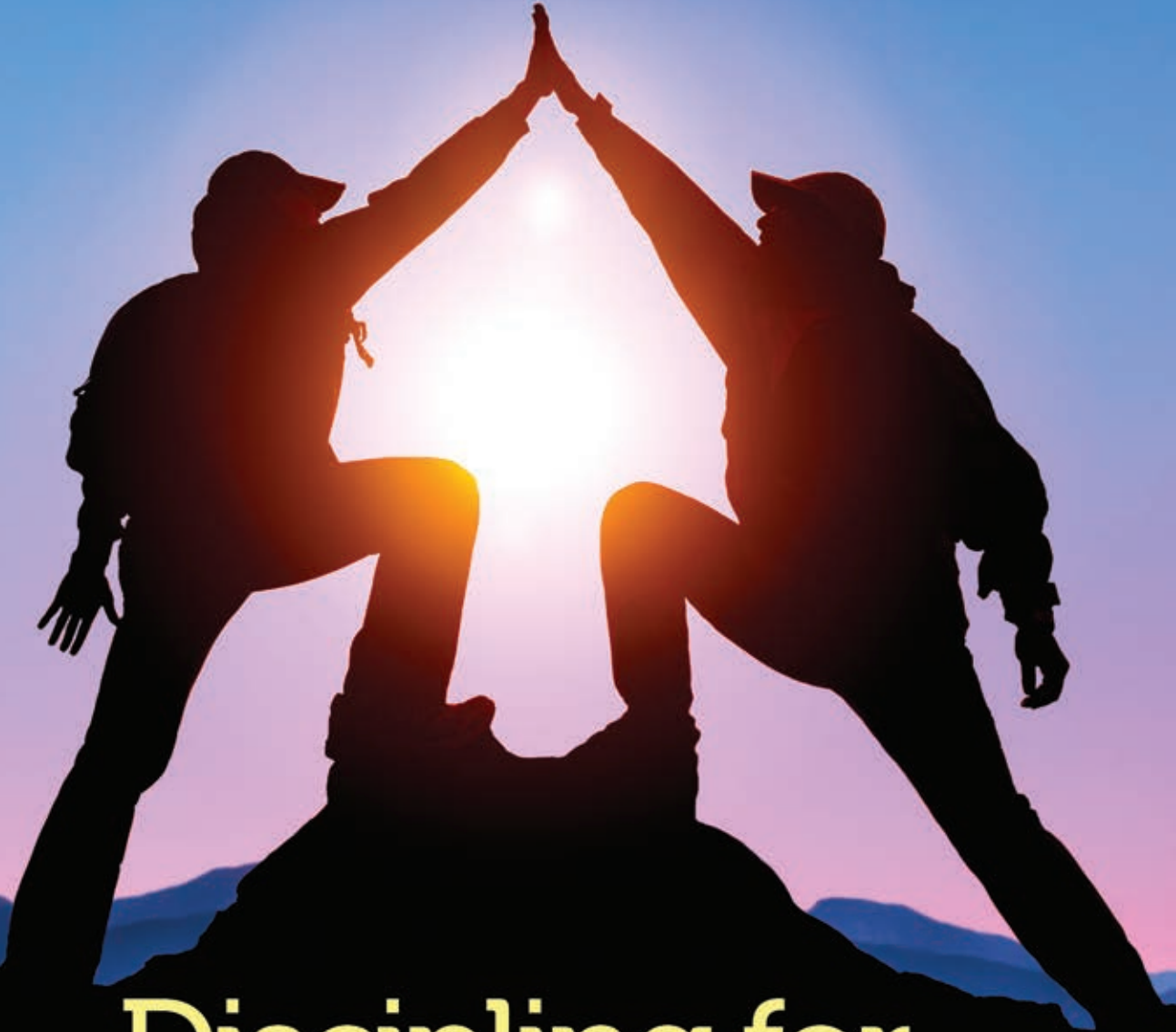


January/February 2021 • \$3.95

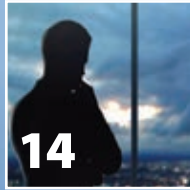
FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME



Discipling for Ministry

Discipling for Ministry



FEATURES

- 6 The Coming Shortage of Pastors and Missionaries**
Bruce McAllister
Jesus was very straightforward when He said, "The labourers are few."

- 8 Passing the Baton**
Michael Privett
Pastoral succession should be easy and automatic, but too many pastors and churches drop the baton.

- 10 Motivating Next-Generation Ministry**
Ken Endean
The home is the most basic place to make disciples.

- 12 Re-Visioning Ministry Training in Times of Rapid Change**
Nathan Mestler
There is a correlation between being a learner and being meek.

- 14 Pastoral Ministry as a Second Career**
Kevin Schaal
Is it possible to enter ministry as a second career? Not exactly.

- 16 Reproducing Spiritual Leaders**
Chuck Phelps
Our Savior reproduced Himself by training a generation of spiritual leaders who were accused of "turning the world upside down."


- 18 Transitioning a Church to a New Pastor**
Marsh Fant III
How can this be happening? Do I really want to go through with this? Am I ready? Is the church ready?

- 22 Honesty, Accountability, and Encouragement: Mentoring Women**
Linda Shumate
When I was a young mother, my friend taught me Christian principles as she taught me how to can peaches.

- 24 A Bright Future for Biblical Ministry**
Bruce McAllister
Those of us in the upper years of life and ministry really need God's grace so that we might be faithful, fruitful, and fervent as we strive to finish well.

DEPARTMENTS

- 5 Mail Bag**
20 On the Home Front
27 Regional Reports
32 At a Glance
Sovereign Counsel: A Gospel-Adorned Response to Civil Government (Part 1)
Robert Vincent
34 With the Word to the World
Jim Tillotson
35 Outlive Your Life
Krista Sivnksty
36 Recovery and Grace
Drew Paul
38 Strength Is Not in Numbers but in the Lord
Jerry Sivnksty

The background of the page is a blurred, light blue image showing the silhouettes of several people, likely in a church or community setting, looking towards the right. This image serves as a backdrop for the text.

This edition of *FrontLine* addresses essential issues in “Discipling for Ministry.” Our writers have a strong history of pouring their lives into the next generation. Many of their sons and daughters have followed them into ministry. You will find fresh ideas and much help for your own ministry of multiplication.

My opening article is a call to action that quantifies the urgent and immediate need for laborers. Michael Privett, a seasoned church pastor, carries a burden for reproducing pastors at home and abroad. His crisp article shares many wise and practical tips. Ken and Judy Endean bring years of effective ministry loaded with insightful parenting tips for pointing children and young people toward ministry. Their grown, ministry-minded children share their views from growing up in a ministry home.

Nathan Mestler, a new, young college president, encourages creative approaches to ministry education for the coming generation. Kevin Schaal emphasizes the importance of mature men entering the ministry a little later in life than we would normally expect. His perspective may well be the immediate answer to replacing the exiting generation of Christian servants. Chuck Phelps has personally mentored over seventy men for ministry. He provides a thoughtful, biblical framework for the reproduction of spiritual leaders. Marsh Fant shares helpful ideas on transitioning pastoral leadership to the next generation based on his own transition in pastoral ministry. Linda Shumate shares some compelling thoughts on women mentoring women. And, finally, I share some closing thoughts from my heart about the bright future of biblical ministry. What a privilege to work with these writers and the *FrontLine* staff. Our desire is that this edition will alert believers, stir hearts, advance strategic conversation, point us to the Lord for His wisdom and power, bend our knees before Him in vital prayer, and call us to concerted action.

Dr. Bruce McAllister serves as director of Ministry Relations for Gospel Fellowship Association (GFA) in Greenville, South Carolina.

CELEBRATING

35 YEARS

**OF FAITH BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**The 5 Hallmarks of
Faith Baptist Theological Seminary**

Mentoring Relationships

Regionally and Nationally Accredited

Local Church Emphasis

Affordable Tuition

Local and International Ministry Internships

Seminary Programs

Master of Arts in Biblical Studies

Master of Arts in Practical Theology

Master of Arts in Religion

Master of Arts in Theological Studies

Master of Divinity

Doctor of Ministry



faith baptist bible college
and theological seminary

1900 NW Fourth Street
Ankeny, Iowa 50023

515.964.0601
faith.edu

I've read about half of the articles in the [September/October 2011] *FrontLine* issue on chaplaincy and have found them excellent and very helpful. On the editorial page, the statement is made that if the reader is interested in the full research underlying these articles, they should contact you. . . . Would you be willing to share with me the fuller articles/research paper/thesis, etc., they are based on? Due to me being a chaplain with the National Guard, this is a subject I'm particularly interested in.

*Pastor Timothy R. Raymond
Trinity Baptist Church
Muncie, Indiana*

I want to inform you of an important development in Bible translation circles, one that I would think the FBFI pastors would want to be aware of. It is a statement to counter the trends of extreme contextualization. Believe it or not, though many may have good intentions (e.g., wanting to reach more Muslims for Christ), they have somehow justified tampering with the Word of God in order to fulfill their good intentions. Maybe these Bible translation practitioners are not those with whom FBFI pastors associate, but I wonder if there might be some friendships or even associations. If the pastors have any associations with Bible translators in large organizations such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, or even small ones, they definitely should be made aware of the Arlington Statement on Bible Translation.

Here's what we at Bibles International wrote about the ASBT:

Bibles International joined with a group of Bible translators, theologians, pastors, missionaries, Greek and Hebrew scholars, and linguists, to draft a statement that promotes conservative principles regarding contextualization in Bible translation. There are various trends and ideas in recent Bible translation theory, many of which are helpful, and some of which are well-intentioned but nonetheless problematic. The Arlington Statement on Bible Translation is a set of simple principles that addresses the most important issues related to contextualization. The Statement will help pastors to determine which Bible translators and Bible societies they would be willing to partner with. Bibles International fully subscribes to this Statement.

As an original drafter of the ASBT, I'm asking *FrontLine* to consider adding a feature [on] this in an upcoming issue. As I said, it would be good for pastors to be aware of these trends in extreme contextualization

so that they can make sure that any Bible translator they support does not adhere to them.

Thank you for all your work in putting out the *FrontLine* magazine! I have a subscription to it and enjoy reading it. God bless you as you continue to serve Him in this way!

*Dr. Troy Manning
Chief Language Consultant
Bibles International/Baptist Mid-Missions
www.biblesint.org*

We promote *FrontLine* several times a year from the pulpit by pointing out good articles or a pertinent cover theme to our people.

We then make copies available to them free of charge. We appreciate the magazine very much!

*Bruce Hamilton
Hamilton Acres Baptist Church
Fairbanks, Alaska*

I appreciate the issue on the Separation of Church and State. The best article (68 pages) I have read on John Leland's influence on the First Amendment is found in the *Penn State Law Review*. To find it, just Google "John Leland Penn State Law Review."

*John Mincy
Greenville, SC*



Visit the FBFI blog at
proclaimanddefend.org

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscription prices for *FrontLine* Magazine are \$26.96 for one year and \$49.95 for two years.

Call us at 864-268-0777, visit www.fbfi.org, or use the subscription card on page 20.

Visa and MasterCard are accepted.



The Coming Shortage of Pastors and Missionaries

Facing the Facts, Finding the Way

Jesus put it bluntly: “the labourers are few.” He did not mince words. He challenged the disciples to face the facts and find the way forward. He told them to pray to the Lord of the harvest. They were to ask for laborers for an abundant harvest of souls.

God has raised up gospel laborers at times and seasons for the compelling advance of His glory and name. He did it during the twentieth century. Informed Christian leaders today share a common urgent concern now in the twenty-first century. There are plainly not enough younger pastors, missionaries, and evangelists to replace the aging, graying, retiring, and dying generation of Christian leaders. They are just not there, not in the needed numbers. They are not on the horizon. They are not on the radar. We need to open our eyes and get real.

On March 1, 2017, the Barna Group sounded the alarm in a study called “The Aging of America’s Pastors” (<https://www.barna.com/research/aging-americas-pastors/>). In summary they found that there are far fewer young pastors now than there were in the early 1990s. The average age of pastors has advanced by ten years since then. Christian young people are less interested in vocational church ministry and more interested in other models of influence. Most pastors are finding it difficult to find a successor to mentor. David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, said, “There are now more full-time senior pastors over the age of 65 than under the age of 40. It is urgent that denominations, networks

and independent churches determine how to best motivate, mobilize, resource and deploy more younger pastors.”

In the summer of 2017 I studied the same issue, not being aware at the time of the recently released Barna study. My study encompassed approximately 2000 active pastors, pastoral staff, missionaries, camp directors, and chaplains. I found that almost 40% of the senior pastors were sixty and older. I found that 75% of senior pastors were fifty and older. The same essential percentages held true for missionaries, camp directors, and chaplains, except that an even higher percentage were over sixty years old. These are men in our immediate circles, not in the broader base of the Barna survey. Only about 10% of the pastors in my survey were under the age of forty. The number of men serving in “second man” pastoral staff positions who might conceivably become senior pastors was only about one-fourth to one-third the number needed. I challenge you to study your own circle of pastors and Christian servants and see what you find.

Causes of the Decline

What factors have contributed to the decline in Christian ministry? Ministerial enrollment generally declined in recent decades and then declined precipitously in recent years. Numerous Bible colleges and seminaries have struggled to remain open, while others have closed, further eroding the base of willing and well-trained workers. The decline of solid Christian families is without doubt a major factor. Too many



parents prefer for the children to enjoy the good life of material comfort and success, the temporal over the eternal. Even worse, the pull of hedonism, the pollution of pornography, and the incessant distraction of visual media compromise the moral character, mental acuity, and spiritual focus of people young and old. Adolescence extends well into one's twenties, with all too many young adults maturing late and wasting some of their best years in aimless, purposeless, self-absorbed living. Moral clarity on the most basic of biblical issues is confused by a culture that has reversed God's intentions for His creation on almost every front. Today there still are many fine young people and young adults who are courageously going against the flow of the culture and seeking to put God first and foremost in their lives. How we commend them for their holy pursuit of God's plan!

We must find a way forward. We must strive to accomplish the Great Commission in our day. Earth's population is approaching 8 billion. A billion is a 1000 million. A million dollars is a stack of \$1000 bills eight inches high. A billion dollars is a stack of \$1000 bills 666 feet high—111 feet higher than the Washington Monument! Think about the world's massive population. Are we alarmed at how many are dropping into hell daily? The whole world needs to be reached for Christ: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." How great the need for missionaries, pastors, evangelists, educators, and support help to go with the gospel.

As Christ said, *it begins with earnest prayer*. He has promised to answer our prayers. We know what God did in the twentieth century, and we know that He can do it again. Thousands of Bible-believing churches were planted at home and abroad. Thousands of Christian schools were founded to educate young people. Numerous Christian colleges and seminaries prepared willing servants and leaders to go forth. Christian camps strongly contributed to the advance of the gospel. God touched thousands of pastors, missionaries, evangelists, Christian educators, and workers to go with the gospel. Many fine mission boards facilitated and upheld missionaries in their quest for souls. God can do it again! But we must seek Him in earnest prayer.

Christian workers often come from churches that are aflame for truth and souls. Churches should be revitalized with a renewed emphasis upon effective evangelism, discipleship, and mentoring in view of the Great Commission. We all need revival, repentance, and return to our first love! Preaching should emphasize the importance of individual spiritual gifts being used effectively. God's work is teamwork! We should emphasize afresh the work of the ministry, missions, and full-time Christian service. Churches should look first within their own membership for men for ministry. Pastors should challenge children and young people about future service for Christ and find ways to get them started now. Be on the lookout for young couples and young singles with a special heart for God. Determine to develop preachers and leaders from within. Likeminded pastors should seek to network to prepare men for ministry in creative ways, if necessary. Christian colleges and seminaries should willingly partner with churches to find efficient, affordable, and effective ways to quickly prepare the next generation of pastors

and missionaries. The leadership crisis is upon us. It is time to get serious and act.

The sheer number of churches that will face the coming shortage of pastors could be overwhelming. Churches can no longer expect a large stack of resumes when there are pastoral vacancies. Churches may need coordinated assistance in finding pastors. Churches and pastors may need guidance in how to transition to new pastoral leadership. Many retirement-age pastors will be looking for fruitful and fulfilling ministry in their upper years. There is much to do. There are many angles to the coming shortage. We are confident that God has everything under His control. All the gifts and resources are at His disposal. His power and purposes have not diminished in the least. God is able! He can do more than we can ever imagine! We must humble ourselves before Him, seek His face, and ask Him to show us the way forward.

Probing Questions

Here are some probing questions to assist you in thinking through what you can do.

Is there a need that I could personally meet through the dedicated exercise of the gifts and talents God has given to me?

Would I be willing to pray often that the Lord would send forth laborers from my family and local church?

Do I know a child or young person whom I could personally pray for and challenge to consider a life of full-time Christian service?

Is there a lesson that I could teach, a message that I could preach, or an innovation that I could use to assist in meeting the coming shortage of laborers?

Is there a person or couple that I could personally disciple or mentor toward ministry?

Is there a student that I could financially assist in pursuit of his/her serving God?

Is there a business that I could start to help fulfill the Great Commission?

Is there a discouraged pastor or Christian worker whom I could encourage and pray for?

Is there an already well-trained person or couple who dropped out of ministry? Could I redirect them toward ministry again?

Is there a church, church plant, camp, school, college, mission, or other ministry that I could personally assist through serving or giving?

Bruce McAllister has invested his life in preparing men for the ministry. He served at Bob Jones University for over forty years, primarily working with the ministerial class, church staffing, and student outreach ministries. He now serves as director of ministry relations for Gospel Fellowship Association Missions and oversees the new GFA church staffing website. See <https://gfamissionsjobs.org> and <http://gfamissions.org/ministry-relations> for more information.





