meditate carefully on *Calling of the Ministry*. It would do them a great, inspirational, sobering service in shaping their philosophy of ministry. Men already in ministry will, if anything, find Perkins to be even more valuable.

Perkins's Object

Perkins aimed to give, not just to ministers but also to their people, a scriptural sense of every preacher's unusual elevation in their midst. The *Epistle Dedicatory*, written by a Perkins supporter, observed that in those times, even the church itself was taking away too much *dignity and authority* from the ministry. To counteract

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

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this, Perkins exposes the five ways in which Job 33:23–24 communicates the high value of a true minister.

1. By his titles: he is an *Angel* and an *Interpreter*.
2. By his rareness: he is *one of a thousand*.
3. By his office: he is to *declare unto men his righteousness*.
4. By the blessing God gives to his labors: *Then he will have mercy upon the sinner*.
5. By his commission and authority: God will say: *Deliver him, that he go not down into the pit: for I have received a reconciliation*.

We'll focus upon just the first two of these.

I. The Titles of a True Minister

Certainly all of us have reflected upon the various ways in which God describes a minister: *pastor, preacher, steward, herald, man of God, good soldier*, and so on. But perhaps we've overlooked these two descriptions, arguably the oldest in the canon of scripture: *angel* and *interpreter*.

That *angel* is actually a scriptural term for a minister is easily established, as Perkins does, from simply noting that the word translated *messenger* in his version is the word for *angel*. It is used not only of heavenly beings but also of preachers like ourselves (Isa. 44:26; Mal. 2:7; Mark 1:2; Rev. 1:20; 2:1; et al.). Whether it refers to the former or the latter in Job 33:23 can be argued, but either way Perkins is on good scriptural ground to infer (at the very least) that ministers are exceptional among other human beings in that they function as messengers

Certainly all of us have reflected upon the various ways in which God describes a minister: pastor, preacher, steward, herald, man of God, good soldier, and so on. But perhaps we've overlooked these two descriptions, arguably the oldest in the canon of scripture: Angel and Interpreter.

for God in the same way that angels do. He explains, *Angels, Ambassadors and Messengers carry not their own message, but the message of their lords and masters who sent them. And Ministers carry the message of the Lord of hosts: therefore they are bound to deliver it as the Lord's, and not their own*.

The applications of this are powerful. Perkins says (emphasis mine), *God's Word must be spoken, and as God's Word. . . . God's Word is pure, therefore purely to be thought upon, and to be delivered. Then let all that are God's Angels . . . think it no less reason to do the duty of God's Angels, lest (as many men mar a good tale in the telling)*

they take away the power and majesty of God's Word in the manner of delivering it.

A second application concerns not the content, per se, but the way in which it is delivered. Perkins draws a healthy distinction which, due to the high value we place today upon seminary degrees and rigorous biblical scholarship,² may be as vital to hear at this present hour as at any time in church history:

He that is God's Angel, the Spirit of that God must speak in him. . . . It is thought good commendation before the world when men say of a preacher, "Surely, this man hath shown himself a proper scholar." . . . Such commendation (if just) is not to be condemned. But what commends a man to the Lord his God and to his own conscience is when he preaches . . . so powerfully to the conscience of a wicked man as that he thinks doubtless God is within him. Art thou therefore an Angel of God? Then magnify the Spirit of God, and not thyself in the preaching of his Word.

Then there is the necessary application to our congregations. They should hear us *gladly, willingly, reverently and obediently*. Perkins calls upon all Christians to do this, *not only if [the preacher's] doctrine be pleasing unto them, but though it cross their corruption, and be quite contrary to their disposition. . . . In as much as it is a message from thy God and King, and the teacher the Angel or Messenger of that God, therefore both he and it must be received with all reverence, and with the very obedience of the heart and soul*.

I believe that congregational polity is scriptural. But there can be a not-so-subtle tendency in congregational churches to democratize response, even after the preacher has given the most painstakingly careful exposition of God's words. But no church member has any divine authorization to play his own view (or even his own conscience) as the trump card if the minister is God's angel, delivering a pulpit message just as he has received it from God. This is not an easy thing to help a fiercely independent, American, congregational church membership understand. Thankfully, many of our folks do understand it. But the acid test is when a faithful *angel* demonstrates that a text contradicts what we have always thought. Then we discover whether we truly accept that our minister is a divine messenger.

The thing that confirms a minister to be an *angel* is that he is first of all an *interpreter*. He is *someone who can expound and explain*. But Perkins takes this to include also his being *the people's Interpreter to God*—that is, able to speak to God on their behalf, *to lay open their wants and nakednesses*. He confesses their sins and prays for their pardon and forgiveness. *Thus every minister is a double Interpreter*. He is God's mouth to them when he preaches, and he is their mouth to God when he prays.

The practical implications of this are powerful. First, *everyone who either is or intends to be a minister must have the "tongue of the learned" (Isa. 50:4)*. To have this necessitates (i) *human learning* and (ii) *Divine knowledge*,

as it may by outward means be taught from man to man. But most importantly, *a true minister must be inwardly taught by the spiritual School-master, the Holy Spirit.*

Of the three necessities, Perkins throws the accent to this matter of being taught by the Spirit. His explanation, complete with an emphatic clarification, is worthy of being quoted almost in full.

We can learn to interpret human writing by human learning, and even interpret the Scriptures truly and soundly as a human book or story, in such a way as to increase knowledge. But the divine and spiritual interpreter, who pierces the heart and takes men's souls by surprise, must be taught by the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. I am not here making any allowance for the claims people make that they have received "revelations." These have no substance; they are either dreams of their own, or illusions of the devil. . . . God's Spirit does not work except on the foundation of the Word.

What I am stressing is this: a minister must be a divine interpreter, an interpreter of God's meaning. And therefore he must not only read the book but eat it. He must not only have a knowledge of divine things flowing in his brain, but engraved on his heart and printed in his soul by the spiritual finger of God. To this end, after all his own study, meditation and discussion, his use of commentaries and other human helps, he must pray with David, "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (Psa. 119:18).

Recognizing these wonders requires spiritual illumination, and the exposition of them requires the tongue of the learned.³

Yet there is something even more important to being a true *interpreter*. It is personal sanctification and holiness. *Moses might not stand on the mount in God's presence till he had put off his shoes from off his feet* (Exod. 3:5). *Dare any man presume to come into this most high and holy presence of the Lord, until he have mortified his corruptions? . . . Let therefore all true Ministers of God, first be God's Interpreters to their own consciences, and their own soul's Interpreters to God.*

II. The Rarity of a True Minister

One of a thousand, Elihu said. *Such men are thin on the ground*, Perkins put it. Now, of course, this is due ultimately to God's sovereign choice. But Perkins was concerned to expound human responsibility on this point. He observed that it was strange, but confirmed by the experience of all ages that, *few men of any sort, especially of the better sort, affect [seek] the calling of a minister.* Why is this? Perkins suggested three principle reasons.

First, *the contempt* with which the calling of the ministry is treated. What Perkins was highlighting here was the treatment meted out only to truly godly ministers. Carnal, compromised clergy were then, as now, pretty generally tolerated. But woe be to the minister who took his life and preaching seriously.

A window into what Perkins meant by *contempt* for such a calling is afforded by some of his remarks upon the passage, *blessed are the pure in heart* (Matt. 5:8). Commenting on the reproach suffered by those in his day who attempted to be pure, he noted, *The pure heart is so little regarded, that, the seeking after it is turned to a by-word, and a matter of reproach: Who are so much branded with vile terms of Puritans and Precisions as those, that most endeavour to get and keep the purity of heart in a good conscience?*

In Perkins's era the word *Puritan* wasn't yet a badge of honor. As he notes, it was hurled derisively at those who attempted to live precisely according to God's Word (*Precisions*), like the expressions *holier-than-thou*, *Bible-banger*, *goody two-shoes*, and *legalist* are thrown about to discredit earnest, conscientious Christians today. It was this contempt that he felt was a factor in the rarity of real angels and interpreters in the ministry. Wicked and irreverent men watch ministers *narrowly, and take hold of their least infirmities, thereby to disgrace them. . . . They hate so deadly both that Law and Ambassage which they bring, and that God whose Ambassadors they are.*

Is this part of the explanation for the reticence of young men today to consider the possibility of the ministry? Have they observed, not just the culture's animosity, but the scarcely disguised contempt of Christians for godly ministers whose consciences are captive to the exact words of God? What effect does it have on a sincere Christian young man who can't help noticing the blatant, unashamed rejection of his pastor's preaching

The thing that confirms a minister to be an angel is that he is first of all an interpreter. He is someone who can expound and explain.

and admonitions by a significant percentage of the congregation; especially those within it who seem universally well liked for their success or wealth or influence or general affability? If being a minister means tension with not just the world, but with fellow church members, especially popular ones, why should a young man volunteer for that? After all, there are lots of other ways to serve the Lord that don't appear to come ready-made for rejection. No doubt Perkins was right: contempt for their calling contributes to the scarcity of true ministers.

