

THE VALUE OF BIBLE SOFTWARE FOR MINISTRY • TECHNOLOGY: SLAVE OR MASTER? • MINISTRY THROUGH CHURCH WEBSITES

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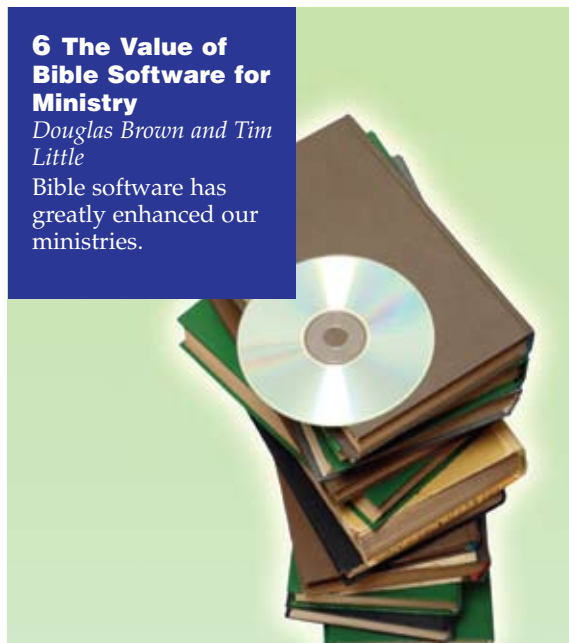
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We are grateful to Dr. Michael Yarborough for his editorial assistance with this edition of *FrontLine*.

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You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.

My March/April 2008 [issue] came yesterday, and I have read the articles on the persecuted church. We heard Brother John Hutcheson at our missionary conference last year. It indeed caused me to pray for fellow believers in our persecuted churches around the world.

My favorite area is the articles in *Sound Words*,

which I pull out and put . . . in a binder for quick reference.

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New Technology—Timeless Truth

John C. Vaughn

A few months ago I used up the last of an old roll of film—yes, film—by taking a picture of my grandchildren. When they said, “Let me see!” I tried to explain there was nothing to see yet. They couldn’t understand what was wrong with my camera. I have a digital camera now, but it’s old already. I watch hurried folks walking by with their thumbs in a blur as they send text messages in airport concourses, but for me, “instant message” is an oxymoron. Those of us who are on the trailing edge of the leading edge of technology wonder if we will ever catch up. We mumble, “Well, I don’t actually have a website,” when asked for the link.

My peers and I poke fun at ourselves about our techno-limitations, but we are trying to learn. We honestly do appreciate those who are techno-savvy, and we are especially thankful for those with the patience to explain to us how to use our gadgets. We know that there are easier and faster ways to do some of the tasks we do, but many of us are at the point in life where we have so many obligations and relationships to maintain that it is a challenge to find the down time to get up to speed. The front cover of this magazine proclaims, “*FrontLine: Bringing the Truth Home.*” New tools can help us do that.

In this issue is an article by Dr. Randy Jaeggli that accurately inter-

prets Proverbs 18:24. His main point is illustrated by a preacher’s passionate application of a misinterpreted verse. Maybe that preacher was you, but I have to wonder if it was me. If so, it was a long time ago, and thankfully my understanding of the verse has improved. Dr. Jaeggli was kind not to have named whoever it was; many of us are thankful that our early errors were not published more widely. His article also references the value of the Qumran manuscript 1QIs^a which verified the reliability of the Masoretic Text. Now, here your humble editor is after three decades of preaching, and I can honestly report to you a remarkable occurrence of three recent events related to Dr. Jaeggli’s article.

The first is that through the marvel of modern publishing, I continue to benefit from the scholarship of others—I even get to read the articles first! The second is that on a visit to Israel in May, we followed President Bush through the Shrine of the Book by mere hours. Dr. Craig Hartman and I laid eyes on a magnificent scroll displayed for the president’s visit. Not the facsimile we had always seen before, mind you, but the actual scroll! Yes, right before us, in plain view, lay the very thing: 1QIs^a!