Passing the Baton

"He dropped it!" I exclaimed to my wife in disbelief and disappointment. We were watching the uber-talented USA men's team 4x100 meter relay qualification race in the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. 2008 was to be the USA men's relay team's year to win. They were disqualified from competing not because the other teams were faster but because they dropped the baton. Unlike other sprints, the relay is a team effort in which one sprinter hands off the baton to the next runner. Passing the baton should be easy and automatic. But they dropped the baton, and in an instant, they were disqualified and their Olympic dreams were over.

Pastoral succession should be easy and automatic too, but many pastors and churches drop the baton. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul gave Timothy and us great guidance and instruction concerning church leadership development and pastoral succession: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.

2:2). Pastoral succession as well as local church leadership development is like running a long relay race.

After ten years of church planting I became convinced of the need to train my men to be our church's future leaders and preachers. A few years later, I was invited to travel overseas to train nationals in their home countries. (Since 2002, I have had the privilege to teach approximately fifty weeklong block courses internationally.) Every pastor and missionary will need to pass the baton sooner or later. Will it be a smooth handoff or a dropped baton?

Pastors and missionaries should follow the Lord Jesus Christ's example for training the next generation of leaders. In three short years Christ trained His disciples to be leaders of His church. Of course, ministries and people develop at different rates, but we can learn much from the Lord's pattern of discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew. To aid in memory, I suggest seven action words beginning with the letter "I" for church leadership development and pastoral succession.

Intercede (Matt. 9:38)

Jesus sets the example of a fervent prayer life. Christ informs us that “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few,” so He commands us to “pray . . . the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest (9:37–38). He then spent the night before He chose His disciples in an all-night time of prayer (Luke 6:12). Of course, the Lord continued to intercede for His disciples (for example, Luke 22:31–32) and intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34).

Pastors should lead their churches to continually pray for the Lord to call and compel Christians into vocational ministry. From the pulpit, beg the Lord to call out someone from the congregation into the gospel ministry. Continually bring this prayer need before the people and intercede. Consider encouraging extended times of prayer and fasting for the next generation of preachers, missionaries, and church leaders.

Identify (Matt. 10:1–4)

As Jesus mingled among people, He identified certain men and asked them to follow Him (Matt. 4:18–22; 9:9; 10:1–4; John 1:43–51). The Lord saw what they could not: He saw their potential and called them to volunteer to follow Him. Similar examples of identifying leaders are found in Exodus 18:19–26 and Acts 6:1–7.

Pastors must be among their people observing them. Identify godly people serving without titles of “pastor” or “deacon.” Offer opportunities for men and women to discover their spiritual gifts and natural talents. Look for natural-born leaders and disciple them to lead for Christ and His church. After praying for wisdom, ask faithful men to teach or preach the Bible from time to time at a nursing home or jail service. Often the Lord uses opportunities such as these to reveal to a believer his ability and love for teaching the Word of God.

Involve (Matt. 10:5ff)

Soon after calling them to follow Him and getting to know them better, Jesus involved these disciples in ministry. They would not minister or preach as effectively as the Lord, nor will we, yet He involves us. Jesus gave them limited authority (Matt. 10:1, 8), a simple message (10:6–7), and specific instructions (10:9ff).

Soon after a person is saved and being discipled, involve him in some basic “entry-level” way. Truly saved people are not content to sit; they want to use their gifts for God. As they grow in commitment and faithfulness, continue to offer limited opportunities to serve so people can exercise their spiritual gifts and natural talents. Teach them to be faithful in the little things and to be an example of the believer (1 Tim. 4:12).

Invite (Matt. 11:28–30)

After observing the disciples’ involvement and faithfulness, the Lord invited them to deeper commitment. He asked

For the local church pastor or missionary, investment is usually the longest and most intense stage of training the next generation.

them to become collaborators with Him even though He would pull most of the weight. The Lord Jesus Christ was inviting people to “take [His] yoke . . . and learn of [Him]” (11:29). He is looking for committed collaborators through whom He can do His work.

After identifying a church member with faithful character, spiritual leadership, and God-given gifts, the pastor should invite him to serve in the local church ministry (Acts 18:24–28). Expect commitment. Offer training as well as resources to develop and exercise his gifts for God’s glory. The pastor might invite a lady to teach a children’s or

ladies’ Bible class or a man to share a devotional or preach a brief message in an evening service. Be careful not to set the standard too high or to embarrass the one invited; a person with little or no Bible-college training should not be expected to do as well as an experienced teacher or preacher.

Invest (Matt. 12–28)

The Lord Jesus Christ invested most of His public ministry into these disciples. For over three years, He was observed, accompanied, and surrounded by these disciples and others. Jesus enjoyed little privacy and poured His life into these men as was noted in the conclusion of the religious leaders about the disciples’ courageous boldness and spiritual power: “they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

For the local church pastor or missionary, investment is usually the longest and most intense stage of training the next generation. Like any kind of investment, one must add a little bit day-by-day and patiently await the future dividends. If I had understood this concept when I was a church planter, I would have invested even more regular and consistent time with the teachable people than with people with lots of problems. As the church plant became more established, investment in the next generation became my priority as I mentored spiritual men (both older and younger than me) in areas of leadership, discernment, people skills, and communication of God’s Word.

Inaugurate (Matt. 28:18–20)

After three years of intense investment into the lives of His disciples, Jesus Christ died on the cross for them and for us. After His resurrection, the risen Lord visited His disciples many times to encourage them but also to inaugurate them. In the Great Commission passages He made it clear that the disciples were now to carry on His ministry: He had the authority to recognize them as His successors and commission them to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).

As a pastor or missionary, we should be investing in multiple men in our ministries, but the Lord will usually show us which one is to be our successor. As you work with this man, put your public approval on this man before others; do not compete with him, embarrass him, or humiliate him. Do not expect an inexperienced man with little biblical training

Continued on page 28

Motivating Next-Generation Ministry

Editor's Note: *This article was written by Ken Endean with assistance from his children, Kristopher, Tim and Katelyn.*

At the end of his life Joshua challenged the Israelites to decide on their spiritual direction. However, as he laid the options before them, he quickly declared that his choice had been made: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15).

Joshua's statement has been a personal challenge, since I have enough trouble with "me" remaining faithful in serving the Lord before I consider how to direct "my house." The home is the most basic place to make disciples. Reaching our children with the gospel is truly home missions. According to Deuteronomy 6:5, 13, and Ephesians 6:4, teaching our children to love the Lord and serve the Lord is the God-given task for all Christian parents. Developing a heart for ministry at home requires family involvement in serving. This is true for every believer, not just families that are in full-time vocational service. Ministry begins at home.

Early Involvement

Involving children in appropriate ministry opportunities from an early age whets their appetite and provides for them the chance to get involved in a purpose that has spiritual ramifications. For activities such as sports and music, parents recognize the importance of training beginning in the early years. The same is true for serving the Lord. Introducing children to the joy and privilege of serving the Lord is vital.

Young people need opportunities to be involved in ministry, to succeed in what they undertake, and to experience the joy of getting involved in a cause that is bigger than their own world. Ephesians 3:10 indicates that the church is a heavenly testimony displaying the wisdom of God. Getting young people involved in a cause that is "out of this world," a cause with eternal ramifications, will be life-altering.

Katelyn: "Ministry was a family activity. I don't think we always realized that what we were doing was ministry."

Tim: "From my earliest memories, finding ways to serve according to our abilities seemed so normal."

Kristopher: "Being given (or thrust into) ministry opportunities put hands and feet to what ministry looked like."

Cross-Generational Focus

Scripture emphasizes the importance of the older teaching the younger. Multigenerational ministry is essential to

developing sensitivity to the needs of the larger church family. The pastor and older church members should recognize the younger generation as a vital resource to be befriended and developed rather than people to be criticized or isolated. Young people need to learn how to interact with people who are not their peers. "How do I believe I can best serve others with the gifts God has given me?" was a question that challenged one of our children. Consistently isolating the young to their own age group limits their ability to see the broader needs of the church. Praying with older, more mature believers provides context for life's challenges and the burdens of others. Hearing praises for answered prayer fuels faith for future service.

Katelyn: "Being in a small church ministry was what our friends did too. Adults in the church encouraged us to assist them in their own areas of ministry. Everyone was involved in ministering to the needs of the Body, so the Body became one. We were one big family."

Tim: "God used a variety of means, including people investing in my life and the preaching of the Word, to challenge my thinking."

Developing What You Honor

Our current culture offers acclaim to people who are recognized for entertainment or who excel in sports. Honoring those who serve the Lord and introducing young people to faithful servants of Christ elevates ministry. Consider the impact of a godly heritage.

Katelyn: "Working closely with my grandmother in children's ministries showed me that it wasn't just something the pastors in our family did, but everyone."

Kristopher: "You modeled talking up Christian heroes. Your respect for your own fathers' faithfulness in ministry caught on. I have grown to have greater admiration for faithfulness over flash-in-the-pan and for godliness over glamour."

While not every family has a generational heritage of ministry, every person can be introduced to servants of the Lord. Christian biographies provide proper heroes for children and young people. Honoring faithful servants of the Lord—pastors, deacons, laypeople—elevates ministry over the mundane.

Serving Together

It is easier to move an object already in motion. As young people get involved in serving Christ, the Lord can steer. Abraham's servant was guided as he went. "I being in the

way, the LORD led me" (Gen. 24:27). Make serving the Lord a way of life. One of the axioms of our church states, "ministers every member." We sought to make that a way of life in our family.

Tim: "Our family did ministry together. Having already had a variety of ministry opportunities was key when I began to seriously consider ministry."

Kristopher: "Ministry was both a family duty and a family delight."

Katelyn: "Ministry was a way of life. It was what my whole family participated in every day of the week. We learned there was a bigger picture than ourselves."

Our ultimate goal is for other people to catch the joy of serving the Lord. The delight of serving Christ should touch those who are closest to us—those in our homes. What begins in our homes overflows to others. The success of ministry is the Lord using ordinary people, serving faithfully, to accomplish His extraordinary task. Our goal is to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . . Enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).

Ken and Judy Endean spent almost eighteen years in Maine where Ken was pastor. They now live in Chandler, Arizona. Ken is currently pastor of Tri-City Baptist Church and chairman of the board for Tri-City Christian Academy and International Baptist College and Seminary. Judy is actively involved in encouraging ladies to serve the Lord as well as leading the handbell ensemble at International Baptist College and Seminary. Ken may be reached at ken.endean@tricityministries.org.



Kristopher and Kimberly live in Chandler, Arizona. Both are active in music ministry. Kristopher serves as the dean of students at International Baptist College and Seminary and teaches on both the college and seminary level. He is the department head of the Bible department. Kimberly stays busy with their three children.

Tim and Rachel serve with CampsAbroad, helping missionaries and national pastors evangelize and disciple teens through indigenous and sustainable camping experiences. They have ministered around the world, traveling to many countries.

Katelyn teaches third grade at Bethany Christian School, a ministry of First Baptist Church of Troy, Michigan. Helping her grandmother in children's church encouraged her desire to invest in young lives for eternity.

Some Suggestions for Teens

Tim Endean

Don't compare yourself with others. Your personality and approach to ministry may be different from what you see in others.

Participate in a variety of ministry opportunities. Your skills may not look like what you see others doing.

Don't wait to be *really* ready. Accept opportunities that challenge you.

Ask lots of questions. Ask people in ministry what they wish they had known in their early years of ministry.

Cultivate your own relationship with God. Ministry must flow from a heart that is loving God, loving His Word, and loving others.

Serve God wherever He calls you. Maybe God is not calling you into formal ministry. Understand that not going into ministry as a vocation does not imply that a person is not ministering.

Side by Side

Judy Endean

For we are labourers together with God (1 Cor. 3:9)

Working side by side came naturally in our home. We were in this together, serving the Lord in a young ministry in Maine. At the time the children were ages two, four, and six. We needed each other, and almost without realizing it we were setting the stage for God to call our children into His service.

When they were very young, we were training their hearts. Something as simple as learning to eat the food on their plates was presented as the right response to God for His provision. We explained that someday God might ask them to eat from a menu they might not choose when they were on the mission field. Eating became an adventure as we gave food items exotic names! Once, after entertaining missionaries in our home, we lost a few flowers in the yard to "clearing the jungles." But our children were listening and preparing.

When the children needed new shoes, we prayed that God would stretch our dollars, and He did. They found out that God answered prayer. Every night after dinner they listened to God's Word and knew that Dad was serious about loving and obeying God. When the neighbors challenged their faith, together we prayed for them. They developed a heart for people and worked their way into almost every neighborhood home by mowing grass, raking leaves, shoveling snow, and showing that they cared. They were not afraid to talk to those they met, and they shared the gospel.

When it was our family's turn to clean the church building, we worked together regardless of how little helpers might slow down the operation. They learned to serve. Taking music lessons and practicing was for the purpose of playing in church. We made instrument choices and secured lessons based on the needs of the church and school, even though it involved financial sacrifice. We didn't complain. The children knew that they were vital to the music ministry. They served alongside their friends.

When the Christmas program came around, it became a family project: designing the program, working on the staging and lighting, preparing the PowerPoint, making invitations to distribute in the community, and spending endless hours practicing the music and Scripture until it was just right. They worked hard and appreciated excellence. They saw the Lord bless as the church family reached out to their unsaved family and friends. God was changing lives. When they saw the need to help teach, or garden, or prepare for a dinner, or work on building construction, or help in another ministry, they volunteered. We encouraged them and thanked them.

All this experience channeled the children into much more challenging opportunities as they reached college and served in other ministries. They loved what their parents and the church family loved. They saw the joy of the Lord. We did not share ministry "problems" with our "little people" unless they were part of the problem or the solution. They grew up loving each member and carrying no resentment. Now, with God's clear direction, our adult children have chosen to continue a life of ministry—and why not?

Re-Visioning Ministry Training in

Eric Hoffer observed, “In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.” It is not lost on me that Eric Hoffer is playing off the words of our Lord who said that the meek would inherit the earth, and I would like to bring these two ideas together. There is a correlation between being a learner and being meek. Meekness suggests a humble stance, an attitude that does not already presume to have arrived but rather that seeks to learn and grow and change. A meek heart is a heart predisposed to learning and adjusting, and it is a meek heart that is required for Christian leaders in these “times of change.”

These are indeed times of change. In fact, if there were any adjustment that I would want to make to Hoffer’s statement, I would insert the word “rapid” in front of “change.” The pace of societal and cultural change in the America is stunning. Attitudes about sexuality and gender issues in particular have shifted dramatically in our country and at a pace that has been hard to keep up with. These rapid changes are having such a dramatic effect on the sensibilities of people, the marketplace, and culture that researchers are increasingly abandoning studying generational shifts that occur over decades in favor of “microgenerations.” Monikers such as Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials are being replaced with terms such as Echo-boomers, Rainbows, Cuspers, Xennials, and Zoomers, which describe very real shifts in societal trends that are taking place in a matter of not decades but just a few years. There is seemingly a new “microgeneration” for each iteration of the iPhone.

Perhaps the most poignant recent example of rapid change in our political arena is the Bostock Supreme Court decision. This decision effectively appended sexual orientation and gender identity language to the Civil Rights Act. This has potentially dramatic consequences for Christian institutions of higher learning. The case law on Christian institutions deemed in violation of the Civil Rights Act is not favorable. Christian colleges and universities need to be strategically planning for a world where tax exemption, federal financial aid, and Department of Education accreditation become unavailable to them. The timing and pace of the changes are not predictable, but if the recent pattern follows, they will come more quickly than expected. In short, these societal changes are having and will continue to have a dramatic effect

on how Christian schools tackle the problem of training the next generation of leaders for the church.

While I run the risk of sounding like Chicken Little, it is not my intent to project just gloom and doom. Rather, my hope is to make a clarion call for the urgent need for American fundamentalism to re-vision ministry training in this rapidly changing world.

A Pathway Forward

The pathway forward needs to start with the end in mind. At the very heart of the challenge is the goal of producing young men ready to lead churches. First Timothy 3:1–7 is a good starting place to get a picture of what is required. A pastor must have (1) maturing Christian character, (2) growing biblical and theological understanding, (3) improving practical ministry skills, (4) a godly home life, and (5) an honorable reputation with the community. When I look at this list, as the president of a Bible college and seminary, I am immediately struck by the fact that the Bible college/seminary is not the best equipped institution to train these outcomes. I believe that there is a place for Bible colleges and seminaries to assist with these needs, but we have to ask ourselves where character is best nurtured. Where are ministry skills best honed? Where does a man become a godly father and husband and earn a good reputation with the community? The answer seems to be that these traits are best fostered within the rich environment of an authentically Christian home and within vibrant disciple-making churches.

This leads to the first step of re-visioning ministry training in these times: in coming days ministry training will need to be church-centric. This is where I find the greatest cause for optimism because, while Scripture does not guarantee the seminary success, the church is given such a guarantee. The Lord declared that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The church will succeed, and when it does, it will need skilled, biblically and theologically trained leaders.

There is a great and vital need for training institutions to come alongside churches and assist with this training. I am convinced that there is a continuing place for the in-residence Bible college and Christian university model, especially for the undergraduate student. But the type of student coming to Christian schools is changing. The average student now comes from a broken or distressed family. They are also increasingly first-generation Christians. There will be value in a curated,

Times of Rapid Change

rich campus experience—a time for the training of character and discipline away from distracting and destructive home and cultural influences, a place where habits of holiness can be fostered and passionate guides can tackle issues of character development, a place where young men and women observe models of biblical manhood and womanhood. In this environment colleges will have to give greater attention to their partnerships with churches and must remain committed to training the students to go back to their sending churches and avoid training them out of the churches that sent them.