A second reason Perkins proposed for the scarcity was *the difficulty of discharging the duties.*

To stand in God's presence, to enter into the holy of holies, to go between God and his people, to be God's mouth to the people, and the people's to God; to be the Interpreter of the eternal law of the Old Testament and the everlasting gospel of the New; to stand in the room, and to bear the office of Christ himself, to take the care and charge of

souls: these considerations are so many amazements to the consciences of such men, who do with reverence approach, and not with rashness rush into this sacred seat.

And then there is this reason, one that a genuine minister feels ashamed to mention: the lack of material compensation and status for those who labor in this calling.

Perkins was no hireling. In his sermons on Isaiah 6 he assured those considering a call to the ministry that if God sent them, *he will provide for them and reward them adequately. . . . He will pay their wages: an eternal weight of comfort here and of glory in heaven.* Nevertheless, he held strong views on the responsibility of hearers to remunerate their ministers righteously. They are men of flesh and blood, he pointed out, and *in the law, God took such*

Young students should *bend their studies and their thoughts to the ministry.* Perkins pointed out that though it is a shame that there are so few ministers, it is also a commendation of the calling. Perkins observed the truth of the old proverb: “*The best things are hard to come by.*”

Since this is a rare and excellent calling, students must *hasten to furnish themselves with all good helps and means.* But they must not become stuck *too long in those studies which keep a man from the practice of this high function.* The calling is *not to live in the university or in the college and to study, . . . but to be a good minister.* This is what makes a man “*one of a thousand.*”

When it comes to church members, the reality of a true minister being one of a thousand teaches them their duty. It is,

first to respect with reverence the person and to receive with reverence the message of every true Messenger, seeing it is so rare a thing to find a true Minister. Nothing is more vile and base than an evil and lewd minister. So is there none worthy of more love and reverence than a holy minister. For Isaiah says, “*Their very feet are beautiful which bring glad tidings, and we should kiss these feet which bring news of peace.*” We should kiss the feet of those who bring the good news of peace. Christians should, therefore, receive and treat a good minister as Paul says the Galatians formerly treated him, “*as an angel of God*” (Gal. 4:14).

Hast thou then a godly Pastor, Perkins asked? Well, then, *Go to him for comfort, for counsel; use his company, frequent his sermons; account him worthy of “double honour.” Think it no small or ordinary blessing, for thou hast “one of a thousand.” Bless God for bestowing his mercy on thee, which he had denied to so many others.*

Himself a Confirmation

At the age of just forty-four William Perkins was carried away by the agonies of kidney stones. He was sorely missed. For many years his influence lingered. Thomas Goodwin, who enrolled at Cambridge ten years later, wrote that even at that time, *The town was then filled with the discourse of the power of Master Perkins’s ministry, still fresh in most men’s memories.*

How confirmatory of what he had preached from Job 33:23–24. Apparently, if people do not discover it while he lives, they will when he is gone; their Angel and Interpreter was indeed *one of a thousand.* ☞

¹ Philip Benedict, *Christ’s Churches Purely Reformed: A Social History of Calvinism* (Yale University Press, 2002), 319. Quoted by W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 42.

² For instance, see Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachen, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (Baker Academic, 2015).

³ As edited by Sinclair Ferguson, *The Art of Prophesying* (Banner of Truth, 1996), 90–91.

Yet there is something even more important to being a true interpreter. It is personal sanctification and holiness. Moses might not stand on the mount in God’s presence till he had put off his shoes from off his feet (Exod. 3:5). Dare any man presume to come into this most high and holy presence of the Lord, until he have mortified his corruptions?

strict order for the maintenance of the Levites. Why should it be assumed that simply because he is a minister or other Christian worker, a man will not be paid equally to the other men in the congregation whose education, experience, time, and troubles are similar to his? Rather, in Perkins’s view, which is the scriptural view (1 Tim. 5:17–18), the ministerial calling *deserves to be rewarded most of all.*

Perkins felt that lack of provision was *a great blemish on the church* and that reformation on this point would be *worth the labour of prince and people.* He admonished, *Special care is to be had in it, else it will not be reformed. For doubtless, had not God himself in the Old Testament taken such straight orders for the livings of the Levites, they had been put to no less extremities than is the ministry of this age.*

Applications

There were four applications which Perkins said provided directions for a variety of people: rulers and magistrates, ministers themselves, young students, and finally, church members. His applications to students and to church members are especially encouraging.

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Bring . . . the Books

Critique of *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Chs. 8–14)

Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth (Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds. [Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008]) is dedicated to “understanding that the Bible clearly and confidently teaches creation *ex nihilo* in such a way as to make the idea of a ‘young earth’ not only reasonable, but certain” (p. 13). This review highlights several key chapters in the second half of the book.

Chapter 8

Robert McCabe argues that the interpretation that views the creation week (Gen. 1:1–2:3) as a figurative, literary framework presents God’s creative activity in a topical, nonsequential manner, violates the historical-grammatical interpretation of Scripture and is motivated by the idea of harmonizing Scripture with a “very old universe” and the evolutionary theory of human origin. According to McCabe, Genesis 1:1–2:3 is a genuine historical narrative that maintains the historical substance of the creation account. This pericope is permeated with a grammatical device, the *waw* consecutive, which comprises a significant component of Hebrew historical narrative and in general provides “an element of sequence to past time narrative” (p. 216). McCabe also summarizes the four basic arguments for interpreting *yom* as a twenty-four-hour day separated by evening and morning (pp. 226–27).

Chapter 9

William Barrick argues that a careful analysis of Genesis 7:11–8:14 provides the ground upon which all geological implications should be based. His thesis is that the “correlation between the chronology of the Flood and the geologic record must be built upon the bedrock of sound biblical exegesis” (p. 254). Barrick assumes the *a priori* status of the biblical account and refuses to make the biblical account of the Flood subject to external confirmation. From this foundation Barrick surveys the Flood narrative and points out three chiasms (7:11; 19–20; 8:5) and a symmetrical pattern in the time periods for the Flood’s development and abatement. From these literary devices he concludes that the pericope is a “sophisticated and coherent narrative” (p. 257). In addition, the etymologies of several key Hebrew words *are not the key* to interpreting Genesis 6–9; rather, it is the language of the Flood narrative provided by phraseology, literary devices, and context that point to sounder semantic clues of the global, comprehensive disruption of the earth’s surface. This chapter demonstrates (1) that it was 150 days of severe rain and tectonic upheaval (as opposed to forty days) which caused the geologic changes in the earth and that the ebb and flow of the receding waters also caused untold geologic change on the earth.


Chapter 11

Terry Mortenson answers the question, “What does Jesus have to say about the age of the earth?” His thesis is that the Lord Jesus Christ gave clear evidence that He was a young-earth creationist who believed in a literal six-day creation that occurred a few thousand years ago. Mortenson forms his conclusion based on three key NT texts: Mark 10:6, Mark 13:19, and Luke 11:50–51. In these texts Jesus is referencing the beginning of the world, not just the beginning of the human race. The phrase “from the beginning” occurs twenty times in the NT. Never does this phrase refer to the beginning of the human race; however, it does refer to the beginning of the world in five parallel passages (1 John 1:1–2; 2:13–14; Matt. 19:4–8; John 1:1–3; Heb. 1:10). The second key phrase, “foundation of the world,” is a reference to the creation week as a whole (Luke 11:50–51; Heb. 4:3). Christ believed that Abel lived very near the creation week.

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

Chapter 12

Ron Minton documents the “Apostolic Witness to Genesis Creation and the Flood.” His thesis is that the NT writers teach a recent creation and worldwide Flood: “From Acts to Revelation, the Apostles continually declare that the creation is of God, and that the early chapters of Genesis are straightforward history. They never hint that creation is much older than mankind” (p. 370). Minton first points out that old-earth creationists such as Buswell, Grudem, Lewis, and Demarest have generally “ignored” or “overlooked” the apostles’ teaching on this subject. Key NT passages presented by Minton include Acts 3:21, Acts 14:15–17, and Romans 1:18–25. Minton makes an important point that man observed “the handiwork of God’s eternal power and wisdom” at the beginning of creation, and that death entered the world through Adam implying a young earth, since death has been in the world only since the Fall (Rom. 5:12–19; 8:19–23).

Harvard evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr admitted that the Darwinian revolution began when men rejected a young earth for an ancient earth—“This ‘finding’ was the snowball that started the whole avalanche” (“The Nature of the Darwinian Revolution,” *Science*, vol. 176 [June 2, 1972], p. 988). Christian institutions seldom drift to the right on important theological issues. The authors and editors of this work lead its readers to the firm conclusion that “no properly interpreted scientific facts will ultimately contradict a straightforward reading of Genesis” (p. 427). 

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I approach Scripture the way I do grizzlies: cautiously and with great respect. So when I see a verse such as Ephesians 2:7, it stops me in my tracks: “That in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” A verse like that gets my attention and, much like I do when I spot a bear, I take another look.

Whether pursuing bruins or the Bible, in order to gain a better understanding, one must first get the big picture, then focus on the details. This requires time and tools. In the Bible-study scenario, the tools differ, but the goal is the same: get the big picture first, then zero in on the target. Thus, if Ephesians 2:7 is our prey, we need to become as familiar as possible with the terrain around it.