Thirty years ago, in my days of passionate preaching based on the passionate preaching of others, I would have had no idea what I was looking

at or what its significance was. When I finally saw it, I was prepared to appreciate it. But, the third event, and no small achievement this one, is that my daughter Becky showed me how to put the little “a” in 1QIs^a so I could write it in this article. Without that “small step for a man,” these comments on information technology’s “giant leap for mankind” would be poorly illustrated.

Many of us remember hearing Neil Armstrong speak those words about “steps and leaps” on July 21, 1969, as he, the first man ever to do so, set foot on the moon. We had wondered for years, “Do you think man will ever go to the moon?” And then it happened! Advances since then have come at a staggering pace. The Lunar Module Computer is reported to have had 74kb of memory that had been literally hard wired, with about 4kb of something resembling RAM. Today, and I literally mean “today” because it could change tomorrow, there is a 6GB memory card available for a cell phone! Your search engine can find all these facts in seconds, of course.

Knowledge comes quickly, but wisdom usually takes time. Consider the wisdom in the verse that Dr. Jaeggli explains. “The man of casual friends is about to ruin himself,” gives warning to the man who publishes his passionate views as widely as is possible today. We would be wise to remember that “there is a very close friend who manifests more loyalty than a brother.” Let’s not forget that it takes a lifetime to have a lifelong friend. We welcome new tools but we will always need timeless truth.

The front cover of this magazine proclaims, “FrontLine: Bringing the Truth Home.” New tools can help us do that.

The Value of Bible Software for Ministry

Never before has there been a more exciting time to study the Word of God. Resources that at one time were available to only a privileged few are now available to anyone with a computer. Over the last two decades Bible software has made incredible leaps in providing students of the Word of God with powerful tools for exegesis. Both of the authors of this article have used Bible software programs extensively in our education, teaching, and church ministries. Barely a day goes by when we are not using our respective research programs for classes, sermon and lesson preparation, scholarly research, or simply for devotions. Without equivocation, Bible software has greatly enhanced our ministries and enabled us to study the Scriptures more efficiently.

This article falls into two parts. First, why use Bible software? And second, we'll offer guidance on two programs that we use and recommend—Accordance and BibleWorks.

Why Use Bible Software?

Benefits

(1) Efficiency. The number-one reason that every student of the Word of God should invest in a Bible software program is that it saves time. Anyone who knows how to do solid exegesis is aware that it takes a lot of time and energy. Good pastors and teachers really do labor in the Word (1 Tim. 5:17). Using quality Bible software does not cut this process short; instead it enables pastors to do exegesis in a more efficient manner.

(2) Accessibility. Closely related to efficiency is the benefit of accessibility. Most pastors who have taken Greek and/or Hebrew own lexicons, concordances, grammars, and dictionaries (or at least they should!). The reality is that while they have these volumes on their shelves, it is difficult to use them regularly. Bible software enables you to access the best exegetical resources with the ease of pointing, clicking, and dragging your mouse. Tasks that might take hours manually are suddenly reduced to minutes electronically. Research programs integrate lexicons and dictionaries right into the text, encouraging you toward deeper study. This kind of user-friendliness encourages the exegete to use better sources. In addition, a quality program will add to your library some of the more essential exegetical tools that you may currently lack.



**OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES
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STUDENTS OF THE WORD OF GOD
WITH POWERFUL TOOLS
FOR EXEGESIS.**

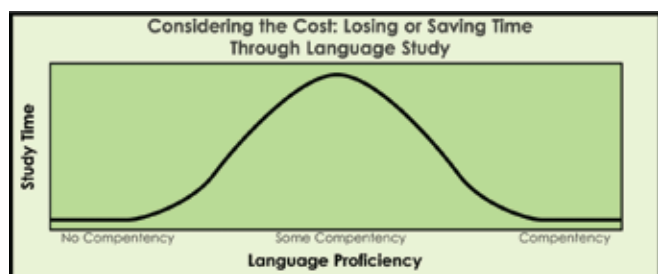
(3) Proficiency. Pastors and missionaries should invest in a Bible program because it enables them to keep studying the Biblical languages. All too often pastors come back to Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary and confess that they no longer possess the ability to read Greek or Hebrew. After investing countless hours of study in these languages and a small fortune in tuition and books, they find themselves asking, “Was it all for naught?” Why do college and seminary graduates forsake their study of the languages? The reason is often that using and maintaining the languages consumes too much time and energy. A powerful program such as Accordance or BibleWorks can help students of the Word maintain or even revive their Biblical languages skills.