Seminaries will have an increasingly important role for a variety of reasons. First, the challenges of ministry in the coming days will demand a rigorous biblical and theological training. As our society is increasingly founded on erroneous philosophical foundations, pastors will have to proclaim and defend the Christian message ably and affably. This is no time for a “dumbed-down” course of study. Secondly, it is increasingly likely that pastors will be bivocational. There will be a need for pastors to have secular, vocational training. This is already the expectation in many areas of the country, a trend that will continue to grow. For many, the path to pastoral ministry will mean earning a degree in a secular field and then getting pastoral training at the graduate level. Thirdly, I believe that in coming days, we will see more men pursuing ministry as a second career. Churches will need to look beyond the youth group for the next generation of leaders. There is a great advantage to this. These second-career pastors will come to the pastorate more mature with more varied life experiences. These last two trends will require that seminaries intentionally design their programs, not primarily as the next step for the Bible college graduate, but for the person who has a secular degree or a prior career. This was the original design of the MDiv program; it is time to get back to that original intent. Perhaps more importantly, this training should be done within the context of the local church. The church can take priority on training the character and ministry skills while the seminaries utilize distance education to deliver the biblical and theological content. Any church in America has access to great seminaries that can deliver content directly into their church, while the church provides a practical proving ground.

Competence over Credit Hours

Lastly, these times of change afford us the opportunity to begin innovating approaches to the design of ministry

preparation programs. We need to look beyond the traditional credit-hour format and begin to design programs that are more efficiently targeted at the competencies of pastoral ministry. One of the most common comments that I hear about seminary training from experienced pastors is that the classroom did not prepare them well for the actual rigors of the pastoral challenge. One of the reasons for this is that traditional ministry training programs are targeted at a narrow range of the core competencies of pastoring. The bulk of seminary courses help the student with exegetical skill, theological training, and preaching and counseling skills. While this training is essential, care needs to be given to designing programs that equip students for the leadership and administrative challenges they will face.

Practical theology classes should be rigorous and designed to show the necessary link between good theology and exegesis and their practical implementation. One way to tackle this is to clearly define the core competencies of the pastoral task and to train those competencies as a cooperative enterprise between church and seminary. Training to competencies rather than to the completion of a certain amount of credit hours has the benefit of making the training more efficient. For instance, if a second-career seminarian demonstrates a competency in business leadership, he can concentrate his studies on the areas of deficiency. Conversely, the Bible-college graduate able to parse all the verbs can take the deep dive into administrative leadership or some other area in which he lacks. A competency-based approach to ministry training will take work to develop, and it will require outside-the-box thinking, but it has the potential to make the pathway to the pastorate more efficient in terms of both time and money—but most importantly it has the potential of producing pastors better equipped to face the challenges of leadership in these times of rapid change.

Now is the time to optimistically re-vision ministry training for the twenty-first century. The challenges are great, but the Lord of the church has promised the success of His enterprise.

On August 13, 2020, Nathan Mestler was installed as the fifth president of International Baptist College and Seminary (IBCS). He is an IBCS graduate and has served as college pastor, classroom teacher, and dean of students. Pastor Nathan is a sought-after speaker at Christian camps and has a good rapport with pastors and young people across the West. Nathan is also an FBFI chaplain and serves with the 162d Wing, in Tucson, Arizona.



Pastoral Ministry as a Second Career

Is it possible to enter ministry as a second career?

Not exactly. My concern is more about the word “career” than it is about the possibility of a midlife change of direction. Ministry is a calling, not a career. It must be directed by God, but God can direct any time He chooses.

We need to break free of single-process thinking regarding ministry preparation. The standard formula goes something like this: a young man, usually a teen, has a “come-to-Jesus” moment and surrenders to the call of full-time ministry. He then goes away to Bible college and finishes an undergrad degree in Bible or a field that would be useful in ministry. He then enrolls in seminary and spends the next four years navigating nearly full-time educational responsibilities, a new marriage, and young children while trying to pay for it all with a full-time secular job. If he can survive that difficult process, he might be called to ministry. Most who start do not finish. Still, if he graduates from

seminary at twenty-five or twenty-six years old, he has spent that time well in preparation. Most young men are novices at twenty-one or twenty-two and should not be serving yet as a pastor or on a pastoral staff.

While it is extremely difficult for a young man to follow that path, it is nearly impossible for a forty-year-old to do it. Does that mean that God does not call forty-year-olds to ministry? He absolutely calls them, and we cannot let our traditionally determined ministry preparation track turn God-called men away from serving. What, then, could be the circumstances in which someone might enter the ministry later in life?

Called Earlier, Following Later

God might extend a second chance to some who would not follow earlier in life. The fault for this might not always lie where we think it does.

"If you can do anything else, don't go into pastoral ministry."

I wish we had not given that advice to young men considering a call to ministry. The advice was intended to communicate the idea that you need to be so committed to the call to ministry that you cannot be content doing anything else. However, what many young men heard was, "If you are interested in anything else, or you can be successful at doing anything else, then you are not called to ministry."

I was meeting Kevin at our local Denny's at 6 AM on Thursdays for discipleship. Kevin was vice president of a major auto-parts retailer headquartered in our area. During the conversation he said, "I think I was once called to ministry." Almost without thinking, I responded with, "When did God un-call you?" He then described how he had been discouraged from going into ministry because of an issue that came up when attending a Bible institute as a new believer. The Holy Spirit used that conversation to spark a renewed call for Kevin's life. He enrolled in Bible college and finished his degree while continuing his work as a business executive. After graduating he left the secular work world and served the Lord dynamically in full-time ministry for several years before God called him home to heaven. He accomplished more for God in five years of full-time ministry than many do in a lifetime. The gifts that made him extremely successful in business translated easily into ministry effectiveness—or maybe it was really the other way around.

There are various reasons why a man might not initially answer the call to ministry. Most pastors I know have intellectual gifts and talents that would make them quite successful in many careers. Like Kevin in the business world, Mike Redick, missionary to Southeast Asia, was a successful chef (in some of the most high-end restaurants in the world) before entering the ministry. Others have come from the trades, military, teaching, performing arts, and many other fields of occupation. Advice that discourages our best, brightest, and most talented people from giving their lives in full-time service needs to be discarded.

Saved Later and Called

God sometimes saves a person later in life and then calls him to ministry. About thirty years ago an elderly man entered our tiny church building for the first time. He was one of the

most enthusiastic believers I have ever met. "Brother Wade" was one of those hanky-waving preachers from the hills of North Carolina—the type that can be quite intimidating to a rather reserved Midwestern personality like mine. He was retired when he joined our church, but he had preached the gospel faithfully for thirty years. He described himself as a wild and ungodly rascal when God saved him in his early forties. God immediately called him to ministry, and he got all the on-the-job education he could over the next thirty years while he pastored remote mountain churches ignored by the more educated pastoral candidates.

We do have to be careful that we do not make the educational requirements for full-time ministry so carefully structured that men like Brother Wade would be barred from serving. I am not discounting the need for a man to be prepared educationally for ministry, but I am calling into question our present prescribed process. Peter was probably in midlife and fairly uneducated when Jesus called him from the fishing boat. The New Testament church prepared men much faster than we do now. How would the requirement of four years of undergrad education plus three or four years of seminary sound to the church of Acts? But those men were prepared. They spent three years with Jesus. Jesus took the time to disciple Peter and prepare him for a productive second life of service. Other disciples had a similar story.

Called Later

There is also biblical precedent for God changing the direction of His servants as they serve. God calls people to be accountants, medical doctors, and farmers too. We seem to be willing to accept the idea that God could call a man to be an evangelist and then redirect him to become a college president at some point later. If God can do that, why could God not call a man to be a schoolteacher for twenty years and then redirect him into pastoral ministry? It is not about gifts. Successful pastors often have a wide variety of gifts, and believers in other professions also often have those gifts. Moses had three different careers during his life. He was a royal and military leader during his first forty years (according to Josephus), a herdsman during his second forty years, and the pastor of history's most difficult congregation in his last forty years. Dr. Bob Wood, for so many years a fixture in the administration at Bob Jones University, had been a successful businessman before answering the call to pastoral ministry at thirty-four years old.

We need to be very careful about questioning the call of men because their circumstances do not fit our preconceived ideas. Jesus told us to pray for laborers for the harvest field. We desperately need a new generation of leaders to fill the pulpits of churches, plant new churches, and do the work of missions around the world. I don't think God planned to leave His people without leadership. The next generation of ministerial leadership in our local churches might come from places that we do not expect. Let's welcome those men, encourage them, and find a way to prepare them.

Kevin Schaal pastors Northwest Valley Baptist Church in Glendale, Arizona, and is president of FBFi.



Reproducing Spiritual Leaders

Editor's Note: Pastor Chuck Phelps, a second-generation pastor, is passionate about reproducing spiritual leaders. As both a youth pastor and senior pastor, Dr. Phelps has seen dozens of young people answer the call of God to serve. Through summer internships he has mentored over seventy men, two of which are seminary professors, four are missionaries, six are music pastors, fourteen are pastors, nineteen serve as assistant pastors, and one is an evangelist. Pastor Phelps's three sons, Chad, Caleb, and Dan, have all followed their father into ministry. Because he has lived out the theme of this FrontLine issue, the editors requested that he write this article.

Over half of the pastors in America today are over the age of fifty-five. In 1992 less than a quarter of America's pastors were that old.¹ In August of 2019 the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* published an article saying, "Over the past decade, full-time enrollment in theology schools nationwide dropped 50 percent."² Serious Christians must see the need to reproduce spiritual leaders!

Reproducing spiritual leaders is an obligation revealed in 2 Timothy 2:2, which says, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." But leadership reproduction is more than a stoic obligation. Reproducing spiritual leaders is a source of great satisfaction. The apostle Paul testifies of the disciple-maker's joy in 1 Thessalonians 2:19–20, when he says, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

Our Savior reproduced Himself by training a generation of spiritual leaders who were accused of "[turning] the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). No doubt there are many helpful books written and many excellent seminars and classes offered on the topic of leadership development, but nothing can compare with the perfect model that our Lord provided during His earthly ministry. Those who want to reproduce spiritual leaders need to carefully follow our Lord's example (1 Pet. 2:21). Consider six essential elements of leadership reproduction the Lord exemplified.

Careful Selection

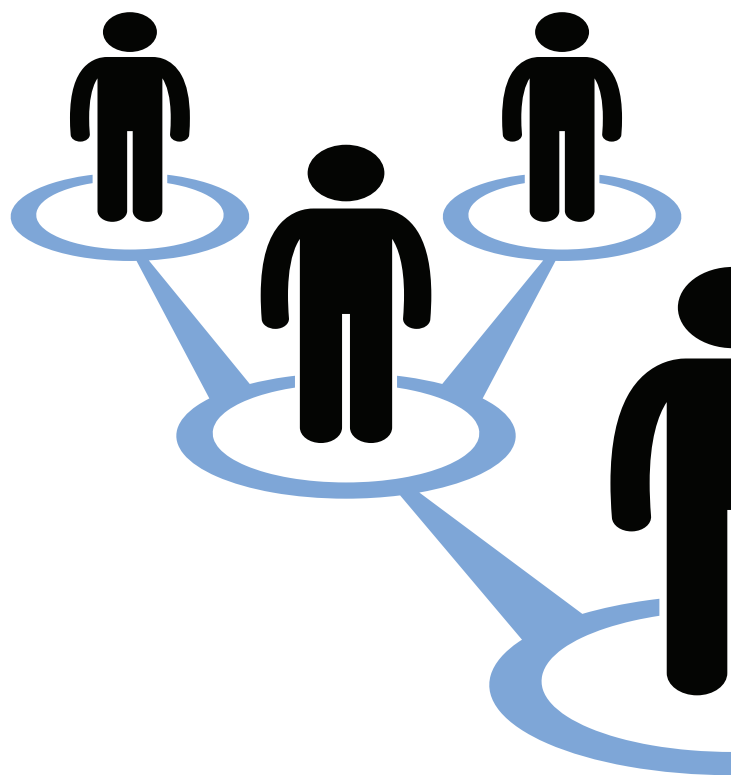
The Lord Jesus was careful when selecting future leaders. Before investing Himself in the twelve He would call "apostles," Jesus spent an entire night in prayer (Luke 6:12–13). From the many who were following Him, Jesus selected twelve in order to reproduce Himself in them. Jesus was looking for those who would first be faithful in the little things. He knew that those who could not be trusted with little things could not be trusted with greater things (Luke 16:10). He wanted to pour Himself into those who were hungry to learn (Luke 11:1) and willing to be corrected (Matt.

16:23). Those who want to reproduce spiritual leaders need to select the right candidates carefully.

Close Association

Jesus did not invite future leaders to listen to Him. Jesus invited future leaders to follow Him (John 1:43). Real spiritual reproduction requires real-life observation. Life must touch life to reproduce a spiritual leader. While classrooms may be great places in which to impart knowledge, living rooms, dining rooms, and kitchens are better places in which to impart know-how. Pastors who are on the front-line of leadership development must constantly practice hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2). There is simply no substitute for an open-door policy.

G. S. Nair was a Hindu and an officer in the Indian army when he came to Christ as Savior. I stayed in his home in 1995. Every morning Indian pastors would show up at his home for breakfast. When I asked Brother Nair why these men were visiting, he replied, "They know that if they want to pray with me and speak with me they must come early." More than thirty men came to his home for breakfast during my stay with him. Since 1976 over 3900 churches have started in India, Nepal, and Sri-Lanka under the watchcare of G. S. Nair.³ Like the Savior, G. S. Nair understands that reproducing leaders requires transparency. While some fail to reproduce leaders because they fear living in a "fish-bowl," those who reproduce spiritual leaders will always say, "Follow me."



Giving Instruction

When our Lord ascended to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration, only Peter, James, and John went with Him (Matt. 17:1–2). While nine disciples waited for the favored three to descend from their place of privilege, Peter, James, and John saw the Lord in His glory. Some would-be disciple-makers fear the charge of favoritism. Rather than meeting personally to customize instruction for those who will one day take the baton, those who fear the charge of favoritism prefer instructing large groups of people but often fail to affect anyone. As a master disciple-maker, Jesus custom-tailored the information that He shared with those He selected to be future leaders. While crowds heard the Lord speak in parables, the Lord explained the parables to the twelve (Matt. 13:10–16).

Filling a future spiritual leader's head with biblical knowledge is an important task. It is far more important, however, to know that the future leader's heart is full for service. Many would-be disciple-makers focus primarily on the work of sharing information. We must carefully and methodically teach the next generation so that they can, "rightly [divide] the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We must also be careful to customize and personalize the truth we teach.

Thoughtful Delegation

Jesus sent His disciples out two by two and "gave them power" (Mark 6:7). Those He sent "went out, and preached." Sometimes the disciples failed (Mark 9:28–29), and sometimes they succeeded (Luke 10:17), but every assignment helped them grow. Future leaders need to be involved right now. Those the Savior sent into service were ignorant in many ways (Acts 4:13). No doubt the disciples (and those who heard them) were aware of their need for more training. Jesus knew that the best training was on the job. Jesus made fish-

ermen into fishers of men by providing them with ministry opportunities beyond their comfort zones. By involving the disciples in ministry, He increased their curiosity, dependency, and capability.

Realistic Expectations

The Gospels openly record the failures of the disciples. The Lord's disciples failed to cast out demons (Mark 9:29), failed to understand the Savior's power (Matt. 16:8), and failed to understand His plan (Matt. 16:22–23). The disciples were covetous of positions and titles (Matt. 20:21). His disciples forsook Him (Mark 14:50) and denied Him (Luke 22:57). Yet Jesus never quit loving them (John 13:1). Jesus never gave up on them.

Reproducing spiritual leaders is hard work. There will be disappointment. Frustrations come when disciples fail. Jesus provided a model that ought to encourage everyone who is willing to be involved in the hard work of building the next generation of spiritual leadership. Knowing what was in men (John 2:25), Jesus chose Judas. Jesus knew that Judas was a traitor (John 6:64), and while He chose Him to accomplish the plan of God (Acts 2:23), it seems that He also chose him to encourage disciple-makers. Some of those who train to be future spiritual leaders will fail. Disciple-makers must learn to guard their expectations.

Ongoing Intercession

In Luke 10:2 Jesus said, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." The harvest is great, but studies indicate that we are not reproducing spiritual leaders fast enough to replace those who are aging. There is a solution. We must pray. Prospective mentors and burdened church members need to plead with God to raise up laborers.

J. Hudson Taylor spent fifty-one years in China. The missionary society that he founded was responsible for bringing over eight-hundred missionaries to the country. Taylor said, "The power of prayer has never been tried to its full capacity in any church. If we want to see mighty wonders of divine grace and power wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let the whole Church answer God's standing challenged; 'Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.'"⁴

Dr. Chuck Phelps, who has been involved in full-time ministry since 1982, serves as senior pastor of Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Indianapolis. Prior to coming to Colonial Dr. Phelps served as a youth pastor in Minnesota and Colorado, as a senior pastor in New Hampshire, and as a college president in Wisconsin.