Paul is writing to people who are more than nervous; they are actually fearful of persecution. They’ve heard by way of messengers that he is in chains. Paul is concerned that the believers in the church not worry about him or become discouraged due to the fact that he is in bonds (3:13; 6:20). He strongly desires they be comforted by two things: Truth and Tychicus.

Tychicus was an assistant to Paul. Paul’s personal reference to Tychicus in 6:21–22 reveals the apostle’s concern that the Ephesian believers not lose hope by thinking that God was failing them when in fact, God was *very much in control*. To make double sure they got the message, he personally sent his assistant to represent him and speak to the brethren face to face. Tychicus was not only to read the letter to the Ephesians but was to personally explain Paul’s positive outlook and condition.

It is said that words are only about twenty percent of effective communication. Facial expressions, gestures, body language, and voice inflection contribute far more than words alone when trying to convey a message. (Surely, all of us have had a text message misunderstood!) Therefore, since Paul could not personally deliver the letter of encouragement, he sent a faithful man in his place to clearly communicate the following great truths: we are chosen of God (1:4), redeemed by Christ (1:7), and sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13–14).

Paul then informs the church how he prays for them. He prays that God will help them understand “the hope [expectation] of his calling” (1:18a), “the riches of the glory of his inheritance” (1:18b), and “the exceeding greatness of his power” (1:19). Understanding the goal, the goodness, and the greatness of God, is key to remaining strong, courageous and steadfast in the face of fear.

I was once charged by a very angry grizzly. It was


not fun. It happened fast. I did not even have time to be afraid. But in the six seconds that led up to the enraged bear being killed, I stood my ground—not because I possessed fantastic courage. As a matter of fact, it was quite the opposite. I did not run or waver because I knew my friend standing beside me was armed with a .375 H&H. It was loaded with very big bullets. And I knew from past experience he was a seasoned hunter with nerves of titanium. That’s why I wasn’t afraid. I still remember the sound of the bear blowing his foul breath and popping his teeth three times a second. He sounded exactly like a steam engine locomotive and was moving just as fast. My brave friend killed the bear at thirty feet with one shot. Needless to say, I was glad.

Well, in these first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul is reassuring God’s beloved saints they need not fear because they have a very brave and powerfully standing next to them. The Lord of Hosts is His name! Then suddenly, near the middle of these already encouraging first three chapters, the apostle makes the startling statement: “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7).

In other words, God stepped into our sin-cursed lives, raised us from the dead and gave us eternal life (2:1–6) so that He might make us the objects of His immeasurable kindness *forever*!

The Greek word used here for “kindness” literally means “that which flows out of the goodness of the heart.” In other words, God’s heart is intrinsically good and it is His nature to be kind. His kindness, born of his goodness, will emanate from His heart, will flow like a river, and will move us to worship and praise Him forever. He will enjoy us, and we will bask in His enjoyment throughout ages, world without end!

Packed in that one short verse of holy writ is the comforting truth that God’s heart *is good* and that He is going to do kind things for us throughout the eons of eternity, all because of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Christian friends, we understand that we were the object of God’s love when Christ died for us. We understand that we were the object of His love when He saved us. But how often we forget that we *will be* the object of God’s love and kindness throughout the ages. *Forever and ever*, God is going to surprise His beloved children with acts of kindness. Our brief time here in these sin-cursed bodies of clay cannot compare to the indescribable joy of forever walking in the radiant kindness of a loving, sovereign God! 

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

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Windows

Did You Feel the Shake?

Did you feel the shake the other day? That question is often part of the routine conversation among the locals where we live. It is not unusual for our district to experience a couple hundred earthquakes each year. Though most are small in magnitude and go unnoticed, occasionally we have one a little stronger that gives everyone the reminder that we are poised on the edge of “the ring of fire.” I have a greater appreciation for the uncertain feeling that an earthquake can create, having lived eighteen years now in the earthquake-prone country of New Zealand. It is a really unsettling feeling when the terra firma beneath you begins to reel and shake.

Last year we had the opportunity to visit the city of Christchurch on the south island of New Zealand. During the early morning hours of September 4, 2010, an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude rocked the city. Then less than six months later, on February 22, 2011, another earthquake of 6.3 magnitude shook the city. Unlike the first quake, the second occurred during the middle of the day, and 185 lives were lost in buildings that collapsed. The buildings that weren’t damaged by the first quake were damaged by the second, forcing the inhabitants to totally rebuild the city.

Scientists have noted some factors that contributed to the intense shaking in the Christchurch earthquakes. One of these was the high amount of energy released in the rupture of the fault.

The faults that failed in both the September magnitude 7.1 and February magnitude 6.3 Christchurch earthquakes were very strong, with high amounts of friction holding the two sides together. When a “strong” fault breaks, it releases more energy than an equal-sized “weak” fault would. Think about the difference between breaking a 1cm-thick sheet of Styrofoam and a 1cm-thick sheet of plywood, and the amount of jarring you would feel in your hands.¹

Another factor was a recently discovered physical phenomenon called “slapdown,” which describes a trampoline-like interaction between the geological layers under the city.

As the huge early pulses of energy travelled through horizontal layers of the earth beneath Christchurch, the weaker upper layers travelled farther upward than the stronger lower ones, and so separated from them. When these upper layers fell back under gravity, they “slapped” against the lower layers coming up again, producing very high impacts. These “slapping” impacts generate energy that travels back up towards the surface, magnifying the whole process.²

In the period following the February 22, 2011,

earthquake until January 15, 2012, the city experienced thirty-one aftershocks of a magnitude of 5.0 or greater.³

The psychological impact created by the frequent and often strong aftershocks caused many people to move away from the Christchurch area. It is estimated that during the first four months following the earthquake that about 10,600 people moved away from the Christchurch area.

It’s the constant quaking which has shaken Christchurch literally, metaphorically and psychologically. An entire population now never knows whether that low rumbling is “just a truck” traveling past, a small aftershock, or the precursor to another massive quake. Every person in the city has earthquake stories which permeate their conversations, and each personal experience was felt with a life-changing intensity.⁴

Scripture and Earthquakes

Have you ever thought about how much the Scriptures make reference to earthquakes, whether literally or metaphorically? In one of the oldest books in the Bible, Job cites an earthquake as an example of God’s “mighty strength.” Job 9:6 says that God “shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.” In Psalm 18:7 the psalmist David says that an earthquake is an evidence of God’s wrath: “Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.”

Earthquakes feature prominently in end-time events. Revelation 16:18 speaks of “a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” According to the Bible, the “big one” is still in the future. The prophet Isaiah prophesied that “the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low” (Isa. 2:12). Later in that same chapter Isaiah says that “the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low” (2:17). One of the ways the Lord accomplishes this humbling of man’s haughtiness is through earthquakes. “And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (Isa. 2:19, 21).

In the rebuild of Christchurch, strong emphasis

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

Charles Spurgeon

has been placed upon building according to the new “earthquake proof” standards of building. Now, don’t get me wrong. I’m certainly in favor of making our homes and buildings as safe as possible, especially since I live in an earthquake-prone country. I suppose the thing that bothers me is the seeming arrogance in the term “earthquake proof.” Do men really think they can construct a building that God can’t shake down? When in their arrogance engineers think they have finally devised a building that is “earthquake proof,” they’ll need to sharpen their pencils again because God says that He is not only going to shake the earth but also the sea and the heavens. The prophet Haggai speaks of a time when God will “shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land” (Hag. 2:6, 21). The gospel writers also give testimony to this same phenomenon: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:25). “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken” (Luke 21:25–26). When men think they have finally engineered and constructed an “earthquake proof” building, they’ll need to consider how they’re going to approach the challenge when the heavens shake.

The Christchurch earthquake not only shook the ground upon which the city rests but also shook its residents; as stated above, over 10,000 of them moved away from the city in the months following the earthquake. Luke 21 highlights the fact that the shaking of the heavens and earth will cause “distress of nations, with perplexity” and “men’s hearts failing them for fear.” The prophet Haggai says that God will not only shake the earth and the heavens, but that God will also “shake all nations” (2:7). The frequency with which we hear about the “natural catastrophes” occurring around the world has caused an unsettled feeling among the nations. Falsely attributing it to “global warming,” world leaders gather in their summits to propose their solutions. If we’re not careful, we too as believers can be shaken and troubled. In reference to the “day of Christ,” Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers that they “be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled” (2 Thess. 2:2).

God and Earthquakes and Us

While preaching through the book of Hebrews recently, I was struck with another way in which God uses earthquakes in our lives. In Hebrews 12 the writer references the events at Mount Sinai when God’s “voice then shook the earth” (12:26) saying “so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake” (12:21). The writer also speaks of God’s promise of the future events: “Yet once more I shake not the

earth only, but also heaven” (12:26). The Scriptures say that this “signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain” (12:27). God says that He uses earthquakes as a means of helping us to take stock of what we’re trusting in. Is our trust in something that can be shaken? The danger for the readers of Hebrews was that their confidence was in the long-standing Old Testament form of worship, their temple, and the Levitical sacrificial ritual. There was a danger that their confidence would be in a tradition of worship that soon would be removed, because in AD 70 their temple would be destroyed and the age-old tradition of the Levitical priesthood would cease.

I am proud to be an American and proud of the “faith of our fathers” and the principles upon which our nation was founded, but we’re living in a day when our religious heritage is being shaken and in many case removed. Our pluralistic society is tolerant of everything but the individual who believes in the absolute truth of the Word of God. People who believe in absolute truth are targeted and penalized for their faith. We watch as more and more Christian institutions and denominations give in to the politically correct viewpoint. As believers we must renew our understanding of “those things which cannot be shaken” (12:27). For the readers of Hebrews it was an understanding of their great High Priest and His sacrifice of Himself as the once-for-all payment for their sins. That was the greater and better truth that could not be shaken. “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come” (9:11) signified God’s taking “away the first [Old Covenant], that he may establish the second [New Covenant]” (10:9). The writer of Hebrews encouraged them not to “be wearied and faint in your minds” (12:3) and to “lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed” (12:12–13). We must press on with faith and endurance, and we can: “receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (12:28).

Our world is “shaking” both literally and metaphorically. Many values that we considered the “bedrock” of our society are being shaken: the definition of marriage, religious liberty and its free expression, etc. As believers we can draw grace and strength from the fact that we are “receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.” We look forward to “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:10). Now there is a city that I consider “earthquake proof.” ☞

¹ <http://www.gns.cri.nz/Home/News-and-Events/Media-Releases/Multiple-factors>

² Ibid.

³ <http://earthquake-report.com/2011/03/02/christchurch-earthquake-2011-the-impressive-list-of-aftershocks/>

⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/360/christchurch/4735478>



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Resist small wrong beginnings. —Clarence Sexton

Every successful man I have ever met had come at some time under the dominating power of a great truth.
—Bob Jones Sr.

Separation or having standards is not a sign of spirituality; it is a clearing of the deck so you can be spiritual.
—Wayne Van Gelderen Sr.

Don't expect the lost, the unregenerate, to act like saved people.
—D. Lee Atkinson

Today in our churches we are frantically trying to keep all the wheels going around instead of making a fresh connection with the Source of power. —Vance Havner

It is closing time in the gardens of the West and from now on an artist will be judged only by the resonance of his solitude or the quality of his despair.
—Cyril Connolly

From a vainglorious doctor, a contentious pastor, and nice questions, may the Lord deliver His church.
—Martin Luther on Romans 14:1

A Liberal is a man too broadminded to take his own side in a quarrel.
—Robert Frost

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.
—William Butler Yeats

God must be the end of all means, for if they lead us not to Him, we go away empty.
—a Puritan

It is true that around every man a fatal circle is traced beyond which he cannot pass; but within the wide range of that circle he is powerful and free; as it is with man, so with communities.
—Alexis de Tocqueville

I just threw out an old Bible that had been packed away for generations. It wouldn't have been worth a dime. Somebody named Guten-something had printed it . . . and some guy named Luther had scribbled notes all over it.
—Tal D. Bonham

Lord, I desire to be deaf to unmerited censure and the praise of men.
—a Puritan

Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become more corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.
—Benjamin Franklin

Don't be an agnostic—be something. —Robert Frost

The best medicine for present sufferings is a regular performance of present duty. —Susannah Wesley

Do the duty that lies nearest you. Your next duty will already have become clearer. —Thomas Carlyle

Alexander the Great—like all of us—should have been satisfied with manhood. Instead, he sought godhood. And it destroyed him.
—Unknown

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



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The Paradigmatic Nature of Biblical Law

Submitted by
David C. Innes

An Excursus by Douglas K. Stuart

Modern societies generally have opted for **exhaustive law codes**. That is, every action modern society wishes to regulate or prohibit must be specifically mentioned in a separate law. Under the expectations of this exhaustive law system, state and/or federal law codes run to thousands of pages and address thousands of individual actions by way of requirement or restriction or control or outright banning of those actions. By this approach, all actions are permitted that are not expressly forbidden or regulated. Thus it is not uncommon that criminals in modern Western societies evade prosecution because of a “technicality” or a “loophole” in the law—their undesirable actions are not *exactly* prohibited or regulated by a written law, so they cannot be convicted even though an objective observer may be convinced that what they did surely deserved punishment.

Ancient laws did not work this way. They were **paradigmatic**, giving models of behaviors and models of prohibitions/punishments relative to those behaviors, but they made no attempt to be exhaustive. Ancient laws gave guiding principles, or samples, rather than complete descriptions of all things regulated. Ancient people were expected to be able to extrapolate from what the sampling of laws did say to the *general* behavior the laws in their totality pointed toward. Ancient judges were expected to extrapolate from the wording provided in the laws that did exist to *all other* circumstances and not to be foiled in their jurisprudence by an such concepts as “technicalities” or “loopholes.” When common sense told judges¹ that a crime had been committed, they reasoned their way from whatever the most nearly applicable law specified to a decision as to how to administer proper justice in the case before them. Citizens of ancient Israel, and especially its judges, had to learn to extrapolate from whatever laws they had received from Yahweh to whatever justice-challenging situation they were dealing with. The number of laws dealing with any given application of justice might be few, but that would not prevent justice from being applied. It would simply have been the case that all parties were expected to appeal for guidance to those laws that did exist, whether or not expressed specifically in terms that dealt with the case under consideration. In other words, the Israelites had to learn to see the underlying principles in any law and not let the specifics of the individual casuistic citation mislead them into applying the law too narrowly.

God’s revealed covenant law to Israel was paradigmatic. No Israelite could say, “The law says I must make restitution for stolen oxen or sheep [Exod. 22:1],

but I stole your goat. I don’t have to pay you back,” or “The law says that anyone who attacks his father or mother must be put to death [Exod. 21:15], but I kicked my neighbor with my foot and hit him with a piece of wood, so I shouldn’t be punished.” Such arguments would have insulted the intelligence of all concerned and made no impact on those rendering judgments. It is in connection with the paradigmatic nature of Israel’s covenant law that Jesus, following the established tradition in Judaism, could make so sweeping an assertion as that two laws sum up all the rest. Properly understood, two laws do indeed sum up *everything* in the entire legal corpus of the Old Testament. So do ten laws (the Ten Words/Commandments); so do all six hundred and thirteen. The numbers go no higher, nor would they need to. If a reasonable number of comprehensive and comprehensible laws (as few as two, as many as six hundred and thirteen) are provided to a people as paradigms for proper living, there is no excuse for that people to claim ignorance of how to behave or to claim innocence when their sins are found out.

Most laws are expressed as commands in the masculine singular—the “you” of the laws is “you, a male person”—from a technical, grammatical point of view. But here again the reader/listener would not have the slightest ground to say, “It prohibits individual men from doing such and such, but I’m a woman/we’re a group, so the wording of the law exempts me/us.” Implicit in the wording is the need for paradigmatic extrapolation to all persons, singular or plural, male or female.

Within the New Covenant, the paradigm of the two great laws is summarized as the “Law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). Because of the help of the Holy Spirit, the need to memorize and remember six hundred and thirteen commandments is obviated. The law is no longer a matter of (paradigmatic) guidelines written externally on tablets of stone. It is now a matter of a clear sense of loving God and neighbor written on the mind by God’s Spirit (Jer. 31:31–34; cf. Rom. 2:15) in accordance with the two commandments that always summed up God’s will and/or the ten that in the Old Covenant were graciously given to clarify the two.

One may ask, “If the commands to love God with one’s whole heart and to love neighbor as self are the two greatest, why weren’t these the first commandments spoken at Sinai? Why did one of them (‘love your neighbor as yourself,’ Lev. 19:18) come later to the attention of the Israelites rather subtly, without fanfare, in the midst of the levitical ‘Holiness Code’ (Lev. 19–26) and the other (‘love

Continued on page 34



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THE STORY OF DAVID, PART 5:

We have reached the halfway point in this series on the life of David, and only now is he finally coming to the throne. My straight-text Bible devotes 25 pages to David's rise to reign over all Israel (1 Sam. 16–2 Sam. 4) and 27 pages to David's actual reign over all Israel (2 Sam. 5–24). Nearly as much space is devoted to David's personality and preparation for the throne as is devoted to his life and reign as king.

Second Samuel 1–4 records the transition of the kingdom from Saul to David. But dynastic transitions are messy. Civil war dominates these chapters, which are brimful of killing and crying. By the end, David's two most dangerous human enemies—Saul and Ishbosheth—are dead. But so are two of his greatest assets—Jonathan and Abner. Think how helpful both of these men could have been in unifying the nation under David. It doesn't seem fair that either of them had to die. Perhaps God, in His providence, was cutting David off from every human aid, so that the establishment of David's throne—in fulfillment of the promises of God—would be entirely His own doing, no one else's.

Apart from 2:1–3, David is primarily depicted not as acting, but as reacting to all these events. Those reactions are windows into David's heart, but the text seems primarily interested in establishing, from multiple angles, David's utter innocence in coming to the throne. By 2 Samuel 5 things begin to calm down and cheer up a bit. The chapter opens with the acceptance and anointing of David as the new king over all Israel, the conquest of Jerusalem as the nation's new capital, and the defeat of Israel's inveterate nemesis, the Philistines.