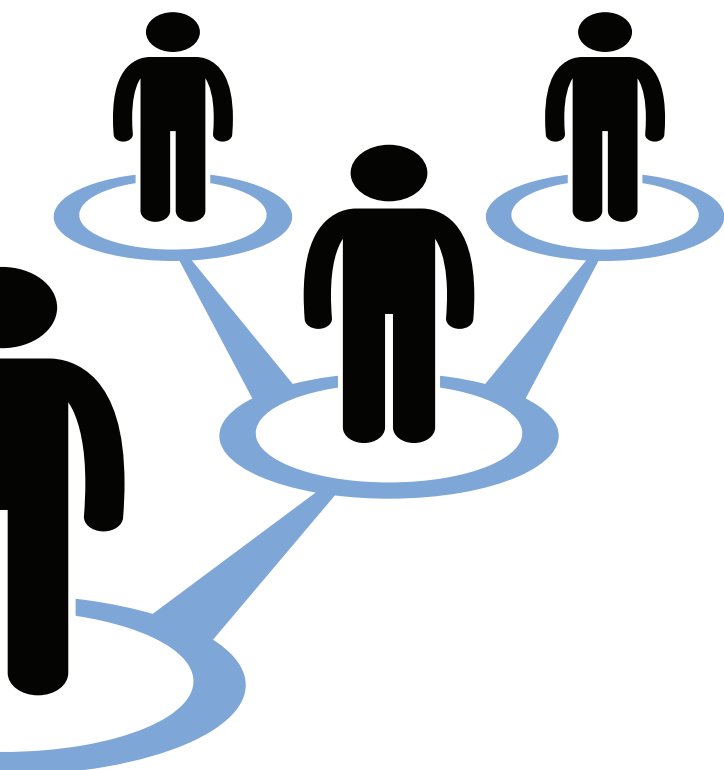


¹ <https://factsand Trends.net/2017/03/09/how-old-are-american-pastors/>

² <https://www.startribune.com/fewer-men-and-women-are-entering-the-seminary/490381681/>

³ <https://gsnair.org/about-pbmi/>

⁴ <http://www.hillsbiblechurch.org/church-history/quotes-on-prayer-from-j-hudson-taylor/>





Transitioning a Church to a New Pastor

I love to plan. I thoroughly enjoy setting goals. My goals are divided into three categories: one-to-two years, three-to-five years, and six-to-ten years. I do this for my personal life as well as my ministry life. After pastoring at the same church for many years, I will never forget the first time I recorded that the church would have a different pastor in the six-to-ten-year category. It seemed so far in the future. Then that goal shifted to the three-to-five-year category, and I began to question myself: *How can this be happening? Do I really want to go through with this? Am I ready? Is the church ready? What steps do I need to take to prepare my family and the church? What are the steps to clearly communicate this to our deacons and church? Where will my wife and I go, and what will we do?*

The Facts

Regardless of my hesitations and feelings, there are some facts about the church and pastors that I could not ignore.

- *The church belongs to Jesus—not to me.* I need to be willing to set aside my feelings and do what is best for the church.
 - Matthew 16:18: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock *I will build my church*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
 - Acts 20:28: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, *which he hath purchased with his own blood.*”
- *Churches age as their pastor ages.* My wife and I started our ministry at Harvest Baptist in our early forties with five children. Similar families joined the church, and we became a church of middle-aged adults with many children and youth. But twenty years later, it was very different. We still had some young families with children, but we suddenly realized we had a large group of senior saints! The church had grown older as we did. We saw firsthand that the age of the pastor is directly related to the age of the congregation.

- *The church is permanent, I am not.* Pastors die, retire, resign, or transition to other ministries, but the church goes on.
- *Every pastor is an interim pastor.** The Lord allows pastors to have seasons of ministry. The length of those seasons will vary by church and by men. But there is both a beginning and an ending point of your ministry at that church.
- *Churches without pastors are vulnerable.* The prayer of Moses and the prayer of Jesus emphasize this fact:
 - Numbers 27:16–17: “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.”
 - Matthew 9:35–38: “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

I wanted stability, not vulnerability for our church. I loved our church and did not want them to experience a season without an undershepherd.

Preparing Your Family

In preparing your family for your ministry transition, there are some vital truths to keep in mind. First, *you and your wife are a ministry team*, so you need to be extra careful to maintain unity in your relationship. Transitions are very emotional, and the two of you should be in agreement about the transition

and timing of it. You need to discuss this between yourselves years before it takes place.

Second, you should *transition to a ministry and not just from a ministry*. God is the One who has called you to vocational ministry, and you should continue in it as long as God gives you health and opportunity. You should be praying about your future ministry before you transition from your current ministry. You should be investigating ministry opportunities for this next season of life.

Last, you must *make a commitment not to check out as you transition out*. Your family should continue to serve faithfully during the transition. You must finish well. Both you and the church will benefit. Everyone will remember how you left—not how you came.

Preparing Your Church

There are two important aspects in preparing your church for a transition. One is *philosophy* and the other is *process*.

Philosophy. A smooth transition begins years in advance with a consistent philosophy of equipping the next generation of pastors and missionaries according to 2 Timothy 2:2. You should be continually teaching, preaching, and modeling this philosophy of ministry in your church. One way this can be done is with your church budget. Use the annual budget to cast a vision of mentoring men for ministry (intern, part-time staff, or full-time staff). Your successor just might be a former intern or staff member. Another way is to delegate the regular responsibility of one of your services each week to a younger man who is already on staff. Our congregation committed to this philosophy years before our transition by having our youth pastor preach each Sunday evening service. This was a win-win situation for us; it gave the young man the opportunity to mature as a preacher and the church the opportunity to encourage the spiritual growth of the next generation. My youth pastor shares how this helped him to develop his skills:

The leadership at Harvest gave me the responsibility of preaching every Sunday evening. This preaching schedule helped me in several ways: First, it taught me how to prepare and deliver a cohesive sermon series. Many associate pastors wait weeks for preaching opportunities, but these long gaps make it difficult to carry over the themes and ideas from message to message in a sermon series. . . . It also taught me how to schedule the study and preparation aspects of preaching every week. Of course, when you preach only once or twice a month, you can afford to spread out your preparation time for each message. But being given the responsibility to preach every week meant that I had to learn how to use my preparation time more efficiently. Like any skill, regular preaching allowed me to understand and improve on my weaknesses. It allowed me to grow comfortable in my own style of delivering the Word of God. And it encouraged me as I saw people respond to the message preached. Lastly, and most importantly, preaching on a regular basis gave me an enriched ministry with the congregation. As I was able to address the entire body of believers (and not only the youth group), the church family grew more familiar with me and with how I handled the Word of God.

My youth pastor, my son Marshall, eventually become the senior pastor and has now pastored the church for several years.

Process

Both the church leadership and the congregation need to be involved in your transition.

Leadership. The lay leadership will need several months to work through the idea that you are leaving. You need to take the lead on this topic. Some may feel hurt or disappointed or may not want to deal with the idea until you will be gone, and it is your job to lead them so they can lead the congregation. The following are a few suggestions that I have found helpful.

First, purchase a copy of *Next: Pastoral Succession that Works* by William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird for each of your leaders.* Have them read it, and discuss different chapters in your deacons' meetings. Help them see that a transition can be a time of spiritual unity in the church. Second, have someone from outside your church who has been through a successful transition—either a pastor or lay leader—come in and discuss his experience. Have him testify to the blessings as well as the unexpected challenges of a transition. Last, and probably the most important, it is vital to have your men commit to a season of prayer. Praying together will build unity among the leadership, which will be essential as they lead the congregation in the search for their next pastor.

Congregation. There is no easy way to communicate to the people you love that you are leaving. It can be painfully difficult, and this reality underscores the necessity of being very cautious in the areas of *timing* and *method*. The timing of your announcement is crucial. It is best that your transition take place while ministry is going well as opposed to during a season of conflict. In addition, it should be done several months before you leave so everyone has a chance to digest it. Regarding your method, communication about your transition needs to be face to face. Both the leadership and congregation need to hear it directly from you, as opposed to through a letter or your church's website.

Churches are vulnerable during times of change. Transitioning to a new pastor is challenging to everyone involved. Yet the pastor who is armed with a knowledge of the facts, who prepares his family and church and wisely works through the process with his leadership and congregation, will ensure that this difficult time turns out to be a positive experience of unity and growth.

Marsh Fant III has twenty-one years of experience as a church re-planter and pastor and twenty years of experience as a business owner. Marsh earned a DMin from Central Baptist Theological Seminary, an MDiv from Bob Jones University, and a BS in administrative management from Clemson University. He is certified as a church consultant with the Society of Church Consulting. He currently serves as GFA's director of Church Consulting and Revitalization and ministers as pastor of Discipleship at University Baptist Church in Clemson, South Carolina. He is also a member of the Executive Committee for the Wilds Christian Camp.



Marshall Fant IV grew up in a ministry home as the second oldest of five children. He has a BA degree in Bible from BJU and earned an MA in Bible in 2009. While serving as an associate pastor at Harvest Baptist Church, he finished his MDiv from Calvary Baptist Seminary. Marshall has served as the senior pastor of Harvest Baptist Church since 2017.



* Vanderbloemen, William, and Bird, Warren, *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

2021

March 1-3, 2021

South Regional Fellowship
Berean Baptist Church
1405 Hewatt Road SW
Lilburn, GA 30047
252.256.1351

March 8-9, 2021

Northwest Regional Fellowship
Westgate Baptist Church
12930 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Tigard, OR 97223

June 14-16, 2021

Annual Fellowship
Colonial Hills Baptist Church
8140 Union Chapel Road
Indianapolis, IN 46240

July 26-28, 2021

Alaska Regional Fellowship
Hamilton Acres Baptist Church
138 Farewell Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907.456.5995

October 16, 2021

New England Regional Fellowship
(Meeting with the New England
Foundations Conference)
Heritage Baptist Church
186 Dover Point Road
Dover, NH 03820
603.749.0762

2022

April 4-6, 2022

Northwest Regional Fellowship
Grace Baptist Church
2731 Matson Road
Victoria, BC V9B 4M5
CANADA

2023

April 23-24, 2023

Northwest Regional Fellowship
Monroe Baptist Church
1405 West Main Street
Monroe, WA 98272

2024

March 11-12, 2024

Northwest Regional Fellowship
Westside Baptist Church
1375 Irving Road
Eugene, OR 97404



MOVING?

FrontLine is moving to a new location. We are now located at 1375 Irving Road, Eugene, OR 97404. Please call us at (864) 268-0777 for more information.

Call (864) 268-0777

**Sign up for your FBFI Membership and/or
FrontLine Subscription Online at www.fbfi.org**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

- ☐ FBFI Membership—\$44.95 (Includes subscription to *FrontLine*)
☐ *FrontLine* Sub only— \$26.95 (One Year)

Gift subscription for:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

- ☐ One Year (\$26.95)

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

Check all that apply:

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

Payment:

- ☐ Check enclosed
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____

() _____
Telephone Number

Mail to: FBFI

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

**Recipients of gift subscriptions will receive
a letter announcing your gift of *FrontLine*.**

Or call our toll-free
order and info line:

1-800-376-6856

SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

Give Thyself Wholly to This

This is the third in a series of articles on the pastor's daily devotional habits. Thus far we have argued that not just the people but, first of all, their pastors, should be continually growing in rich, satisfying, devotional times with the Lord.

That may sound as though we're starting off on the wrong foot—arguing for a practice that we ought to be able to take for granted. But can we? Evidently not. In his book *A Call to Spiritual Reformation* long-time seminary professor D. A. Carson relates,

Ten years ago fifty students at a major North American seminary were applying for overseas ministry during the summer holiday. During the selection process they were carefully interviewed. Only three of the fifty could testify that they had regular times of devotional reading and prayer. *It would be painful and embarrassing to uncover the prayer life of many thousands of evangelical pastors* (16–17, emphasis added).

Retired Scottish pastor Maurice Roberts, whose editorship of the *Banner of Truth* magazine from 1988–2003 kept him in touch with many other pastors and missionaries, warned,

The scholar at his books persuades himself that he is too busy to spend an hour each morning in secret devotions. The pastor feels he cannot devote time to the cultivation of his soul because he has too many letters to reply to or even sermons to prepare. The missionary cannot wait on the Lord as he used to because of the pressure of language-study, and later on, because of daily duties at the mission, and later on still, because of deputation work in the home country.

In these crafty ways does the devil lead God's people by a staircase which winds ever downwards. But let us recall in the midst of our busy life that we may do ourselves and the cause of God great harm by the neglect of our soul. Let us once lose the dew of our spiritual freshness and we are at once a ready prey to compromise. How have so many evils come into the church but through men's neglecting to cultivate daily fellowship with Christ? Like the Ephesian church in the Book of Revelation, they have been busily engaged in their "works" and "labour" and "patience" and even their zeal for orthodoxy. But in the eyes of the Saviour they have "left their first love" [Rev. 2:1–4] and risk losing the very "candlestick" altogether (*The Thought of God*, 64–65; see this issue's *Bring the Books* column).

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

It's accounts like these, confirmed by my own discussions with Christian workers over the years, that have burdened my heart for appealing for a renewed consideration of a pastor's (or missionary's) nonnegotiable devotional life. A life of devotional exercise in pursuit of the Lord which, although not entirely separable from his weekly sermon preparations, is nevertheless identifiably distinguishable from it. The two previous articles have stressed two reasons for this which I trust are compelling.

First, *a pastor is an ordinary Christian man, and only secondarily a minister to others.*

Second, *a pastor at his very core is a "man of God" with spiritual needs peculiar to him in that calling.*

In this third installment, I'd like to add two final considerations. The first concerns a pastor's spiritual impact upon a congregation.

Effectual Ministerial Work

It is almost axiomatic: *A pastor's power for doing ministerial work effectually is, to a great degree,*

Inside

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

dependent upon his own increasingly experiential devotional walk with God.

Spiritual giftedness, all by itself, is certainly a major factor in a pastor's usefulness. But even giftedness cannot compensate for the absence of the spirituality that comes only from a consistent, devotional pursuit of God (as contrasted with one that is merely *curious, intellectual, or professional*). Why is this?

The man who is to be God's messenger must himself draw near to God and abide in His secret. . . . The word must detach itself from the book and become a living element of experience before it can profit even the reader himself; and much more is this the case, of course, before it can profit others.

The answer is that the spiritual impact of preaching and teaching lies, to large degree, in the *life* of the preacher.

William Quayle, an early-twentieth-century Methodist minister, argued this crisply.

A given sermon is the preacher to date. The sermon is an act; and to this act the preacher brings himself, all himself, the acquisition of his years. . . . A great life, telling a great truth, ought to be a definition of a preacher at his message. . . . And a preacher-man's business is to amass a life of cubic dimensions, to the end that he may evoke the great power and utter the great word.

"Preacher, what are you doing? Are you getting up a sermon?" And his answer, "Rather, I am, by God's grace, constructing a man." . . . The sermon is the preacher up to date. All his life flowers in what he is saying at a given time (*The Pastor-Preacher*, 29, 31, 32).

This is an intangible thing that cannot be measured in visible or quantifiable ways. But people sense whether or not their pastor is bringing to his preaching a life of growing spirituality. If he is, many of them will grow right along with him. His own sanctifying pursuit of the Lord creates a powerful wake, pulling them inevitably, though perhaps imperceptibly, to themselves, into deeper appreciations for God's grace, broader sympathies with Christ's purposes, diminishing interests in the things of this world, and increasingly satisfying whole-life devotedness to the things of the Lord. Happily, a pastor's preaching and his preparations for it contribute to this growth immensely, but pulpit work from week to week has an inherent limitation in that its texts and subjects are necessarily narrow in their scope. It simply cannot concern itself every week with much of what we require for ministerial effectualness. There are too many additional truths and experiences with the Lord which

can be nurtured only by reflection and prayer in order to empower our spirits with the element of personal conviction that throws telling weight into our words.

The finest, most insightful, and well-expressed treatment of this connection between a minister's own spiritual growth and the power of his influence upon a congregation that I've ever read is in James Stalker's *The Preacher and His Models*. His chapter on "The Preacher as a Man of God" is, in my estimation, simply unequaled on this point in books on pastoral theology. I'm going to quote him at length.

A ministry of growing power must be one of growing experience. The soul must be in touch with God and enjoy golden hours of fresh revelation. The truth must come to the minister as the satisfaction of his own needs and the answer of his own perplexities; and he must be able to use the language of religion, not as the nearest equivalent he can find for that which he believes others to be passing through, but as the exact equivalent of that which he has passed through himself.

There are many rules for praying in public, and a competent minister will not neglect them; but there is one rule worth all the rest put together, and it is this: Be a man of prayer yourself; and then the congregation will feel, as you open your lips to lead their devotions, that you are entering an accustomed presence and speaking to a well-known friend.

There are arts of study by which the contents of the Bible can be made available for the edification of others; but this is the best rule: Study God's Word diligently for your own edification; and then, when it has become more to you than your necessary food and sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, it will be impossible for you to speak of it to others without a glow passing into your words which will betray the delight with which it has inspired yourself.

Perhaps of all causes of ministerial failure the commonest lies here; and of all ministerial qualifications this, although the simplest, is the most trying. . . .

Power for work like ours is only to be acquired in secret; **it is only the man who has a large, varied and original life with God who can go on speaking about the things of God with fresh interest**; but a thousand things happen to interfere with such a prayerful and meditative life. It is not because our arguments for religion are not strong enough that we fail to convince, but because the argument is wanting which never fails to tell; and this is religion itself. People everywhere can appreciate this, and nothing can supply the lack of it. The hearers may not know why their minister, with all his gifts, does not make a religious impression upon them; but it because he is not himself a spiritual power (53-55, emphasis added).

And how is that personal, experiential, spiritual life of power obtained? Stalker states,

The man who is to be God's messenger must himself draw near to God and abide in His secret. . . . The word must detach itself from the book and become a living element of experience before it can profit even the reader himself; and much more is this the case, of course, before it can profit others. It is the truth which has become personal conviction, and is burning in a man's heart so that he cannot be silent, which is his message. **The number of such truths which a man has appropriated from the Bible and verified in his own experience is the measure of his power** (109–10, emphasis added).

Just this month I began rereading *Wise Counsel*, the interesting series of letters which John Newton wrote to a younger minister, John Ryland Jr., over a period of more than forty years. Newton advises his less-experienced friend several times about differences between studying theology theoretically or abstractly, and coming to know it experientially as a life-shaping force. For instance, early on in the correspondence, Ryland has submitted to Newton a certain view of justification and the question of the order of God's eternal decrees. These are not inconsiderable issues, and there is blessing in searching out the truth regarding them and in preaching it accurately to a congregation. But Newton had sat under the preaching of men who "appeared to be rather wise than warm, rather positive than humble, rather captious [given to finding fault] than lively, more disposed to talk of speculation than experience." His advice to Ryland took the form of personal testimony to the nature of the knowledge of spiritual things which he himself valued.

I desire to grow in knowledge, but I want nothing which bears that name that has not a direct tendency to make sin more hateful, Jesus more precious to my soul; and at the same time to animate me to a diligent use of every appointed means, and an unreserved regard to every branch of duty (21).

Note those ambitions: sin more hateful, Jesus more precious, etc. If we have these same ambitions for ourselves, we'll inevitably crave time and reading and memorization and prayer and reflection that is centered upon the peculiarities of the deficiencies in *our own* walk with God. And it's that attention to the uniqueness of ourselves that gives experiential forcefulness to all of our preaching to others, regardless of the week's passage or subject. But without that personal attention it will not matter what we preach; all will be less effectual, less convicting, more theoretical.

A Final Consideration

As a last appeal for a consistent, vibrant devotional life, I'd like to urge upon us something which can be drawn suggestively from a number of texts. It concerns the matter of a preacher's *inheritance*, or his *portion*. It might be expressed this way: **A pastor's choicest "portion" consists of an unusual nearness to God, made**

possible by his calling unto exceptional preoccupation with the LORD.

An especially relevant passage for introducing this proposition is in Psalm 73: 28a—"But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works."⁸

These are the words, as you know, not of an ordinary Israelite, but of a Levite named Asaph. His was an elevated role, even among the Levites. He was a chief musician, assigned by David to the privileged inner circle of three directors who oversaw the entirety of the worship music.

What Asaph writes about in Psalm 73 is his finally emerging from a paralyzing personal bitterness. It was the consequence of contrasting himself with the world. He had looked at the things worldly people accumulate and at their apparent insulation from common troubles. His own experience had been painfully different. Sharp afflictions seemed to dog him (v. 14).

Then he went *into the sanctuary of God*, and everything cleared up. *Then understood I*, he said (v. 17). And his eye-opened conclusion was that his Levitical access of approach to God and his liberty to tarry there in nearness to Him were a superior good outweighing all else that could be desired.

The reason for dwelling upon Asaph's experience is that I believe it contains certain fundamental elements that are the very heart of every minister's sacred calling, Old or New Testament. Pastors, like the apostles, are set apart occupationally for prayer and for the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Like the priests and the Levites, they receive their material provisions out of the people's tithes and offerings. This divine arrangement, in both cases, is *that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD* (2 Chron. 31:4; compare 1 Cor. 9:14), rather than becoming entangled with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2:4). And though this may mean, at least for the New Testament minister, a relatively small material compensation, his is a *different portion* than that of ordinary Christians.

His portion is the Lord Himself to a much greater degree than that experienced by the ordinary Israelite (or Christian in this New Testament age). God separated the Tribe of Levi out from among their brethren for distinctive service in the tabernacle. He gave them no inheritance such as He allotted to the other tribes. The explanation was *the LORD is his inheritance* (Deut. 10:9). And to the priests the Lord said, *Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel* (Num. 18:20).

This parallel could be pressed invalidly. But to at least some degree there is a similarity in this respect: Old Testament priests and Levites and New Testament ministers enjoyed (enjoy) an exclusion from ordinary employments that freed (free) them for an exceptional preoccupation with the Lord Himself. This is their precious, ministerial *portion*.

It is this freedom to absorb oneself with the Lord and His Word that makes intense sermon preparation possible, making possible in turn an unusually satisfying communion with the Lord.

Now what a minister must grasp and magnify is that not only in preparing sermons, but also in his growing, satisfying devotional life, made possible to a great extent by virtue of his calling, his special portion is an extraordinary nearness to God day after day. He should seize this privilege. He should pursue it zealously, with great ardor.

Henry Martyn wrote in his *Journal* for November 3, 1804,

After dinner, I prayed earnestly, and continued writing sermon till late at night, in general enjoying God's presence, and looking up to him, to correct my spirit, that I might be meek and tender, and might write with seriousness, not to please men but God. It was a very long study, but a pleasant one: I left off satisfied and peaceful, **at thinking that the happiness of life consisted in communion with God, of which none could deprive me** (emphasis added).

Obviously, what Martyn says of the happiness of life consisting in communion with God is true of every Christian. But what he's recording is his experiencing this as a direct result of employing his time late into the night as a minister unfettered by the demands of an ordinary believer's daily work schedule. He was preparing a sermon. It brought him into God's presence to a heightened degree. The experience was spirit correcting, pleasant, satisfying, and peaceful; the happiness of ministerial life. A minister's *portion*.

Now what a minister must grasp and magnify is that not only in preparing sermons, but also in his growing, satisfying devotional life, made possible to a great extent by virtue of his calling, his special *portion* is an extraordinary nearness to God day after day. He should seize this privilege. He should pursue it zealously, with great ardor. His happiness will be greater than his people's when *their corn and their wine [increase]* (Ps. 4:7)!

Commenting upon Psalm 84:4, *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee*, C. H. Spurgeon elaborated on this unique ministerial blessedness.

Those he esteems to be highly favoured who are constantly engaged in divine worship. . . . To come

and go is refreshing but to abide in the place of prayer must be heaven below. To be the guests of God, enjoying the hospitalities of heaven, set apart for holy work, screened from a noisy world, and familiar with sacred things—why this is surely the choicest heritage a son of man can possess. . . . So near to God, their very life must be adoration.

This is the life which Matthew Henry extolled when he wrote at the end of his own ministry, "A holy, heavenly life spent in the service of God and communion with Him, is the most pleasant and comfortable life that anyone can live in this world."

Brothers, the lines truly have fallen to us in pleasant places. We simply must not, cannot, fail to magnify our portion and to enjoy it. The Puritan Oliver Heywood wrote in his journal in 1701,

I stayed at home and set myself solemnly to spend all that forenoon in secret prayer in my chamber. . . . Accordingly, after I had performed my usual chamber devotions and family duty, at nine o'clock I went into my chamber and began my exercises; read Psalm 51, fell on my knees, humbled my soul for sin, pleaded for pardon and grace about an hour, and God graciously helped. Then I read Isaiah 64, prayed for the church and the nation, and God helped. Then read Psalm 102. Prayed again for the interest of Christ abroad in the world, and was assisted. Then I read I Timothy 4, pleaded for my sons, for my congregation, and relations till twelve o'clock. It was a delightful forenoon, blessed be God.

To conclude, I know that these arguments are wordy. But I trust that their very wordiness will provoke reflection. A pastor, preacher, or missionary ought, of all people in a congregation, to be ardently pursuing an ever growing, satisfying devotional life with the Lord. This should be so, because,

First, *A pastor is first of all an ordinary Christian man, and only secondarily a minister to others.*

Second, *A pastor at his very core is a "man of God" with spiritual needs peculiar to him in that calling.*

Third, *A pastor's power for doing ministerial work effectually is, to a great degree, dependent upon his own increasingly experiential, devotional walk with God.*

And fourth, *A pastor's choicest "portion" consists of an unusual nearness to God, made possible by his separation unto exceptional preoccupation with the LORD.*

Let us take heed unto ourselves, as well as to our teaching. Let Whitefield's motto be our own: *First a saint, and then a scholar.*

*"Communion with God, accompanied by trust in him and a heart to declare his doings is the life of our lives. It is the chief attainment of our earthly existence. The reason why so many good men often cry out, 'My leanness, my leanness,' is that they so seldom have intimate fellowship with the Father and with his son through the Holy Ghost" (William S. Plumer, *The Book of Psalms*, 718). ☞

Dr. Mark Minnick pastors Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. You can access his sermons at mountcalvarybaptist.org/pages/sermons/default.aspx.

Bring . . . the Books

The Thought of God by Maurice Roberts

The Thought of God by Maurice Roberts is a recent (1993) collection of editorials written while the author was editor for *The Banner of Truth* magazine. Roberts pastored the Free Church of Scotland in Ayr from 1974–94 and then the Greyfriars congregation in Inverness until his retirement in 2010.

Roberts's ability to write clearly, deeply, and thoughtfully is apparent. He states biblical concepts and truths in a concise and memorable way. His writing has a breadth that draws from a thorough knowledge of church history, theology, and practical pastoral experience. The thirty moderately brief, readable chapters are divided up into five sections: "Our Great God," "Fellowship with Christ," "The Christian's Walk," "Life Together," and "The Glory to Come."

"The thought of God should be the Christian's panacea," Roberts writes. "And what an infinity there is in the thought of God." He explains that the past century has been fraught with spiritual triviality because of a need for a deeper sense of the sinfulness of sin and a deeper attitude of reverence in worship.

I found "The Interpretation of Providence in History" (ch. 5) especially thought-provoking and intriguing. He uses 1 Kings 18:17–18, a conversation between King Ahab and Elijah about the drought in the land. Ahab blames Elijah for praying down God's judgment and robbing the people of happiness and prosperity. Elijah stoutly reprimands Ahab for bringing down God's judgment by leading the people into idolatry. Both men interpret the providence of history through different lenses. Roberts states, "The way a man interprets providence proves his real theology." And only a believer can get it right. Throughout both secular and Christian history, Roberts eloquently illustrates the divergent interpretations of the same events of history. "It is the duty of the church to explain history," he writes, citing Jesus' rebuke of the Jewish leaders in Matthew 16:3: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Even though a Christian's interpretation of history is subjective since it is not inspired revelation, spiritual Christians should believe that God, according to His Word, will help us accurately discern the times in which we live.

"The Christian's Refreshing" (ch. 9) stresses that every believer involved in ministry needs times of restoration and relaxation. We should be attentive to certain "warning signs." "One such sign is when our mind becomes incapable of facing any aspect of our work with pleasure." Although the book is not expressly directed at those in full-time ministry, many chapters have their fullest applications to those of us who are. "It is unquestionably one of the tragic fruits of our fallen nature that we can grow in theological knowledge without growing perceptibly in appreciation of what that knowledge means.

The head may be full, while the heart is cold. . . . Indeed, the oftener we study any doctrine the less sweetness it seems to give us." Indeed, "a 'felt Christ' is one great need of the hour to counteract our miseries."

One topic that surfaces throughout the book is the appropriate use of the Lord's Day. He urges believers to dedicate even their free time on the Lord's Day to spiritual thoughts and pursuits. Their conversations with believers should not be about sports or other secular interests, but those that would increase their pursuit of God's kingdom. "When the Lord's people meet, they should always try to lead one another's thoughts to God."

In "Where Godliness Is Leaking" Roberts observes that "history is strewn with examples of churches and organizations which began well and did good but which then departed from their original good work." Why? *First*, he notes the lack of *good parenting in the home*. He blames this on the absence of Christian "distinctives" which include a lack of purposefulness and Christ-like character training, little to no father-led family worship, and not honoring the Lord's Day. He stresses the need to limit television viewing and excessive entertainment, while promoting a good work ethic. Popular music is also a negative influence. Referencing the practice in the Bible of naming the mothers of so many Old Testament kings, he stresses how important godly mothers are to rearing godly children. These are just a smattering of his solutions for the home. *Second*, he singles out *worship practices in the church* that do not cultivate a serious state of mind. "Nothing which smacks of 'entertainment' is appropriate in the worship of God." The *third* factor is *the Christian's self-watch*—time in secret meditation and prayer, hiding God's Word in the heart through Scripture memory, extended periods of prayer, and "keeping a religious diary."

The many poignant thoughts in the book make it difficult to choose examples. His statements are infused with authority because they so succinctly reflect God's truth. The book is salted throughout with Reformed theology which is to be expected from the editor of *The Banner of Truth* magazine. (At one point he refers to regeneration taking place before salvation,—but in the next sentence he notes that in reality regeneration and justification are virtually simultaneous.) The book deserves the reading of all God's ministers. I was deeply blessed and often pricked in conscience by truth. Read much of the book in private because you may find yourself on your knees. ☞

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

Terry Hamilton has pastored Friendship Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, since 1989.

Straight Cuts

Is Sunday a Day of Rest?

Etched deep in the minds of many Christians is the idea that Sunday is supposed to be a day of rest. This conclusion seems to follow naturally from the Old Testament identification of the Jewish holy day with the required Sabbath rest each week. At various times over the course of church history certain believers have even referred to Sunday as the Christian Sabbath. In our day some say Sunday should be a day of rest in order to argue that churches should reduce their busy Sunday schedules so members might not be so tired by the end of the day and better prepared for the week ahead. Although this perspective seems reasonable, it is more important to make sure that it is biblical.


The Old Testament instructions for the Sabbath provide a good starting point. At Sinai God prohibited Israel from working on the Sabbath, corresponding to God's rest from the work of Creation on the seventh day (Exod. 20:8–11). Besides a special day of rest, however, the Sabbath also served as a special day of worship. Although corporate worship was appropriate and available every day of the week at the tabernacle and later at the temple, God expected twice as many burnt offerings on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9–10). According to Ezekiel 46:1–5, the temple in the future kingdom will also continue to highlight worship on the Sabbath—the eastern gate will be closed all week until the Sabbath, when it will be opened specifically for the purpose of worship. For the Jews, then, the Sabbath had a twofold purpose: a day of rest and a day of worship.

One episode from the life of Christ sheds further light on this dual role. One Sabbath day as Jesus crossed a grain field His disciples plucked the heads of grain and enjoyed a nourishing snack (Matt. 12:1–8). When the Pharisees accused the disciples of violating the Sabbath prohibition of work, Jesus rose to their defense. Among other arguments, He pointed out a regularly recurring Sabbath violation that they had apparently never considered, even though it was recorded in their law as well as visible before their eyes in the temple services. Every Sabbath day, Christ observed, the priests “profane” the requirement to rest on the Sabbath by laboring vigorously in their worship duties (v. 5). People in modern Western culture have little appreciation for the intense work involved in slaughtering animals, catching the blood in a basin, and heaving numerous carcasses of whole burnt offerings up onto the altar. For other sacrifices the process was even more involved. Leviticus 1 directs the priests to remove the head of a bull and skin the carcass, then sever and wash the legs as well as the kidneys and

other entrails, and burn it all on the altar, including the fat. The following chapters in Leviticus record a similar process for several different kinds of sacrifice.

The priests worked hard on the Sabbath, yet Jesus proclaimed them to be blameless before God. It was impossible for them to observe both aspects of the Sabbath at the same time, so the requirement to rest had to give way to the priority of worship. We conclude from Christ's statement that worship as a function of the Sabbath was distinct from the obligation to rest, and that worship was always more important.

The New Testament indicates that the early church changed the day of worship for Christians from Saturday to Sunday, although it does not record the actual event that initiated the switch. What we have, though, is clear evidence that the change had taken place. For example, on his way back to Jerusalem Paul stopped in Troas for a full week. It was on the first day of the week, however, that the church gathered for worship. Luke identifies two distinctive aspects of worship that happened that day: the Lord's Supper and the preaching of the Word (Acts 20:7). In 1 Corinthians 16:2 Paul directs God's people to participate in another worship feature when they gather on Sunday: bring their offering. Later John provides a hint as to why the church may have shifted worship from the seventh day of the week to the first day: he refers to Sunday as “the Lord's day” (Rev. 1:10), indicating that the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week made that day the best time to gather to worship our God and Savior.

All this evidence leads to an important conclusion. Whereas the New Testament confirms that Sunday became the accepted day for Christian worship, we find no biblical evidence that the early church ever transferred the practice of resting on the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. That idea has simply been a long-standing but unfounded assumption. Space limitations do not allow this study to address the issue of restricting activities on Saturday or even on Sunday in observance of the Lord's Day. Romans 14, however, offers an overarching principle for determining one's behavior and activities every day of the week. Rather than attempting to apply the Jewish Sabbath restrictions or choosing to do what seems most comfortable and pleasing to yourself, Paul points instead to Christ as the key factor to consider. Each individual, he insists, must choose whatever personal standard would bring the Lord the most honor (Rom. 14:5–9). Through His death and resurrection Christ earned the right to be the highest priority of His people. Honoring and serving Him on the Lord's Day is more important than rest. 

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

Gary Reimers pastors Cornerstone Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, and is adjunct professor of theology and expository preaching at BJU Seminary. He also leads BJU's Holy Land and Journeys of Paul tours. Contact him at greamers@bju.edu.

One result of living in a fallen world is that life and ministry are full of difficulties. The pressures and disappointments of life can tempt believers to despair or even to give up. Perhaps it's a battle with cancer or financial struggles. Perhaps your ministry doesn't appear to be growing or successful. Perhaps a long struggle against a particular sin seems hopeless and hardly worth the effort. What keeps a believer trusting God in the face of illness? Or persevering in a challenging ministry context? This sanctified fortitude in the life of a believer is called endurance.

The Necessity of Endurance

Endurance is one of the hallmarks of a true believer's life. None of our Christian virtues have any staying power without endurance. What value is love if it suddenly wilts in a time of difficulty? How genuine is our faith when extinguished by the cold winds of self-reliance? Without endurance we cannot keep loving an unbeliever who continually rejects the gospel. Without endurance we could not continue our daily fight against sin. Without endurance we would certainly and disastrously abandon God's call on our lives.

The Bible tells us that these kinds of trials are necessary to produce endurance (Rom. 5:3-4). When a tree is planted, the trunk is often tied to a stake to protect it from the wind, but if you take a careful look you will notice that it is tied loosely. This is not sloppy horticulture; it is an intentional and highly important practice. While an unstaked tree would be vulnerable to breaking in the wind, a tree too tightly staked would not be able to move with the wind. Without that resistance the trunk will not develop its necessary strength and taper. So it is in our lives. The winds of adversity surely blow, but they are sent by our loving Father to produce the strength of endurance in our lives that contributes to our spiritual maturity (James 1:4).