As one commentator points out, 2 Samuel 5–6 is a non-chronological collage of incidents in the reign of David, a series of vignettes collected from the first 25 years of his reign and overlapped in a patchwork of important symbols of God's blessing and establishment of David's kingdom. The central point is described in 5:1–5 (David's enthronement over all Israel), punctuated in 5:10 and 12 ("And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him. . . . And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel"), and then illustrated in a variety of ways: politically, diplomatically, militarily, and spiritually.

Solidifying the Kingdom (5:1–5)

David has waited a long time for this. Not just waited, but survived "through many dangers, toils, and snares." It's been about 18 years since David was first anointed to be Israel's future king; now he begins his reign at the age of 30 (5:4–5).

Conquering God's Capital (5:6–16)

Jerusalem, too, has waited a long time for this. It has been 400 years since God said He would one day pick out a special place for His name (Deut. 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23, 24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2). The conquest and capitalizing of Jerusalem was a significant step towards the fulfillment of prophetic anticipation and divine purpose.

David became great because Yahweh was with him (5:10), but, more importantly, David *understood* that the Lord had established him and had exalted David's kingdom for the sake of His people Israel. David realized this was about more than him. Saul started out "little in his own eyes" but soon became a king "just like those over all the other nations"—selfish, demanding, superior, power-abusive, and self-aggrandizing. Godly leaders understand that there are two things more important than them: God and God's people. We can't say David never forgot that; but when he did, it never took him long to move his life back under the shadow of that sobering reality. Jesus taught that the same principle extends to the leaders of God's church (Mark 10:42–45).

Defeating the God's Enemies . . . Twice (5:17–25)

Soon after David's coronation, Israel's longtime enemies, the Philistines, "came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim" (5:18). When David asked God whether he should confront them in battle, God assured him that he should do so and that He would deliver them into his hand (5:19)—and He did (5:20–21).

The *very next verse* records that "the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim" (5:22)—the wording duplicates 5:18 *verbatim*. David had faced these circumstances before. Wouldn't it be logical to assume that God's will would be the same? Why ask God about it? Yet David assumes nothing. That is wise decision-making. In the face of identical providential circumstances, David again asks the Lord what he should do—and receives a very different answer, but with the same result.

The point is simple and obvious. Seemingly providential circumstances alone are not trustworthy. We do not look at our surroundings for signs of direction without prayer to God for guidance, even in situations we think we can figure out because we have faced them before. Following the assumed providences of God without prayer to God is the opposite of faith, not a sign of mature decision-making. Basing decisions on providential circumstances without prayer is to forsake a living relationship with the God of

THE KING SUBMITS TO THE KING (2 SAMUEL 1–6)

providence. Appearances can be misleading, circumstances misread, providences misunderstood. When it comes to seeking God's direction and making wise and right decisions, reading apparent providences is never a substitute for seeking God Himself.

Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem (6:1–23)

This is ultimately a passage about worship, a right approach to God, and a right posture toward holy things. And David is right at the heart of it.

Taking Unauthorized Liberties with Sacred Things (6:1–5)

We take unauthorized liberties with sacred things when we take a purely pragmatic, sensible, human approach to God. What could make more sense than to carry the ark on a brand-spanking-new cart built especially for this occasion and purpose (1 Chron. 13:7)? "What are we supposed to do, carry it by hand?" Well, think. That may not be a bad option. How was it carried before? Did God have anything to say about how this sacred object was to be transported?

We take unauthorized liberties with sacred things when we ignore what God has to say about what He is like and how He is to be approached. Turns out God had some very specific things to say about moving the sacred furniture of His tabernacle (Num. 4:4–6, 15). Numbers 7 authorized the use of carts for moving the tabernacle (7:2–8) but not the ark of the covenant, which was to be carried by hand (7:9). Why? It doesn't matter, and God never explains. All we need to note is that God's word about handling these sacred things is very clear. Whether or not we understand the reason God requires what He requires is immaterial. The determining factor in our approach to God and to sacred things is not what does or does not make sense to us, but what God says.

Arousing Divine Displeasure (6:6–11)

Resist the temptation to read between the lines and assume that there must have been some additional secret sin for which Uzzah was being judged. That robs the passage of its own point. We can precipitate God's displeasure not only by outright acts of known disobedience but even by well-intentioned but ill-informed sincerity. God may overlook sincere ignorance, but if He does it is His mercy, not His duty.

David reacts to God's anger with anger. We tend to sympathize with his frustration. After all, he was being sincere and doing his best to worship God genuinely; isn't that what matters? That raises a question: Was he doing his best to discern and do what God commanded in this respect? The progression of the passage makes it clear

that, however sincere and well-intentioned, David had not purposefully explored God's words for divine direction.

David's reaction, on reflection, changes from anger to fear. That's what God is after—not cowering fear, but taking Him seriously. Why is this response more appropriate than anger? God was *right* to do what He did; His self-revelation left Him no other option (Num. 4:15). God was *good* to do what He did; He could have smitten the entire company. God was *guarding His nature*; He is not an impotent God who can be carted around at will in a box. God was *guarding His reputation*; He is not like helpless idols that must be protected from harm by their worshippers. God was *guarding His holiness*; He had given clear instructions for how the ark was to be transported and that it was not to be handled. God was not acting arbitrarily or unpredictably; the warnings were explicit and obviously given so that people would *not* die. God's instructions may strike us as curious, but His actions are anything but arbitrary or unfair. If we get stuck on David's initial reaction and continue to object to God's action as excessive, we miss the whole point of the passage: David himself didn't get stuck there.

The NT confirms that God retains the right to do the same thing today, and that "fear" is still an appropriate emotional motivator for the people of God (Acts 5; 1 Cor. 11:30–31; 2 Cor. 5:10–11; Heb. 10:30–31).

Handling Sacred Things Sacredly (6:12–15)

Verse 15 is almost a repeat of verse 5. Almost. David goes from celebratory worship to stunned anger to fear to celebratory worship again. But two important things happen in the interim while the ark is temporarily housed in the home of Obed-Edom: (1) God demonstrates that great blessing really is attached to His presence (6:11–12), and (2) David has apparently gone to God's Word to discover what they did wrong and how to correct it (6:13–15). We know that because he changes the way the ark is transported (cf. 1 Chron. 15:2, 11–15).

Worshipping Irrespective of Others' Approval (6:16–23)

Michal was embarrassed, indignant, disgusted by what she saw as the absurd behavior and undignified exhibition David made of himself (6:20). David is equally indignant at Michal's utter incomprehension of what was going on and why (6:21). David was not doing what he was doing to be noticed; he displays a humility, genuineness, transparency, and God-focus that models a kind of worship that is irrespective of other persons or what they think.

Fearing God means taking God seriously. That means taking God's word seriously. And that has particular application to how we approach and worship Him.

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Intolerance

Once again religious convictions and cultural tolerance are being tested. On February 17 of this year, after being approached by Ben Valencia and Luis Mermolejo, Texas bakers Edie and David Delorme declined to bake a cake to celebrate the men's wedding. After declining based on their Christian convictions, the Delormes provided the men with a list of bakers who would be willing to bake the cake for them.

Valencia immediately took his case to the *Longview News-Journal*, complaining that the Delormes' rejection made him and his partner feel "dehumanized."

The response from LGBT activists has been aggressive. The Delormes received a number of threats against their business and family, including threats to burn down their house and sexually violate their son. They have moved their eight-year-old daughter to another location for her safety.

Edie defended her and her husband's decision: "That cake is used to celebrate a union. We just don't feel like we're supposed to take part in the celebration of that union, because it's a violation of our faith."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/gay-activist-threatens-christian-bakers-burn-down-home-violate-son-broken-beer-bottle-refusing-bake-gay-wedding-cake-159025/>.

Prophetic Word?

Prosperity preacher Paula White is using her platform to stump for Donald Trump. In a recent speech she claimed that Trump is "saved" and "needs to be our next president." She tells the story of getting Trump a Bible signed by Billy Graham with an accompanying letter for his sixty-ninth birthday. This, she claims, was some sort of prophetic word.

Trump's public comments and lifestyle have been a cause for deep concern to many Christians. But White claims that Trump always answers positively to questions regarding his faith in Jesus. Her own testimony says all that needs to be said: "I like many people have a perception because sometimes media. I know it's hard to believe in this day and age, can paint a picture that is not a reality. So I thought I would walk in and set the ground rules straight. And I met him and I said, 'Mr. Trump, I don't want your money I have enough of my own. I don't want your fame, I have enough of my own.' I said 'I want your soul.' And he just looked at me and smiled and said 'We're gonna make a great team.'"

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/prosperity-preacher-paula-white-billy-graham-donald-trump-prophetic-word-bible-159092/#gluOKwO70GqS5ltw.99>.

God Is a Woman?

Cee Lo Green is no stranger to controversy, and he certainly is not a source

of sound orthodoxy. The soul singer released a song in early March entitled "God Is a Woman."

In a short description of the song that came out with its debut, Green wrote, "Manifesto of thought and intention, master of plan, light in every direction encouraged by affection, mother of the moon and stars, matter, and mountainous plains, and even prouder mother of man, a song of praise to echo forevermore, and always. . . . From my own mothers [sic] womb here I stand as a witness that . . . GOD IS A WOMAN."