Endurance in Trials

We can often draw encouragement from those who have gone before us and left a legacy that displays this kind of strengthening in times of difficulty. Corrie Ten Boom (1892-1983) was born in Amsterdam to a devout Christian family. Her father was a watchmaker, and her family lived a quiet and ordinary life. During World War II and the subsequent German occupation of the Netherlands, the Ten Booms participated in the Underground, providing documentation and places of safety for Jews. One safe space they provided was in their own home. They were eventually betrayed to Nazi officials by a fellow citizen posing as a friend. As a result, Corrie's father and eventually her sister died in Nazi custody. Corrie spent just under a

year in three different concentration camps and was only finally released by mistake. The week after her release the women her age at that camp were sent to the gas chamber. Not only did Corrie's faith remain intact during these years, but after the war she opened her home to former traitors, now rejected by their countrymen.

Her story is so well-known in her writings (particularly *The Hiding Place*) that it is easy to forget just how ordinary Corrie was. She had no special training, no exceptional gifts. By her own admission she was an ordinary woman, but she served an extraordinary God. He ministered to her in times of deepest distress and provided the endurance necessary to face her providential circumstances. Although the possibility of being sent to a concentration camp is almost nonexistent for us, hearing the heavy trials of other believers helps us put our own trials in perspective. All trials bring a heavy weight, but God gives grace for all difficulties. Just think of those believers that you know personally who have endured incredible trials and have testified to God's maturing work in their lives. Those testimonies are an essential part of our Christian life, encouraging us to endure. Then, as God upholds us in our troubles, we can minister that comfort to others as well (2 Cor. 1:4).

Endurance in Evangelism

Endurance is necessary for trials, but there are examples of other kinds of everyday endurance. Consider John Newton's endurance in evangelism. Again, his story of conversion is well known, and for good reason. Born into a seafaring family, Newton was a desperately lost young man, indolent and reprobate. The Lord graciously saved him and led him from slave ship captain to evangelical Anglican clergyman. Newton's story is certainly a remarkable testimony to God's "Amazing Grace," but I would like to draw our attention to a lesser celebrated aspect of his life.

Newton was a prolific letter writer who, as a pastor, carried out a significant ministry of correspondence. Many of his letters were published during his lifetime and have survived to this day (*The Works of John Newton*, 4 vols.). One particularly interesting correspondent was fellow Anglican minister Thomas Scott. Newton and Scott met at a gathering for clergymen, and while they both served in ministry, the men could not have been more different. Newton possessed a real, personal, and authentic faith rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Scott was a product of his age: an unconverted clergy-

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

Charles Spurgeon

man with little interest in vital religion. Today we would likely classify him as a theological liberal. By Scott's own admission, he kept up the correspondence only out of a desire to draw Newton into theological controversy, but the Lord had other plans. Newton persisted, undeterred in his evangelism, and eventually the Lord reaped a harvest. Scott would go on to write a book about his conversion (*The Force of Truth*) and a whole Bible commentary that was widely used throughout the nineteenth century.

Newton's endurance is striking not necessarily because of its duration; after all, it was only a few years before Scott turned to Christ. Rather, his testimony ministers to us because he was willing to invest in someone who was settled into false religious beliefs. How many of us would take significant time to pursue a cult member or a staunch secularist with the gospel? When we recognize that salvation is a work of God's Spirit, then we see that no one is beyond God's reach and no gospel investment is wasted.

Endurance in Ministry

What about times in ministry where day upon day seem fruitless and we doubt whether God's hand of blessing rests on our efforts? Tom Carson (1911–92) served as a church-planter, pastor, and lay church leader in French-speaking Quebec during the second half of the twentieth century. A memoir of his ministry has been written by his son, noted New Testament scholar D. A. Carson (*Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor*). The religious history of Quebec during Tom Carson's ministry is not well known to American Christians, but it is worth learning.

Christians, particularly Baptists, suffered great opposition in Quebec during the 1950s and '60s due to the staunch Roman Catholicism that characterized the province. The opposition even resulted in some pastors being jailed and their churches being burned. An entire generation of believers ministered doggedly with little fruit. Pastors faithfully tended small flocks of twenty or thirty people and sought to be an encouragement to one another. However, great changes began to sweep through Ontario in the 1970s. Central to these changes was the Roman Catholic counsel of Vatican II (1962–65). This council sought to modernize the teaching of the Roman Catholic church but served to disenfranchise many of the more conservative Roman Catholics, such as the ones living in Quebec.

These changes caused a reevaluation of religion, especially by many young people, and soon evangelistic efforts began reaping a great harvest. Churches that were beleaguered for so many years grew exponentially. Carson recounts that there were about forty evangelical, French-speaking churches in Quebec in 1972, all of them small congregations. Just eight years later, there were over five hundred of these churches, and some quite large (*Memoirs*, 23). Who had preserved the gospel witness in Quebec for the day when the Lord chose to reap a harvest? Those faithful pastors and lay people, including Tom Carson.

Likewise, many of the Puritans, such as Cotton Mather, purposefully fasted and fervently prayed for a genuine, heaven-sent revival and died never having seen it. Yet within ten years of Mather's death George Whitefield arrived in America, and the Lord sent a revival now known as the First Great Awakening (*Diary of Cotton Mather*). At that same time God was moving powerfully in England, Scotland, and Wales, drawing in scores of people to Christ. Today many of the hymns we sing in our churches were written by men and women won by Christ through these revivals.


What about us? Are we prepared to pray and labor for a revival we may never see in our lifetime? Are we willing to pour our lives out on the altar of gospel ministry for no result beyond the glory of Jesus Christ? Are we willing to endure for no greater reason than the call of our Savior on our lives?

The Source of Endurance

Where do you get the endurance to be a Ten Boom, a Newton, a Carson, or a Mather? That kind of gospel grit is a gift of God's grace. It must be supplied by God Himself through the means He has provided. We must study the Scriptures deeply, pray earnestly, and fellowship joyfully with other believers. These are God's spiritual lifelines that tether us to the Rock in times of storm.

Finally, can I encourage us to look to Christ and His soon returning? Hope fuels endurance and endurance produces hope (Rom. 5:4; 8:25).

In 1957 a researcher at Johns Hopkins carried out a very bizarre experiment on rats. He placed wild rats in a tank of water and observed that they drowned after only fifteen minutes—compared to domesticated rats, which lasted much longer. Intrigued by the reason for the discrepancy, the researchers exposed wild rats to the tank again, but then rescued them. After a few experiences like this, the wild rats lasted for about fifty hours just like the domesticated rats. Whatever we might think of the ethics of experiments like this, the illustration is striking. When the rats had the experience and subsequent hope of rescue, they were strengthened in their resolve to endure.

If such an odd example seems too strange, just consider the experience of motherhood. How is it that a mother can endure the difficulty of childbearing? Better yet, why would a woman desire to have more children after experiencing all the pain and difficulty the first time? Mothers endure those great difficulties because they have a great hope. They are longing for and working toward the incredibly joyful event of a baby's birth. In a similar way, we are strengthened by the expectation that our endurance is producing spiritual maturity. But our even greater confidence is the certain hope of eternity in the presence of our Savior, where our light and momentary afflictions give way to an even more exceeding weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17). 

Ben Smith pastors Vacaville Bible Church in Vacaville, California.

CHURCH DIRECTORY



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



UPPER CROSS ROADS BAPTIST CHURCH
ucrbaptist.org
 Dr. Robert A. Conduct
 Senior Pastor
 2717 Greene Rd
 Baldwin, MD 21013
 (410)-557-6963



Pastor Mike Ascher
Showing forth the path of life
Good News BAPTIST CHURCH
goodnewsbaptist.org
 3252 Taylor Road, Chesapeake, VA 23321 • (757) 488-3241



Hamilton Acres Baptist Church
 138 Farewell Avenue • Fairbanks, AK 99701
akhabc.com • 907.456.5995
 Pastor Bruce Hamilton
Services: Sunday - 9:45 & 11:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M.
 Wednesday - 7:00 P.M.



Grace Baptist Church of Victoria
 2731 Matson Road,
 Victoria, British Columbia
www.gbvic.org
 We preach the Bible because we believe the Bible.
 Don Johnson, Pastor



KEYSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH
 15 Keystone Lane • Berryville, VA 22611
 540-955-3410 • www.keystonebaptist.org
 Pastor Douglas B. Wright

You can feature your church here and support the ministry of *FrontLine*.




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



NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH
nwvbc.org | 623-581-3115
 Dr. Kevin Schaub, Pastor
Multiplying Disciples in the Phoenix Metro Area

Shepherd's Bethel

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



Rent Free
 Fully Furnished Homes
 Laundry Facility
 Fashion Center

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

Honesty, Accountability, and Encouragement

Mentoring Women

Mature women are called to teach younger women the values, attitudes, and skills they need to honor God and have a good testimony in the world (Titus 2:3–5). Of course, women grow spiritually through hearing preaching and their own individual Bible study, but personal relationships between women have also always been an important avenue of spiritual growth. This kind of discipleship used to happen in an informal way, as women visited or worked with each other on projects. When I was a young mother, my friend taught me Christian principles as she taught me how to can peaches. The world continues its assault on foundational Christian values and practices, and younger women and new converts need even more support as they seek to build their lives on Christ. We must not be so distracted by our own busy lives that we forget that the younger women still need to be discipled in their initial spiritual growth, to grow in their ministry to others, and to grow into leadership.

All new Christians need to be discipled. My husband and I were saved just after our first anniversary, the first fruits of what was intended to be a church plant. Two couples discipled us. In addition to the preaching on Sunday (in our pastor's apartment), our discipleship involved our hanging out in the evenings with them. Both families had very young children, and we were both occupied during the day with school or work. Hungry for fellowship, we invaded their family lives for two years, and it seemed like they willingly let us, even encouraged us to do it. We learned so much, and not just about doctrine. By their lives, these two wives demonstrated the teaching in Titus 2 about reverent behavior, loving their husbands and children, what self-control means, how to have a pure mind, and what industry at home looks like. We also absorbed lessons on child rearing, sin and forgiveness, sacrifice, prayer, and faith in God during trials. Watching God triumph in their trials strengthened our faith immeasurably. Their victories became, in a way, our victories as well, and those lessons stuck with us through many years and many trials after we moved away. I cannot express how crucial this early discipleship was to us. Their investment of

time in teaching and modeling the basics of Christian living taught us to trust and to follow God.

Vulnerability, Rebuke, and Exhortation

If you are willing to share your life as a mentor/friend, consider that there may also be women who, while not new converts, have great spiritual need. Many women are starved for real connection, no matter how long they have been saved, because forging genuine friendships that lead to honesty, vulnerability, rebuke, and exhortation takes time and a willingness to let others in. If a mentoring relationship sounds like it will require more than an hour a week, that's because it most likely will. Ministry doesn't occur on our timetable. Some may hesitate to purposefully reach out to a younger woman because of fear, but remember that you also grow as you rely on God's grace for wisdom.

As continually growing Christians, we should both *have* a mentor and *be* a mentor. Seek out a trusted, mature woman who is willing to share her experience with you. Also seek out someone to whom you can be a blessing. Pray that God would open doors to the right people. Not every woman is comfortable asking for mentoring. She may not seem like she needs this kind of relationship, but she does. God may lead you to a one who would be open to your friendship and be blessed by it—perhaps a person you wouldn't have expected.

All Christians also should grow in ministry to others. Scripture teaches that every member of the body can minister to others (Rom. 15:14; Eph. 4:11–12; Col. 3:16). By your mentoring friendship, you can help a younger woman learn to minister. As your friend notices spiritual needs, you can pray with her and guide her as she takes the step of reaching out to help others under the Spirit's guiding. I remember the deacon chairman's wife teaching us new deacons' wives about ministry to the women in our group—not just about what we were supposed to do, but also why. Her example of real concern for us as we ministered modeled the same concern we were to show to the women in our group. She

Continued on page 26

say yes

TO THE MBU EXPERIENCE

- ✓ FRIENDLY, SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE
- ✓ ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
- ✓ ACCREDITATION
- ✓ LOCAL CHURCH & MINISTRY EMPHASIS
- ✓ BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES



MARANATHA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Maranatha Baptist University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.
www.hlcommission.com | 312.263.0456

Go boldly. Start here.

VISIT **MBU.EDU/GOBOLDLY**

A Bright Future for Biblical

Closing Thoughts from My Heart

I have some closing thoughts to wrap up this edition of *FrontLine*. God has given me the privilege to preach and teach His Word now for fifty years and to invest my life in preparing men for ministry and in teaching young people to go out into all walks of life to serve Him. It is such a privilege to know and serve the Lord—it is so rewarding and satisfying. It is a joy to know so many fine servants of the Lord and to see how God has blessed and used them. Those of us in the upper years of life and ministry really need God's grace so that we might be faithful, fruitful, and fervent as we strive to finish well. God has promised to be with us and see us through to journey's end. Here are some thoughts particularly for my pastor and preacher friends.

Let's keep our eyes on the Lord, staying confident, joyful, and expectant. I love the doxology of Ephesians 3:20–21: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” These verses underscore that our God is able to do more than we can ever imagine. He can do so because of His supreme Person, His superlative power, and His sustained purpose to bring glory to Himself. Though writing from imprisonment, Paul was ever optimistic that God would build His church. We are heirs of that confident expectation. We have seen God do wonderful things in our lifetime for the phenomenal advance of the gospel at home and abroad. We know that God can do even more in the generations to come until the Lord comes again. In this wicked age we are rightly concerned for the future of our families, churches, communities, country, and the world. We desperately need a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit to raise up a new generation of stalwart servants and leaders. Let's look to Him in expectant prayer and joyful service. God has done, is doing, and will do more than we can ever imagine!

Don't retire too early, but don't hang on too long. Most pastors that I know have stayed in one ministry for many years. They do not hop around from church to church. Their roots are deep, and their fruit is lasting. Some of the most fruitful years can be the mature years (Ps. 92:12–15). Some men are vigorous in ministry to sixty-five, seventy, and even beyond. However, it is virtually universal that a ministry will decline if a man outstays his usefulness. So plan ahead. Mentor a successor if possible. Prudently prepare your membership and leadership for eventual pastoral change. Prepare yourself and your wife for a major change. Don't retire from ministry

altogether, but rather ask God to lead you to just the right path and place of “retirement ministry.” There are many possible venues. If you have a servant's heart you will never be without a ministry.

Don't let a promising younger man get away. It is very unlikely that there is going to be a surplus of available men to become the future pastors of the existing fundamental churches. Though most ministries are currently stable, there is a soon coming a leadership shortage. I really hope that I am wrong, but I do not think I am. If you know of a promising younger man, then pour your life into developing him as potential pastor for your ministry or another church. If you have an effective assistant pastor or youth pastor, then lock on to him for the Lord's sake. Young men crave a mentoring pastor. There is not a more fruitful way to invest your time and energy than in one who will take God's truth into the next generation.

Let's protect and promote biblical ministry. By God's grace many fundamental churches and ministries have matured in their theology, philosophy, and practice of ministry over recent decades. Many pastors have taken their deep and broad education and done their best to expound God's Word, disciple God's people, reach the lost, and extend the gospel around the world. They have worked through difficult and delicate issues, strived to maintain purity and unity, and struck a biblical balance of conviction with compassion. We have learned to respect one another in spite of our finely nuanced differences. By God's mercy, we have not been swallowed up by ecumenical compromise and cultural accommodation. But we are only one generation away from disaster. Even just one pastor can quickly turn a ministry to compromise and ruin. Let's keep passing our biblical convictions along to the next generation with winsomeness, warmth, and warnings.

Let's advance the gospel at home and abroad. What really matters eternally is getting the gospel to the lost, seeing people saved, and helping them grow. We should share our spiritual wealth by preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ abroad. But let's give it all we have for Christ now. Seriously encourage and challenge young people, young adults, and all ages with the glories of the Great Commission. Get people praying for laborers. Connect with and encourage mission agencies in their quest for willing workers. Organize some mission trips from your church. Ask God to allow you to get to the mission field yourself; He is able to provide your expenses. Encourage your missionaries by visiting them on the field. Train some national pastors. Evangelize and disciple

Ministry

and worship on the foreign field. God can still transform our lives with evangelistic zeal and missionary passion. Let's keep planting churches at home in the USA too. Let's identify some truly needy communities without a sound, biblical church and go to it.

Build strong marriages and families. I have observed over the years in ministerial training that, on the whole, the best Christian servants come from solid Christian homes, often from ministry homes. Full-time Christian service ranks are filled with people from solid families and churches. To be sure, God greatly uses people from not-so-ideal backgrounds, but I believe that the decline in the number of full-time servants is due to the deterioration of Christian families. Young people who come from homes where God is honored, the Bible is read and taught, church attendance is expected, and godly lifestyles are exemplified are in a strong position to commence a life of service for Christ. All the gifts in the body of Christ are essential and valuable. Every boy and girl, young man and young woman, coming from biblical homes should yearn to influence others for Christ through their vocations and professions. Surely for some, that will be through the ministry of the Word in focused, full-time service for Christ. So in your ministry, build strong families for the glory of God and the advance of the gospel.

Use your gifts, talents, experiences to help pastors and churches. You have one or more specialties in ministry that can be used exceptionally. You can help lift the load of a younger pastor and your wife, a young pastor's wife. They are learning their way and you can help them. Take them to lunch or dinner. Listen to their hearts with your heart. Do the same for older pastors and their wives. Make the phone call, take an interest, give them a love gift, and tell them how proud you are of them. Attend pastors' fellowships with the purpose of being a blessing to someone or several. Make new ministry friends. Add them to your prayer list. Serving others in these ways is very rewarding.