Both of Green's parents were Baptist ministers, but his theology involves an inclusivism that cannot be defended from Scripture.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/cee-lo-green-song-god-is-a-woman-crazy-gnarls-barkley-159094/#OC1Ui84orJa64vTc.99>.

The NCAA Faces Scrutiny

Several LBGT groups are calling upon the NCAA to divest from colleges and universities that have sought or are seeking Title IX exemptions. Title IX was intended to protect students from discrimination. In 2014 Title IX was interpreted to include transgender students.

Fifty-nine schools have sought Title IX exemptions based upon religiously held views and a firm commitment to sexual ethics.

Campus Pride, leading more than eighty other LGBT organizations, is seeking to influence the NCAA to divest from

such schools. In a letter of response, Shirley Hoogstra, president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, said that the letter from Campus Pride "mischaracterized our institutions and their policies."

"Many do hold a view of marriage as between a man and a woman consistent with the view of all of the world's major religions, and they ask all employees and students to confine sexual activity to this context for as long as they are a part of the campus community. These policies in no way target LGBTQ members of the community but instead apply to all within the community."

NCAA spokesperson Gail Dent indicated that the NCAA has received the letter and will respond appropriately.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/lgbt-groups-demand-ncaa-divest-christian-colleges-title-ix-exemptions-gender-identity-159164/#WIZYkUOYdIKG-dLZ4.99>.

The House Acts

The US House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution on March 14, 2016, declaring ISIS's atrocities against Christians and Yazidis as genocide. The resolution was authored by Jeff Fortenberry (Republican from Nebraska) and Anna Eshoo (Democrat from California) and cosponsored by over two hundred members of the House.

The European Union, Iraqi and Kurdish governments, and the US Commission on International Religious

Freedom all provided substantial evidence, but the State Department has been reticent to call ISIS's actions genocide. This united action by both parties demonstrates the obvious nature of these crimes and the urgent necessity for the United States to respond appropriately.

The House also passed a resolution asking President Obama to seek a war crimes tribunal through the United Nations against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. That vote passed 392 to 3.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/house-resolution-islamic-state-isis-slaughter-christians-persecution-genocide-159172/>.

Children and Blasphemy Charges

The Human Rights Watch has called on the Egyptian state to “quash blasphemy sentences handed down to four Christian boys and their teacher over a video mocking ISIS.”

Four Egyptian boys were tried for their involvement in a video mocking ISIS for the beheading of Christians. Three boys (Mueller Edward, 17; Bassem Hanna, 16; and Alber Ashraf, 16) received the maximum sentence and were sentenced to five years in prison. Another boy, Clinton Yousef, 17, was sentenced to a juvenile facility for an undisclosed period of time. The boys' teacher was tried separately and received three years in prison for violating Egypt's blasphemy laws. The defense lawyer for the boys intends to appeal the decision.

One of the boys' fathers told the Human Rights Watch that the boys made the video as a way of coping with the persecution of Christians by ISIS. “They were psychologically troubled by the killings

NOTABLE QUOTES

Iwould rather save one soul from death than have a monument of solid gold reaching from my grave to the heavens.—D. L. Moody

The fear of consequences may keep us from committing the outward acts of murder or adultery, but only love will keep us from committing murder or adultery in our hearts.—Jerry Bridges

When Joseph was enticed by Potiphar's wife, he did not refuse her on the basis, “If I did that and my master found out, he would have my head.” No, he said, “How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). His motivation for morality was centered in God, and because of that it was acceptable to God.—Jerry Bridges

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.
—William Cowper

Speaking as a minister, it is my strong feeling that no man has the right to preach to a crowd he has not prayed for.—A. W. Tozer

Every faithful pastor can tell you, with great sorrow and concern, the stories of young people and men and women who walked away from the church and straight Bible teaching and warm Christian fellowship to have their own way. When the old nature stirred, they turned their back on God and walked away. They went into questionable marriages. They went into worldly alliances. They took jobs in which they had no chance to please and glorify God. They went back to the world. Now, they did not walk out of the house of God because they did not want God—but because they found something they wanted more than God!—A. W. Tozer

of Coptic Christians in Libya and went for entertainment. They didn't deliberately intend any offense. . . . How can you try someone for mocking ISIS?”

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/human-rights-watch-egypt-christian-children-blasphemy-prison-five-teens-isis-islamic-state-video-159167/#fdOC-0UoAvy7CAW6c.99>.

Wycliffe Associates Separate from Wycliffe Global Alliance

Wycliffe Associates was founded in 1967 and presently has 6279 staff and volunteers translating Scripture in 75 different countries. This group announced that they will not renew their affiliation with the Wycliffe Global Alliance, a group founded in 1991 to bring together Bible-translating organizations.

The decision made by the board of trustees hinged on two issues. First, members of the group lacked commitment to translating with literal language the concepts of God as Father and God the Son: “The Wycliffe Global Alliance includes Bible translation agencies that do not include Father and Son of God in some translations of the Scriptures.”

Second, the lack of commitment to core Biblical and translational principles hindered the integrity of their association.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/wycliffe-associates-split-global-alliance-father-son-of-god-arabic-translations-158910/#K5remaFRCQFVL0Fd.99>.

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

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ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

I grew up as part of the tribe that calls itself “conservative,” but it took me far too long to stop and ask myself an obvious, direct, and important question: what exactly are we trying to conserve?

Fundamentalists are conserving the fundamentals of biblical faith. (We’re not the only ones doing so—plenty of believers around the world don’t use the label but still love and believe the great central truths of Scripture.) Fundamentalists are conserving other things too. In our best moments, at least, we’re conserving the best of the tradition of Western hymnody. Even if everyone else drops “And Can It Be?,” we will stubbornly keep singing it. We’re also conserving a culture of willingness to obey widely ignored biblical passages such as 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14.

But “conservatism,” like “progressivism,” is misguided when absolutized. Writer Bruce Riley Ashford has pointed out that these two -isms are both moving targets. They mean different things in Tehran, for example, than they do in Washington, DC. Christians do not owe allegiance to “conservatism” or “progressivism” as abstract concepts. We owe allegiance to something higher—a moral standard by which we can judge (1) what is worth “conserving” and (2) what counts as “progress.” There will be times and places in which the Bible calls us to “progress,” such as when Wilberforce bucked public opinion and cleaved to Scripture to end the British slave trade. But now that he has done so, he began a tradition of opposition to that trade that is worth “conserving.”

I have taken a long time to get to my point about language and Scripture, but here it is: it is not our duty to conserve the English language, nor to ensure that it progresses. The Bible simply does not tell us, either explicitly or in principle, that language may not change—nor that it must. If “gay” meant something innocent in 1890 and something sinful today, we have no duty to be “conservatives,” insisting that what “gay” “really means” is what it used to mean (just try it and see how far you get). Likewise, if the use of “they” as a singular gender-neutral pronoun is gaining ground in formal writing, displacing “he,” I don’t see a biblical worldview pushing Christian writers to be “progressives” at the forefront of that change. English will change despite our best efforts to conserve what we like or progress toward something else we like. If an individual Christian prefers a certain usage or convention, neither conservatism nor progressivism (seen as absolutes) should guide them.

What should guide them? What in language is worth conserving, and what counts as progress? They only give me half a page. Hang on.

Dr. Mark L. Ward Jr. works for Logos Bible Software; he is also the author of *Biblical Worldview: Creation, Fall, Redemption*, published by BJU Press.



Chaplain Endorsers Keeping Current on Challenging Issues

On the second Thursday of each January, the Armed Forces Chaplain Board (AFCB) holds a conference near Washington, DC, for all Department of Defense (DoD)-approved chaplain-endorsing agencies. The purpose of the one-day event is to keep all endorsers current on changes in DoD and Service Branch policies and regulations regarding chaplains. As you can imagine, the social engineering and deep cuts to all branches of the military have severely impacted every element of our military, chaplains included.

In fact, they have resulted in both fewer chaplains and in greater challenges to those who remain.

To keep open the lines of communication between DoD and Endorsers, as well as among the Endorsers, various civilian agencies exist. Many years ago, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) was formed. Its intent was good, and its collaborative efforts had and still have some merit. NCMAF holds its annual conference in conjunction with the AFCB meeting. Sadly, members of NCMAF fail to clarify the difference between evangelism (sharing the gospel) and proselytizing (efforts to convert someone from his own religion to another). The result of this failure is the inappropriate application of “prohibited proselytizing” to all evangelism, which is unconstitutional.

Additional confusion results by the frustrating misuse of “pluralism,” which simply means that many different religions exist within a community. Through the tedious insertion of the word “tolerance” into nearly every topic, the broader chaplaincy-endorser community fails to distinguish between “pluralism” and “ecumenism,” which takes the false view that “we all worship the same God.” Of course, the practical result is that “the tolerant” are completely intolerant of intolerance. They are absolute about their disdain for “absolutists.” Nothing new here for separatists; it is the reality in which we serve—a few disgruntled and departing former separatists to the contrary, notwithstanding.

A little over ten years ago, several endorsing agencies who take the gospel seriously did what serious evangelicals must all do eventually: we got out. Refusing to make common cause with religions who reject the gospel, we formed the International Conference of Evangelical



FBFI Endorser Dr. John C. Vaughn, Associate Endorser CH (COL) Joe Willis, and NTA Endorser Pastor Garry Thompson at the AFCB Conference.

Chaplain Endorsers (ICECE) for endorsers who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ and our mandate to proclaim it. Each January, in conjunction with the annual AFCB conference, ICECE meets to hold briefings on current issues, new regulations, threats to the gospel, and public policy that is contrary to biblical truth and Evangelical practice. This year we had well-prepared briefings on “Women in Combat and the Selective Service Act” by CAPT Bob Miller of Hope for America; “Current Political Threats” such

as those “Resulting from the Obama Executive Order on Sexual Orientation” by Art Shultz, ICECE Counsel and newly elected ICECE executive director. Veteran Navy Chaplain CPT Steve Brown briefed us on the “Chaplain Program Requirement Changes” regarding new and more robust in-residence seminary requirements. Chaplain Brown is now the Endorser for the Associated Gospel Churches. Dr. John Vaughn, Endorser for FBFI, described “Policy Governance in ICECE Bylaws and Shared Best Endorser Practices.” A motivating final presentation from Chaplain CPT Jim Poe, retiring chairman of ICECE, addressed the near-taboo topic of the “Government Forced Massive Islamic Immigration into the West/America.”

After a full day of substantive presentations and discussion, punctuated by the necessary but more mundane organizational duties, we attended the one-day AFCB Conference mentioned above. There we met face to face with the many military and civilian personnel that we work with remotely to recruit and guide new chaplains in the various service branches. We were addressed by the Generals and Admiral who serve as the Chiefs of Chaplains of the Navy, Army, and Air Force. Finally, we received helpful guidance from the respective Chaplain Corp Personnel Directors in fulfilling the complex compliance requirements as a part of many endorsers’ obligations to both DoD and their chaplains.

The lesson in all of the meetings and related travel and follow-up is simple: being a chaplain endorser requires constant vigilance to the shifting sands of public policy; it is both rewarding and taxing to keep current on issues that determine not only the success of the chaplain but the very existence of the chaplaincy in the future.

A Critical Lesson from the History of Baptist Missions (Continued from page 7)

One group was more openly Fundamental in its stance and more militant in its defense of the faith. This group became known as the “hard core.” The Conservative Baptist Fellowship formed the nucleus of this group. On the other side stood a group that had embraced the philosophy that would become known as the “New Evangelicalism.” It was a compromised position which gained increasing acceptance in the 1950s. Those espousing this position became known as the “soft core.”

New Evangelicalism

The March 1956 issue of *Christian Life* carried an article that articulated the philosophy of New Evangelicalism, outlining differences between the old Fundamentalism and the new movement: “The fundamentalist watchword is ‘Ye should earnestly contend for the faith.’ The evangelical emphasis is ‘Ye must be born again.’” The rest of the article outlined eight theological areas where the Evangelicals proposed changes in emphasis. They were

- A friendly attitude toward science (including theistic evolution).
- A willingness to re-examine beliefs concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.
- A more tolerant attitude toward varying views on eschatology.
- A shift away from so-called extreme dispensationalism.
- An increased emphasis on scholarship.
- A more definite recognition of social responsibility.
- A re-examination of the subject of biblical inspiration.
- A growing willingness of evangelical theologians to converse with liberal theologians.⁷

This article proved to be a road map for the direction that the New Evangelicals would travel over the next several decades. The issue of separation from apostate religious leaders became an intense battleground, and the plain biblical commands concerning separation were minimized or explained away.

When it finally became apparent that Fundamentalists could not win the battle with New Evangelicalism within the Conservative Baptist movement, Biblical separatists withdrew. In 1961 Dr. Monroe Parker, president of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College and a leader in the separatist movement, called for the formation of a new mission agency—thus, another Fundamental agency, Baptist World Mission, was born.

While we have taken the time to provide a history of the battle relating to the Northern Baptist Convention, other mission agencies, such as Baptist International Missions, Inc. (BIMI), arose out of parallel battles with compromise in other regions of the United States. Many independent Baptist churches and multiple mission

agencies in the South were the result of separation from the compromise of the Southern Baptist Convention. Their unique histories likewise demonstrate the link between doctrinal fidelity and the progress of New Testament missions.

In reviewing the history of Baptist missions in the twentieth century, we have discovered that a primary tactic Satan used to attack biblical Christianity was theological compromise based on a redefinition of the criterion for unity and ministry cooperation. The “Inclusive Evangelical Policy” of the 1920s called for unity based only on a shallow assent to the gospel. The “New Evangelicalism” of the 1950s called for a modified form of the same concept; a popular phrase often heard in the movement was that ministry was “all about the gospel.” Today separatist Baptists are hearing the same siren song from many conservative Evangelicals and even some within Fundamentalism. We must never forget that Biblical fidelity and obedience are not just about the gospel. Neither is New Testament missions just about the gospel. While the good news of Christ’s redemptive work is at the core of Christianity, God has given His people a comprehensive body of truth in the Scriptures, the “faith once delivered to the saints.” The great fundamental doctrines of the Word of God still demand our loyalty and commitment. A philosophy of missions that reduces ministry cooperation to the lowest common theological denominator must be rejected. Those concerned about pleasing Jesus Christ must embrace an orthodoxy and orthopraxy that fulfill Christ’s challenge, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” This is the critical lesson that we must learn from Baptist missions in the twentieth century if we would continue to be faithful to the Savior in impacting our world for Him.

Dr. Bud Steadman has served as the executive director of Baptist World Mission since 2009. He previously ministered as pastor of Community Baptist Church in South Bend, Indiana, for thirteen years and at Catawba Springs in Raleigh, North Carolina, for ten years.



Special appreciation is expressed to Dr. Fred Moritz and Dr. David Cummins. Many of the resources for this article came from their writings in the archives at Baptist World Mission.

¹ David O. Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 3.

² George Cross, ed., *The Theology of Schleiermacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1911), 50.

³ Jeffrey P. Straub, “George William Lasher—Baptist Proto-Fundamentalist,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* (2006): 137.

⁴ Kevin Bauder, “Biography of O. W. Van Osdel” (ThM dissertation, Denver Baptist Theological Seminary, 1983), 56.

⁵ Robert George Delnay, *A History of the Baptist Bible Union* (Winston-Salem, NC: Piedmont Bible College, 1974), 118.

⁶ Chester E. Tulga, *The Foreign Missions Controversy in the Northern Baptist Convention* (Chicago: Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 1950), 62.

⁷ “Is Evangelical Theology Changing?” *Christian Life* (March 1956): 16–19.

the LORD your God with all your heart,' Deut. 6:5) almost forty years later, in the new generation's law code, Deuteronomy?" The answer is disarmingly simple: too many people could not appreciate the two great commandments except in reference to the others, including the ten principal expressions thereof, the Ten Words/Commandments of Exodus 20. That is, without an awareness of all six hundred and thirteen commandments and seeing within them the high standards of God's holiness and His particular required and/or banned behaviors enumerated, a person corrupted by a fallen world does not easily get the point of what the two great commandments are intended to summarize. Once one has learned the breadth and depth of God's expectations for His holy people, however, the two greatest commandments serve brilliantly as comprehensive reminders of all that is expected of God's covenant people. This is the point of the law of Christ in the New Covenant. It is not an amorphous, contentless concept but a way of summarizing full obedience to everything Christ taught, demonstrated, and reinforced from elsewhere in Scripture.

A final implication of paradigmatic law: not all laws will be equally comprehensive in scope. That is, some will be very broad in their applicability (love Yahweh your God) and some much more narrow (do not bear false witness). One might ask, "Why not say 'Don't be dishonest in any way,' which would be broader and more comprehensive than 'Don't bear false witness'?" But that would be missing the way paradigmatic law works: through a somewhat randomly presented admixture of rather specific examples of more general behaviors and very general regulations of broad categories of behavior, the reader/listener comes to understand that all sorts of situations not exactly specified (either because a law is so broad or so narrow) are also implicitly covered. In other words,

when all the laws are considered together, one's impression is that both the very narrow, precise issues and the very broad, general issues fall under the purview of God's covenant. The wide variability of comprehensiveness is intended to help the person desiring to keep the covenant to say, "I now see that in the tiniest detail as well as in the widest, most general way, I am expected to try to keep this law—in all its implications, not just in terms of its exact wording." Some commandments are thus less broad in scope in the way they are expressed than is necessary to cover all the intended actions; others are so broad in scope in the way they are expressed that one could never think up all the ways they might be applied. This is just as it should be. The narrow and the broad taken together suggest the overall comprehensiveness of God's covenant will for His people.²

¹ It was no accident that judges were selected and in place already in Exodus 18 before the covenant was even given to the Israelites. Without judges to extrapolate from the guiding principles of the law, the application of the covenant stipulations would have been impossible. Judges applied the principles found in the legal paradigms (laws) to the specific situations brought to them in court cases and rendered verdicts that were in accord with the guidelines of the laws, but not necessarily verdicts that were actually mentioned verbatim in the law since the cases themselves were not necessarily exactly those described in the samplings the law provides.