Recognize that some churches need to close or merge. Churches, like people, have life cycles. There is a time to face reality and carefully close a ministry. I once led a church to do this in a weekend ministry. It was a rescue attempt. As a church planter by nature, closing a church was the last thing that I thought I would ever do. But the time to close came. It was time to face reality. We sold the building to another church. The final ten members voted to invest almost \$200,000 from the closure into a trust fund with a mission agency. The principal could not be reduced; the interest would go to plant

churches. Now thirty years later about thirty churches have been planted from that fund, and the fund itself is over 50% larger today. God is so good! In some cases, a merger of one or more likeminded struggling churches may be the best idea for the future of much more effective ministry in a community. People need a "full service" church for encouragement and edification rather than endlessly "rattling around" in an older, large building with a handful of people. Maybe you could advise such churches to make wise decisions, bringing new life from ministries that have outlived their effectiveness.

Support and encourage Christian colleges and seminaries. I had the incredible privilege to serve in Christian higher education for over forty years. Some of the finest men and women I know serve in such settings. They work very hard and are exceptionally ministry minded. Faculty and staff pour their lives into young adults at a very critical season of life. The higher-education servants I know are also pouring their lives into their local church ministries. I challenge you to join me in praying for the leaders of these fine fundamental Bible colleges, Christian universities, and seminaries. Focus a day each week on these schools, praying for their strategic biblical success, courageous stand, distinctive standards, and dedicated staff and students. Strong fundamental schools constantly fight to go upstream against the downstream pollution of godless public education with its the wicked immoral culture. Ask God to raise up a new generation of godly servants and leaders from these sacred halls. Put the college in your budget. Put it in your will. Do all you can to encourage and strengthen these vital ministries. Send your young people and stay engaged with them as they develop into Christian manhood and womanhood.

Support and strengthen Christian schools, camps, and other ancillary ministries. The local church is the centerpiece of God's work in the world today. It is His primary means of evangelism and discipleship and the place of corporate worship. God has also raised up many very helpful specialized ministries for His glory. Christian primary and secondary schools provide young people with excellent learning opportunities to cultivate a biblical worldview and love for God. Christian camps extend lovely settings in God's creation for people young and old to focus solely upon the Lord, His Word, uplifting music, and wholesome fun. Thousands have been saved, reclaimed and called to serve Christ in camp settings. Publishing ministries provide excellent resources for churches and families. Legal and legislative organizations are fighting to protect our liberties. Radio and media

ministries make a real difference in many lives. Let's appreciate and support these ministries with our prayers and finances. All of these ministries complement rather than compete with local churches. Help these ministries!

For practical articles related to church planting, pastoral search, interim pastoral work, ministry transitions, and résumé writing, see <https://gfamissionsjobs.org/blog>.

As director of Ministry Relations for Gospel Fellowship Association Missions (GFA), Dr. Bruce McAllister oversees church planting and development, church staffing assistance, and pastor and church relations. He may be reached via e-mail at bmcallister@gfamissions.org or via phone at 864.640.1395 and is eager to help pastors in any way, especially to connect them to resources to help their ministries.



The Bridge Builder

Will Allen Dromgoole

An old man going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast, and deep, and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned, when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim, near,
"You are wasting your strength with
building here;
Your journey will end with the ending
day;
You never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm, deep and
wide—
Why build you this bridge at evening
tide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head;
"Good friend, in the path I have come,"
he said,
"There followeth after me today
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.

This chasm, that has been as naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge
for him."

Honesty, Accountability, and Encouragement

Continued from page 22

showed what ministry was and was there to help us as we went.

Women also need to grow into leadership, whether as the wife of a staff member or as the leader of a significant ministry in the church. Having a ministry mindset is absolutely essential for anyone in leadership, but such positions come with some unique features, and the counsel of a more experienced woman can help a leader grow into her new position. As I spoke with various women about their experience as they entered ministries, one idea that came up was assumptions. When a couple joins a ministry, there may be assumptions on all sides (hers, the congregation's, the other staff's) about what the wife should be doing and what kinds of relationships she should or should not have. One example was of a youth pastor's wife realizing that, because of dynamics with parents, her relationship with the teen girls was different than it was when she was working in camp ministry. Another was the pressure that a new senior pastor's wife felt to do all the things the former one did, until she realized that God had a different plan for her. These kinds of assumptions may also vary with church size or type of ministry.

Times of Transition

Some women navigate ministry transitions better on their own than others. Some may come with significant ministry experience, but that can lead to its own set of expectations. Ministry wives are, of course, also disciplined by their husbands, but I urge you who are already senior staff ladies: don't just assume that a new staff member's wife will meld seamlessly into your ministry and find an effective place. Think about the kinds of spiritual, family, and ministry challenges she might face (maybe the same ones you have faced) and be proactive in helping her overcome them. Many a younger lady would benefit from your intentional friendship/mentoring to help her figure out how God could use

her gifts and talents and develop her spiritually as she serves in your church.

Women new to ministry often have no expectation that mentoring will take place. This is particularly true for a new ministry couple at a small church or missionaries or church planters who are starting by themselves rather than in a team. There is the call, and they are meeting it with zeal and with humility. It is not that these women necessarily feel a lack, but it may also be true that their lives and ministries would benefit by an older lady's purposeful attention to them.

Another reason that ministry women should mentor each other is for accountability. Some ministries have been shaken by the sinful attitudes and actions of a pastor's wife. These sins could have lain hidden for a long time before being expressed, but they may possibly have been brought to light in the context of an intentional mentoring friendship, where they might have been identified and challenged at earlier stages.

Thinking about this topic has challenged me as I thought about my experiences, both before and after my husband and I entered the ministry. I hope this article prompts a more reticent person, as I was, to actively seek friendship with another godly woman for example, for teaching, for rebuke, for encouragement, for wisdom. I also hope that it prompts ladies to reach out to others with the purpose of forming godly friendships that help us all, younger ladies as well as older, honor the Lord better and minister more effectively, wherever God has placed us.

Linda Shumate ministers alongside her husband, David, in Phoenix, Arizona, where he is the director of MGM International, a missions agency focusing on the Spanish-speaking population in the US and abroad. She has raised children and done a variety of ministries as the Lord has brought opportunities her way.



Regional Reports

FBFI South Regional Fellowship

Tony Facenda

Dr. Billy Martin once said, “I used to get upset with the interruptions to my ministry—until I realized that the interruptions were my ministry.” This saying has never been more applicable than in the Covid-19 world in which we live. The interruption to our plans and goals could, if we are not careful, be viewed as one continuous obstacle. Yet the truth is that it is one continually evolving door of opportunity.

One of these doors is Zoom. This form of connecting and interacting has helped us at FBFI South in seeking to stay linked. On January 7, 2021, we had our latest Zoom meeting. It was both encouraging and challenging.

It was very encouraging to hear how the Lord is working in and through churches during this time. We learned that there are times that wisdom dictates that a church must close for a short time, allowing both the leadership and members to deal with the virus. But even through the closures God draws the church body closer and makes the bond of love one for another stronger.

During the Zoom meeting we also learned that many unsaved and unchurched people have been reached with the truth of God’s Word through online teaching. We were challenged with ideas concerning in-person worship, online advertisement, the use of social media, and how to improve our local church ministries and FBFI South. Sharing ideas during Zoom meetings leaves us with specific ways to improve our mindset and mechanics of ministry.

This year we are hoping to establish a monthly Zoom meeting. At each meeting it is our plan to focus on one area of ministry or life and then have a general give-and-take about ministry, ending with a time of prayer. Our goal is that each of these meetings would last from thirty to sixty minutes.

While acknowledging that Zoom does have value, we must keep in mind the essential and irreplaceable need for in-person worship and fellowship. Our in-person FBFI South 2021 meeting is scheduled for March 1–3 at Berean Baptist Church in Lilburn, Georgia (near Atlanta). It is our prayer that while we move forward together, we will continue to value our friendships and relationships and will seek to nourish them with regular in-person connections.

Past, Present, and Future

Chuck Phelps

The Foundations Baptist Fellowship International has been waiting 101 years to celebrate its 100th anniversary! Mark your calendar and plan to be at Colonial Hills Baptist Church June 14–16, 2021, to be inspired by the past and ready for the future. Speakers are to include Craig Hartman, Paul Hartog, Bob Jones, Mark Minnick, Les Ollila, Kevin Schaal, Mike Sproul, and Wayne Van Gelderen. The theme of “Praise for the Past and Foundations for the Future” will direct each speaker to take a serious look at the fundamentals that brought the FBFI together and will keep the FBFI together in the future.

Information about this year’s FBFI Annual Fellowship may be found at fbfiannualfellowship.org.

GLOBAL EVANGELISM *through the local church*

Missionaries in India, Kenya, Southeast Asia, Romania, Poland, Uruguay, Puerto Rico and Mexico

- Training national pastors
- Planting local churches
- Involving your congregation
- Reaching the world for Christ!



INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST MISSIONS

IBMMISSIONS.ORG • 2211 W Germann Rd, Chandler, AZ 85286 • 480-245-7905 • larry.ball@ibmmissions.org



Passing the Baton

Continued from page 9

to be as polished as a seminary graduate and experienced pastor. Remember, you were young once too, but someone worked with you. Work with him on areas of theology. If he and others are sensing God's call to the gospel ministry, then mentor them toward local church ordination (Acts 6:1–8; 14:23). Over time, if this man seems to be God's choice to be your successor, then allow him to co-pastor with you for a year or two so he can continue to understand your biblical philosophy of ministry and so the church can recognize him as an undershepherd of the flock and your natural successor.

Influence (Matt. 28:20b)

Among His last words to the disciples, the Lord Jesus Christ encouraged them with these words: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20b). This promise of Christ's presence influenced their future ministries. Even after the religious leaders threatened and persecuted the disciples, the disciples continued to boldly preach that the resurrected Jesus Christ was the only way to be saved. The religious leaders "marvelled" and finally determined that the disciples' boldness and confidence was a result of the fact "that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). The Lord's past, present, and promised future influence over the disciples provided the courage they needed to make disciples of all nations.

All over the world, I have younger church leaders as well as preachers that the Lord has given me the privilege to influence their lives and ministry. Like Paul, we should

live in such a way that we can say to younger preachers, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). After we hand off the baton, we should keep the relationship strong so that we can encourage, counsel, mentor, and even earn the right to rebuke these younger men.

Conclusion

I ran track in high school and college. As a sprinter, I loved the relay race because it combined individual talent with teamwork. Most of the responsibility for a successful handoff rests upon the one who is completing his sprint and hands off the baton to the next runner. In order not to drop the baton, we would plan and rehearse the steps of the handoff. A coach might also help prepare for a successful handoff because it does not matter how quickly the sprinters run if the baton is dropped.

Pastors and missionaries, the baton is in our hands. We are running the race, and the Lord willing, one day we will finish the course (2 Tim. 4:7). There comes a time when it is best for our local church or missions ministry to hand off the baton to a younger man who will keep running for God's glory! In order to finish well, we must pray, plan, and prepare now to hand off that baton—and not drop it!

Michael R. Privett, DMin, is senior pastor of Summit View Baptist Church in Travelers Rest, South Carolina, and executive director of Vision2020Asia. With over twenty-five years of pastoral experience and eight years in full-time missions, he is committed to training the next generation of preachers and pastors. He is also the author of *Why on Earth Are There Churches? The Biblical Mission of the Local Church*. For more information or to contact him, go to www.michaelprivett.com.



Advance the Gospel Through Medical Missions

- 1 Medical missions teams (2 WEEKS)
- 2 Medical missions internships (6–9 WEEKS)
- 3 Short-term medical missions (2 YEARS)
- 4 Career medical missions

We need like-minded Christian healthcare workers from all professions. Let's talk.

FOR MORE INFO:
Jack Mitchell, DMD

(978) 397-1693 • drjack@gfamissions.org
gfamissions.org/medical-missions





NEW

DMin in Biblical Counseling

Wisely connect truth and life.

.....

Find out more seminary.bju.edu

Available by livestream, online and module



Serve

{ because }

you are not your own;
you were bought at a price.

Find out what is involved in the great calling of missions
**and how we can support you every
step of the way.** — www.bmm.org



bmm
Baptist Mid-Missions

FrontLine

Editor

Kevin Schaal

Managing Editor

Malinda Duvall

Publication Editor

Steve Skaggs

Assistant Editors

Kevin Bauder
Gordon Dickson
Mark Herbster
Bruce McAllister
Ken Rathburn
David Shumate

Contributing Editors

Mark Minnick
Layton Talbert

Design

Mike Moreau

President

Kevin Schaal

Executive Officers

Gordon Dickson
Chairman

Taigen Joos
Vice Chairman

Bud Steadman
Secretary

Michael Privett
Treasurer

Executive Board

Ron Allen
Mike Asher
James Baker
Earl Barnett
Dave Byford
Robert Condict
Jeff Davis
Roger Duvall
Ken Endean
Tony Facenda
Gary Fisher
Terry Hamilton
Mike Harding
Craig Hartman
Dale Heffernan
Arin Hess
David Innes
Don Johnson
Stephen Jones
Larry Karsies
Mark Minnick
Jeff Musgrave
Larry Oats
Dave Pennington
Chuck Phelps
Kent Ramler
Matthew Recker
Stephen Russell
Dale Seaman
Will Senn
David Shumate
Ron Smith
Bud Steadman
Jeremy Sweatt
Dan Unruh
Wayne Van Gelderen
John Vaughn
Joe Willis
Doug Wright
Mike Yarborough
Aaron Young

Advisory Board

Mark Brock
Ron Ehmann
Mark Herbster
Marty Herron
Jeff Kahl
Greg Kaminski
Tavis Long
Brock Mawdesley
Bruce McAllister
Nathan Mestler
Dan Pelletier
Mike Shellman

Board Emeritus

Rick Arrowood
Charles Britt
Gerald Carlson
Ed Caughill
Walt Coles
Johnny Daniels
Collins Glenn
Phil Golden
Bill Hall
Bruce Hamilton
Bob Jones III
Tom Knauf
Peter Maruyama
Bennie Moran
Mike Moreau
Fred Moritz
Ed Nelson
Tom Nieman
Les Ollila
Wilbur Schoneweis
Bob Taylor
George Youstra

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

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

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

FrontLine Magazine

FBFI Chaplaincy Endorsing Agency

2801 Wade Hampton Blvd., Suite 115-165 • Taylors, SC 29687
(864) 268-0777

E-Mail: info@fbfi.org • www.fbfi.org

COPYRIGHT 2021 *FrontLine* Magazine. No materials may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission of the publishers. ISSN 1526-8284

FROM *the* CALL TO THE FIELD

BWM connects
local churches with
God-called church planters
and enables them
to fulfill the great
commission together.



BAPTISTWORLDMISSION.ORG

Robert Vincent

Sovereign Counsel: A Gospel-

Editor's Note: This guest column by Dr. Robert Vincent is the first in a two-part series.

Sovereign Counsel: A Gospel-Adorned Response to Civil Government (Part 1)

In a time of national and international tumult we need the New Testament's instruction guiding our responses to civil government. We may live in a unique time and setting, but the issues we face today are anticipated by Scripture. God has not left us in the dark. Three foundational truths from the mind of God grounded the biblical writers as He spoke His counsel through them.

- God's complete awareness that the nations (which He established) and the leaders of those nations (whom He ordained) constantly plot to resist Him and throw off His rule (Ps. 2:1–3).
- The supremacy and sovereignty of God over the nations (Pss. 2:4–5; 22:28) and all circumstances and situations (Pss. 103:19, 22; 47:2).
- The Kingship of Jesus Christ, God's Messiah (Ps. 2:6–12), who has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18), rules over the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5), and does so for the advantage of His body, the Church (Eph. 1:22).

Four passages provide specific, extended instruction regarding a Christian's response to civil government: Romans 13:1–7, 1 Peter 2:13–18, Titus 3:1–7, and 1 Timothy 2:1–6. These passages reveal the apostles' understanding of how Jesus' teaching should be implemented in a world very different from the theocracy of Israel. (This column will consider only the first two passages, leaving the final two passages for the next issue.)

Romans 13:1–7

Historical Context. Paul wrote Romans in the year Nero first came to power (AD 54). The capital city of the empire, where these believers lived, had been named after the pagan goddess Roma, housed the pluralistic Pantheon, and was the natural seat of imperial cult worship. A mixture of settled law and imperial decree ruled the empire.

Literary Context. After eleven glorious chapters of gospel definition, Paul depicts what a life being transformed by the gospel looks like. It is costly (12:1, "a living sacrifice") and will face significant challenges and opposition internally and externally (12:1–2). Christians will face conflict and enemies (12:17–21). Yet, a life transformed by the gospel can respond

in a way where evil is overcome by good—including in the context of civil government.

Scriptural Content. The command "be subject unto" (that is, "submit yourselves," *hupotasso*) is repeated twice (13:1, 5). Christians are to voluntarily arrange ourselves under governing authorities as God's design and obey the laws of our country, state, county, and city. We are also commanded to do good (13:3); the ways to do good can be more than obeying the law, but not less. Finally, we are to pay taxes (13:6–7) and maintain a continuous esteem for civil officers (13:7).

Paul accompanies his instruction with a unique warning against resisting civil powers; those who resist, resist those whom God has ordained (13:2), face the wrath of government (13:4), and risk a clear conscience before God (13:5). He also explains God's overriding view of government's role—government is the gracious provision of God for the good of society to execute right and justice, to promote good and punish evil (13:4).

Reasoning. Paul bases his command to submit on theology, on what is true about God. He does not call for worship of government but a right theology of government—a look at the establishment of government from God's perspective. Jesus declared that Pilate had no authority over Him unless it had been given to him from above (John 19:11). Paul reiterates this teaching, noting that all authority is established by God (13:1). The very same God who has ordained the gospel has ordained human government (13:1–2), appointing its ministers (calling them His ministers three times in 13:4, 6). God ordains fallen leaders to govern fallen men.