² An obvious parallel in the NT is Paul's lists of gifts in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Some gifts are narrow in scope; others are broad. Moreover, the two lists are not identical (any more than the laws of Exodus-Leviticus and Deuteronomy are identical). But as a paradigm for the entire corpus of gifts, Paul's lists eloquently tell the reader that any and all special abilities a person has been given by God that could help build up His church should be developed and employed to that end.

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The Work of a Savior

Note from Pastor Ron Smith: *We received the Macedonian call. "The reason for this letter is to ask if you would consider coming in here as a volunteer to conduct a service for us here at California City Correctional Facility. . . . I believe it is vital that we have solid doctrine to properly begin to establish the church here." That was the request I received in October of 2014 by a brother (Jose) concerned for his fellow brethren. It would take almost three months to be able to enter the facility. My life is different as a result. I minister with brothers who are not just hungry for God's Word but are capable teachers and preachers.*

Being asked to pastor a group of fellow brothers behind the walls has been one of the most incredible blessings in my some twenty-eight years of ministry. The very first time I preached, a brother named Ishmail let me know I got my "anothers" mixed up in Galatians 1. The brethren at California City Correctional Center (aka "CAC") are a blessing and I had better be prepared . . . because they are! The article below by Jahmal Coleman is from the heart. God can change the leopard's spots!

As a high school student sixteen years ago, I never would have imagined this day in prison. I was a star athlete preparing to go to college, getting good grades in school in mostly college-prep classes. I was then introduced to marijuana and began to use it. From there everything began to go downhill! I started ditching school to smoke and stealing to support my new habit. My grades began to drop, and my basketball coach confronted me about the situation. I remember it like yesterday.

He asked, "Did something happen in your life? You are usually an A and B student. Talk to me—what's going on? I can help."

I said, "Nothing."

He said, "I can get you into a good college on a scholarship for sports with your good grades. Get it together."

I never did. I missed that season of basketball because of my grades. Once I could no longer play, I gave up. Shortly after that, I left home and dropped out of high school to run the streets. My sole purpose for the next few years would be to feed my addiction and party. By the age of twenty-five I had six kids, had gone to prison six times, and had gotten married.

I had been raised in a Jehovah's Witness family. I remember going door-to-door. I knew there was a God and that He had a Son, Jesus, but I did not know any doctrines of the Bible. I remember my dad praying all the time. One night when I was in the county jail I remember having the thought of "letting God in my life" come to mind. Every time I would push the thought away, it would come back. This happened for three days. Finally, I said, "OK, God," and that was the beginning of my journey.

As I think back to that day, I did not understand as much as I do now about the work of our Savior at the cross. But I can say today that I have trusted in Christ and Christ alone to save me from my sins.

Today I am in state prison serving a twenty-two-year sentence. I have seven years in with ten left to go as of now. Life in here has been bittersweet. The sweet part was coming to know Christ as Lord and Savior and being conformed to His image day in and day out. God has brought me a long way from doing drugs to now being one of the pastors at Tree of Life church at CAC. I am a student at Harvest Bible University, where I received a 4.0 on my report card for this last semester. I also discovered my God-given gift of drawing. I have become quite the artist, by the grace of God. I use my talent to bring glory to His name by philanthropic means. My artwork is given to Good Day for Children, a group that sells the art pieces at a gala and gives the money to children who are victims of sex-trafficking abuse.

The bitter part is that my children are growing up without their father. I feel the pain of that reality every day. My pain serves as a reminder to stay on the path and tenaciously seek God to become better and do better. Another part of the bittersweet is the challenges we face in prison. There is a lack of men and women of God who are willing to help the body of Christ behind bars. We need more men of God teaching sound biblical doctrine to come and help. One of the biggest challenges we face in here is people coming in with false doctrine, leading people astray. I have been to five prisons, and the last two have been challenging in this regard.

Thanks to Pastor Ron Smith for his help in coming into the prison system to help the body of Christ. His first trip inside was interesting. I am always aware of people's perceptions when they first come into the prison. Media and society paint a picture that gives a perception of prison that scares most people from wanting to come in. Such perception is far from the truth, unless you go into a level 4 prison. Pastor Smith came in with ease and even said he was surprised at the biblical knowledge that the leaders here possessed. Now he says he enjoys the fellowship and that it is real strong.

I encourage you to come into the prisons, help in any way that you can by sending sound biblical teaching on CD, great books, Bibles, and your love and prayers.

Jahmal Coleman is an associate pastor of Tree of Life Church in CAC. He has been a philanthropist for the last three years through giving art to the Good Day for Children Foundation.



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Encouraging Missions in a Wired World

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firsthand knowledge. They have direct confirmation that their support is being used effectively and find it easier to pray for us. It's no wonder that members struggle to remember missionary names and fields if we see them only twice a decade. Change that. Let people hear from their missionaries regularly. A very brief Skype update isn't burdensome for missionaries—the benefits in awareness and prayers are tremendous.

Conclusions

Ideally, missions work will be truly cross-cultural, focused on two places at once. Missionaries minister to people in a culture not their own, even while they self-consciously try to draw a future generation to desire the same thing. And technology opens new ways to do that—to show an immediate and accurate picture of missions with its realistic challenges and difficulties but also its victories, joys, and blessings. Supporters and missionaries alike must view that task as worthy of their time and effort. Together we must set a vision for the coming generations who will be the next to serve.

Dr. Joel Arnold serves in the Philippines under Gospel Fellowship Association. He and his wife, Sarah, have three children. Among other ministries, Joel teaches at Bob Jones Memorial Bible College in Quezon City.



* Missionaries should consider sharing the vision of their work however they can. Missionaries in restricted-access nations

clearly can't afford to give any information about their specific missions work. And because what you say is accessible on both sides of the ocean, missionaries do have to be careful about what they share. Freely publishing your updates online means there are things you can't say. But there are major benefits too. Living in an English-speaking country, I expect that my Filipino church members will read my updates. That knowledge gives me a positive accountability. More importantly, it shows the people I'm ministering to that I have nothing to hide. I want my Filipino brethren to view themselves as our fellow ministers. So why not update them as well on how God is working? I need their prayers too!

Praying Effectively for World Evangelists

Continued from page 19

of him to comfort him and allow him to be all God wants him to become for the glory of God. Pray that he will always **put Christ first** in his life and ministry.

May God give you such a passion for missions and missionaries that you will become an effective prayer warrior for your missionaries and their families. Remember the words of the missionary from Vanuatu: "Without your prayers missionaries have no power."

Dr. Ron Allen has served in full-time ministry since 1966. A passion for missions characterized his twenty-six-year ministry as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of San Francisco. Ron and Barbara Allen now conduct a ministry of encouragement to missionaries at home and abroad. Over the past nine years they have housed over 450 missionaries in their home at no expense to the missionaries.



The Influence of Children

We read in Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD." Indeed, children are the wealth of parents. The Scriptures also state in Psalm 127:5, "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." They are the blessing of the home and really make life interesting! They come up with statements that are oftentimes humorous and sometimes challenging.

For example, many years ago, a friend of ours in Pennsylvania was very upset with her five-year-old son and said to him in a stern voice, "Son, what kind of idiot do you think I am?" He replied, "Well, Mom, how many different kinds are there?" She said she had to run out of the room because she was about to burst out laughing. My own daughter-in-law was upset with her then-two-year-old son. She said to him in frustration, "Son, when are you going to learn to obey?" He looked at her and said, "Ummm, I believe when I turn three." She too had to run out of the room before she burst out laughing.

Children certainly say things in the most innocent and honest ways. Children also take things literally. For example, one of my sons was teaching his youngest son how to hit a ball off the T-ball stand. He kept swinging and missing the ball, so my son said to him, "The reason you keep missing the ball is because you are not keeping your eye on the ball." His son looked at him, then bent over and literally put his eye on the ball!

Children can also say things that deeply touch your heart. Many years ago, one of my sons who was nine years old at the time said to me, "Dad, when I grow up, I want to be a little boy soulwinner." We had a friend in South Carolina who was unsaved and hardened to the gospel. He had heard many great men of God preach, but he refused to give his life to Christ. We had prayed and prayed for

him as a family, yet he continued to reject God. He had a six-year-old son at the time; one day the boy crawled into his dad's lap, looked him the face and asked, "Daddy, when are you going to let Jesus save you?" This hardened man was broken by the tender words of his son and shortly thereafter received Jesus Christ as his Savior.

There are also profound examples of the influence of little children in the Scriptures. In John 6 we find the well-known account of the Lord using the lunch of a young boy to feed five thousand men plus thousands more women and children. In Acts 23 we find another account of how God used a child to save the apostle Paul from a plot against his life. The chief priests and elders had bound themselves under an oath to eat nothing until they had killed Paul. They were going to ask the chief captain of the guard to bring Paul to them under the pretense of further questioning him, then attack and kill him as soon as he came near. But Paul's nephew overheard their plot, went to his uncle, and told him. Paul instructed his nephew to go and tell the chief captain; when he did, the captain listened to the boy. Then he ordered a military convoy of 470 soldiers to accompany Paul on horseback to Felix the governor. Little children do have an influence!

But most of all, the Lord loves children and wants to save them. Jesus said in Matthew 19:14, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Children are so often open and tender to the truth of God's Word; while they're young, we must be constantly pointing them to Christ so they will receive Him as their Savior early on in their lives.

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