1 Peter 2:13–18

Historical Context. Peter writes to saints scattered throughout Asia Minor who are suffering displacement and persecution for their faith. The setting is a full decade after Paul wrote Romans. Nero is still in power, and his sordid character and erratic, impulsive decision-making are now far better known. Believers are experiencing some level of heightened, painful government intrusion into their affairs—they are distressed under varied and fiery trials that are testing their faith (1:6–7). Tempted to think this was strange, they are counseled otherwise by Peter (4:12). Peter highlights the reality that when government is at its worst, believers may have our greatest opportunities to shine.

Literary Context. The verses immediately before (2:9–12) and immediately after (2:18ff) bookend Peter's counsel by declaring the power of gospel transformation through sanctified lives. A right perspective on our role in society is foundational—we are strangers and foreigners here on earth (2:11) and bondslaves to God Himself (2:16). Our highest allegiance and greatest duty are to Him.

Adorned Response to Civil Government (Part 1)

Scriptural Content. Peter declares that his counsel is the will of God (2:15). He reiterates Paul's command (submit, *hupotasso*, 2:13), demonstrating that he understood Christ's teaching as Paul did. Paul focused on submission to the rulers themselves, Peter on the ordinances of those individuals (2:13). Peter also reasserts our need to honor civil authority (2:17).

Peter understands differing levels of civil government (2:13–14), and even concedes that rulers may be foolish (2:15). Like Paul in Romans, Peter captures the purpose of government: punishment for evildoers and the praise of those who do right (2:14).

Out of the four NT passages, Peter alone presents the powerful influence of respectful submission, which can silence foolish men (2:15). It provides for us an opportunity not to retaliate sin with sin, particularly sins of speech (2:21–23). As Solomon counseled, we are not to curse the king, even in our thoughts (Eccles. 10:20). Respectful submission reminds us of our need to keep entrusting ourselves to Him who judges righteously (2:23) rather than those who judge falsely. It enables us to bear sin against us with the hope that others will come to live to righteousness (2:24). Such circumstances constrain us to focus on the “the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (3:4), much in the same way would a wife who struggles to submit to a disobedient husband. We are called to excellent behavior, a powerful salting influence in the earth that may cause both rulers and Gentiles (2:12) to glorify God.

Reasoning. Though his counsel is the same as Paul's in Romans, Peter's rationale is different. He reminds us that we were called for a purpose, implying that submission often involves suffering (2:19ff). Indeed, Christ's own submission to being falsely accused through the channels of civil government involved suffering. In those circumstances, Christ modeled a sinless response. He did not retaliate sinfully, but He continually entrusted Himself to His Father's righteous verdicts (2:21–23).

Additional Considerations

We must submissively obey. But is this unqualified? Other passages help. We also learn that we submissively and respectfully disobey when we must, as the disciples asserted before the Sanhedrin (a civil-religious institution) when forbidden to preach in Jesus' name (Acts 5:29). Jesus had explicitly commanded them to preach this message in this way (cf. Luke 24:47). They obeyed God and were willing to suffer any consequences imposed on them for doing so. Scripture contains other examples where people chose to obey God rather than men.

Sometimes when disobeying submissively, we may be permitted to give a respectful explanation of our reasons, as it did for the three Hebrew men who would not bow to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:16–18). When Jesus' disciples could not yield to the restriction of the Sanhedrin, they were able to give an explanation (Acts 5:29–32), but it initially seemed only to make matters worse: the Sanhedrin intended to put them to death (Acts 5:33). The midwives, when examined by Pharaoh for their failure to kill Hebrew infants at birth, had opportunity to explain their decision. Their answer seems to convey a tactic they employed strategically—to be slow to attend the expectant mothers at the time of birth, so that when they arrived, the babies were already born (Exod. 1:19).

Sometimes the wisest response to interrogation may be to offer no answer. When Jesus stood before “that fox” Herod (Luke 23:6–12), Herod questioned Him at some length; stunningly Jesus did not answer a single question. We know nothing about the nature of Herod's questions; but the questions themselves, the way they were asked, or the character of the one asking guided Jesus to say nothing. This is a direct contrast to Jesus' encounter with Pilate, which at moments turned into powerful conversation (John 18:33ff). When Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin they asked Him questions about His disciples and about His teaching. Jesus seems to have selectively answered, focusing on the more important question about His teaching and omitting any discussion of His disciples that could have endangered them (John 18:19–21).

Sometimes the wisest course may be to appeal for justice or entreat for an alternative. Paul respectfully appeals to Caesar as a higher earthly authority than Festus (Acts 25:9–12). Standing trial for unsubstantiated charges, Paul has a righteous defense. Festus is motivated primarily to do the Jews a political favor (24:27; 25:3), a favoritism that distorts justice by removing its proverbial blindfold (Prov. 17:15): he proposes that the trial continue in a venue favorable to the Jews (Jerusalem). Paul replies that (as a Roman citizen) he is already in the proper court: he is willing to suffer death if guilty, but if the Jews' charges against him are invalid, he should not be handed over to them for trial. Consequently, he appeals to Caesar. Daniel respectfully appeals to the commander of the officials—a lower earthly authority than the king—when confronted with a course contrary to God's will (Dan. 1:11–13). In doing so, Daniel found an alternative that accomplished the king's objective even better than the king's plan and that allowed him to keep his conscience clear.

Dr. Robert Vincent is assistant pastor of Education and Outreach at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

“Me? An Example?”

Jim Tillotson

Eight years into my ministry as the senior pastor of Meadowlands Baptist Church, we had a leadership shortage. We were a growing first-generation Christian congregation, but we did not have enough deacons or Sunday school teachers.

As I sought help to understand why, an older pastor challenged me to look back over the past several years and see who had taken most of my time. To my surprise, I had spent most of my time with people who were no longer in our church. They were quick to demand my help, but slow to follow biblical counseling. I realized that I had been giving my time and energy to the wrong people. Someone has said a disciple is a learner, one who attaches to a teacher in order to learn a trade or a subject.

There are those in every church who have bought into the Spock ethic—“Live long and prosper.” However, there are also those in every church who want to be discipled. The Bible is clear: we are to go and make disciples. We need more Pauls who challenge those around them to “follow me as I follow Christ.”

We all generally want to imitate or follow someone. Junior high students look up to high school students. High school students look up to college students. Children look up to parents. Young married couples look up to happy old married couples. New parents look up to seasoned parents. New business leaders look up to successful business leaders. New Christians look up to mature Christians.

We naturally look for someone to follow. Some feel that discipleship happens by giving a lecture and their favorite verse is Hebrews 13:17. Yet the example and command in the New Testament teach life-touching-life discipleship. Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:3, and the example of Christ and His disciples would bear that out.

If you have ever worked on a puzzle, you know the most important part is the picture. In fact, without a picture it is almost impossible to put together. God wants you to be a picture for someone. God desires every Christian to be seeking to disciple someone. Puritan Thomas Brooks said,

Example is the most powerful rhetoric. A person’s life is their most powerful message and must reinforce what he says or he may as well not say it. If example does not follow advice, the one giving it will rightly be viewed as a hypocrite.

If you want to disciple your family, your employees, a younger Christian, 1 Timothy 4:12–13 gives some great guidance.

We should be an example . . .

In Word.

Ephesians 4:29. Be an example of honest, encouraging speech. Are people encouraged and edified after spending time with you?

In Conduct.

People tend to follow how a man lives—the picture they see—far more than what they say. So you must be available to be seen. Discipleship takes time. It takes time to really get to know someone and for the other person to get to know you. A pastor cannot do all of his discipleship from the pulpit or in the boardroom. It is why part of the qualifications of a pastor tell us he must be given to hospitality and a lover of good men.

In Love.

Biblical love involves self-sacrificing service on behalf of others regardless of how one feels. Mistakes will be made. A good discipler will lovingly correct and encourage. A poor one will be harsh and “do it myself” from then on, which will limit the ministry. A study of Jesus and Peter will be a good example of how it should be done.

In Spirit.

This describes passion. Are you as passionate about God as you are sports, movies, work, shopping, etc.? The people you are discipling will know which is first.

In Faith.

The idea here is faithfulness. The picture has to stay the same to be helpful. We need examples of men and women who are committed to the right things for a lifetime. Hard is not bad, hard is just hard. Enduring hardness and being long-suffering are what inspire those who are following you.

In Purity.

This refers to being an example of purity in both actions and the intentions of the heart. Unless you are stronger than Samson, smarter than Solomon, and better at seeking after God’s own heart than David, then you need to be careful. May we all look for someone faithful we can pour our lives into and be an example in these areas.

Outlive Your Life

"He outlived his life."

Those words were recently said at the memorial service of a dear friend and church staff member. The meaning is obvious. His legacy will go on even though he is not with us physically anymore. The mentoring spirit he had will continue reaping benefits in those he discipled. His memory may fade eventually, but lessons learned from his life will not.

My mind parked on this thought for days after that service. What am I doing now so that I will outlive my life? What have I accomplished that will last? Who am I influencing for God that will carry on when I'm not here?

I'm serving as a pastor's wife, but are my motives pure or is it just duty? I stay involved in music ministry, but is my goal to bring glory to myself or to God? I love helping people, but as I serve them, am I really "helping" to connect for the sake of the gospel, or am I doing it for the earthly enjoyment and reward?

When thinking biblically, we will focus on the fact that our treasure and legacy are not earthly, but eternal, heavenly—and rightly so. This gives hope when ministry seems fruitless and actions here on earth go unnoticed. We are reminded to look to our eternal reward and wait with anticipation for God's heavenly approval instead of craving the applause of man in this temporal life. However, we often forget that because God is a relational God and has created us with relationship possibilities and responsibilities, we do indeed need to live in a way that is not forgotten, at least by those close to us during the time God allows us to live. Our influence—ultimately our Christian testimony—will either be remembered positively or negatively long after we are gone.

The Gift of Memory

Proverbs 10:7 states, "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." Memory. What a gift that is from God. Because God has created us with the cognitive ability to remember, our thinking processes allow us to focus in on past events, lessons, blessings, and, yes, people.

God's Word is a biographical wonder of stories to remember. People whose lives are described "for our learning" in a living, eternal book breathed out by God reiterate the importance of Proverbs 10:7. Throughout Scripture, we see true stories of real people who are either memorialized as

blessed or wicked. We read of men such as Lot who pursued godlessness and endured the ramifications of those decisions (despite being declared just and righteous in 2 Peter 2). We see wisdom clearly applied in lives like Joseph's, who, despite circumstances, left a blessed legacy of trusting God. Stories like Jonah's encourage us that, even though we fail and rebel against God, His grace and mercy are always available to turn our direction completely around.

What Story Will You Leave?

Everyone loves a good story! Social media has brought with it a reinvented (although perhaps sometimes scarily addictive) avenue of keeping up with others' lives. Millions of biographies fill shelves of bookstores and carts on Amazon. Documentaries regarding every subject are available to view 24/7.

As Christians, though, believers in an eternal, righteous God, are we seeking to leave a story that others will remember as blessed? Are our lives compelling for Him? Do people, in a way, read our story and sense the need to know God more? What about us will live on? Living eternally is obviously our goal, for this short vapor of life that we have will not last. We know that. But how often do we really seek to live right so that our memory will be blessed? This is not so that we receive the glory, but that God receives the glory and then the fire of living a life completely for Him is passed on to the next generation and those left behind. What an incredible thing to have it said of us that we have outlived our lives when God calls us home!

Friend, if your goal is to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," there is no limit to how God can use your life! If that isn't your desire, why isn't it? At the dawning of this new year, why not ask God to use you on a much deeper level in the lives of those around you?

Outlive your life. Your memory will be blessed!

Krista Sivnksty and her husband, Todd, started in youth ministry and then were in full-time evangelism for almost eighteen years before God led him to the pastorate. Todd is the senior pastor of Berean Baptist in Lilburn, Georgia. Krista is involved in music, counseling, and ladies' ministries and love being a pastor's wife!



Recovery and Grace

Our twenty-seven-year-old son, Nathaniel, a 2016 graduate of The Citadel and an Army Reservist, was in a horrific car accident while out Christmas shopping on Thursday, 29 November 2018. About six weeks before this event my oldest sister, Valerie, had died from complications with diabetes. And on the Saturday morning after Nat's accident, I received a phone call from my youngest sister informing me that our dad, who had been hospitalized earlier that week, had passed away.

Traumatic Brain Injury and Paralysis

A few hours later the doctors took Nat off sedation and waited for him to wake up. When he remained unconscious, the neurosurgeon informed us that he thought that Nat had suffered a traumatic brain injury. In the days that followed we learned that Nat had actually suffered a severe diffuse axonal injury traumatic brain injury. There were about thirty-six points of injury, ranging in size from pinpricks to apple seeds, scattered all over his brain with concentrations on the left side and around the brain stem. The doctors also informed us that Nat was not just unconscious; he was in a light coma.

At first we didn't know if Nat would survive because of neurological storms that drove his body temperature up to 105 degrees and his heart rate up to 180 BPM. The initial prognosis indicated that Nat could remain in a persistent vegetative state for the rest of his life.

On 9 January 2019 Nat moved to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, one of the top ten brain and spinal hospitals in America. When he began to emerge from his coma, we realized that he was completely paralyzed on his right side. He had to relearn how to swallow, speak, and even the simplest tasks. He remained at the Shepherd Center for about five months, making very slow progress, after which he was discharged on 4 June 2019 and moved to the short-term section of a local nursing home, where he continued therapy to prepare for his move home and start of outpatient therapy. On 5 September 2019, about nine months after his accident, Nat finally came home.

Currently, Nat is not competent to make his own medical, financial, or life decisions. His mom, BethAnne, and I have temporary guardianship until he becomes competent. He also requires 24/7 assistance for all of his daily living tasks.

Amnesia and Memory

Nat's long-term memory is about one hundred percent, but he suffers from post-traumatic amnesia (PTA). His retrograde PTA (up to three years before the accident) is improving, and so is his anterograde PTA (from the accident forward). His short-term memory is also improving, and he is now able to track the day of the week and the date. He also has double vision because of damage to one of the cranial nerves that connects his left eye to the base of the brain. He can walk a little but needs assistance because of the lack of standing bal-



ance caused by his vision problem. Nat is improving weekly in his abilities to swallow, speak, and read.

We have seen God's provision, power, healing, grace, and working in our lives. Help, finances, equipment, and benefits have come to us from so many sources. Our church family at Layton Chapel Baptist Church, Spring Lake, North Carolina, has been an integral part of supporting us with prayers, encouragement, meals, and finances. God is using our situation to increase our faith, mold us, and prepare us for future ministry. We are not sure how far Nat will be able to progress in his recovery, but we are trusting God and asking Him to give Nat an independent life.

Nat has enough awareness that he saw the need to rededicate his life to Christ, as did his girlfriend, Kat, and she is still a part of Nat's life, hoping and praying that they will be able to resume their plans for marriage. Nat is very motivated and works hard every day to achieve his goals: (1) recovery, (2) service with the US State Department, (3) marriage, (4) motivational speaking, and (5) walking the line at the Citadel.



We ask that you would pray with us for Nat's recovery and God's grace in our lives as we continue this difficult journey.

CH (MAJ) Drew Paul is a USAR Chaplain on active duty orders with Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He has been serving there since 1 October 2016. Before serving as a Chaplain, Drew and BethAnne Paul were church planting missionaries in Australia from 1991-2011.



ESCAPE INSIGNIFICANCE. IMPACT ETERNITY.



COME. LEARN. ENGAGE. GROW.



INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST
COLLEGE AND SEMINARY



1-800-IBC-4858



info@ibcs.edu



ibcs.edu



Strength Is Not in Numbers but in the Lord

Throughout the Scriptures we see the great power of the Lord manifested in small groups and even in single individuals.

The Lord said in Leviticus 26:7–8, “And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.”

He declared to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 7:23–24, “But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them.” What a profound impact and encouragement this must have made upon the Lord’s people!

We see the strength of the Lord also revealed in the life of Gideon. In Judges 7 God was going to destroy the Midianites. Gideon had an army of 32,000 men. In verse 3, God told Gideon to relay this message: “Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.” Then the Lord instructed Gideon to take the ten thousand that were left down to the water. He said in verses 5–6, “So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.” Now notice what the Lord said in verse 7: “By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.” Ninety-seven hundred men went home! Now, when you break down the

numbers from 32,000 to three hundred men, it seems like an impossible situation. But the odds are in the Lord’s favor—no one goes to war against the Lord and wins! Exodus 14:14 declares, “The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Romans 8:31 says, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Deuteronomy 11:4 shows how God’s power destroyed the whole Egyptian army: “And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; hath destroyed them unto this day.” Then look what the Lord’s powerful strength did to the Assyrian army. In 2 Kings 19 we read that the king of Assyria declared war against Hezekiah, the king of Judah. But look at what happened to Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in verses 34–35: “For I [God] will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.” What a God He is! What power God can demonstrate through just a few people or even one individual. This truth ought to greatly encourage all of God’s people.

Psalm 27:1 says, “The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 46:1 states, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Philippians 4:13 declares, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” I trust the Lord will help you to always depend upon His strength as you live for Him.

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

say yes

TO SEMINARY TRAINING AT MBU

You can earn a master's or doctorate from Maranatha Baptist Seminary without leaving the people, places, and ministry that you love. Work from the church office or home office. Enroll in a course and join class live—or wait and watch later. You'll receive biblical training from professors who have years of experience shepherding local churches and serving others around the world.



MARANATHA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Maranatha Baptist University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.
www.hlcommission.com | 312.263.0456

Any class. Anytime. Anywhere.

APPLY ONLINE AT **MBU.EDU/SEMINARY**
OR CALL **920.206.2324** TO LEARN MORE

**Fundamental Baptist
Fellowship International**

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

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

Return Service Requested



BJU SEMINARY
PROCLAIM. SERVE. ADVANCE.

Enhanced Biblical Counseling programs

Graduate certificate • Master's degree • Master of Divinity • Doctor of Ministry

Plan your next step! **seminary.bju.edu**

Available by livestream, online and module