(4) Portability. This final reason does not apply to everyone, but it nevertheless demands attention. Because Bible software can be loaded onto a laptop, it is possible for ministers on the go to study and exegete virtually anywhere. Imagine missionaries on the deputation trail far from a study or library preparing sermons with the very best exegetical tools at their disposal. If portability is important to you, it is worth noting that several commentary sets and dictionaries are available in electronic format with some Bible programs. We will say more about this later.

Cautions

(1) Bible software cannot replace language study. Nothing can replace a real knowledge of a language. We do not want someone to be deceived into thinking that buying a quality Bible program can somehow replace the study of Greek or Hebrew. Those with little or no language training can benefit from Bible software. If the user is a novice without firsthand knowledge of the Biblical languages and training in hermeneutics and exegesis, Bible software can actually be quite dangerous.¹ The bottom line is that these programs will be more useful to those who have had at least a year of Greek or Hebrew than they will be to those who have not.

(2) Bible software may deter language proficiency. Ironically, while a Bible program can be an excellent aid, it can also become a crutch, hindering students from learning Biblical Greek and Hebrew. Because it is so easy to parse verbs, decline nouns, and translate inflected terms using Bible software, students may come to rely on their program instead of going through the rigors of learning the language. Learning a language is hard work, and for most students Bible software may become a temptation that can cut the learning process short. For this reason, the language instructors at FBBC&TS are cautious about how students use Bible software during their first year in Greek and Hebrew.



There is often a direct correlation between one's proficiency in the Biblical languages and the time it takes to

prepare for sermons and lessons (see chart). The more proficient you become in the languages, the more time you will ultimately save in preparation. Conversely, those without any language training often spend less time in preparation simply because they do not use any Greek or Hebrew tools. Those with some training (e.g., first-year Greek or Hebrew students) usually end up spending more time in preparation; they see the value of using the original languages but are not yet capable of using them efficiently. Most language students get “over the hump” of competency sometime during their second or third year of language studies. There is no way that Bible software alone can produce this kind of proficiency.

(3) Bible software promotes electronic books rather than printed books. While the electronic format of books has some appeal, both of us prefer reading books in print rather than on the computer. As a result, we will both continue to purchase commentaries in book form. The current trend with some software programs, however, is to publish commentaries and dictionaries in electronic format. This is true especially of Logos, the other well-known Microsoft Windows-based Bible software program. Since the design of BibleWorks and Accordance is more for exegesis, they provide mostly exegetical reference tools rather than a complete library.² Another potential problem with purchasing books in electronic format is that technology and media are continually changing. Programs that “read” electronic books are always improving and could eventually render certain electronic formats obsolete. We seriously doubt that books in print will ever go the way of eight-track tapes.

(4) Bible software requires a certain level of computer literacy. We have both noticed that some people who purchase Bible software never take the time to learn how to use it. No matter what program you choose, you need to realize that it will take some time and effort to grasp how to utilize effectively each program's capabilities (as is the case with any computer program). Some pastors will inevitably never use Bible software simply because they have a limited aptitude in using the computer, or perhaps because they would feel uncomfortable changing their study habits. Make no mistake, there is a learning curve for using any Bible software. In fact, we are still discovering new ways to use our respective programs.

Choosing the Right Bible Software: A Closer Look at BibleWorks and Accordance

There are numerous Bible software programs available to students of God's Word. We will raise three basic factors to consider in choosing the right program for your circumstances. First, consider the cost. For the most part, you get what you pay for, because most of the databases for Biblical research (e.g., various Bible translations, lexicons, and dictionaries) are available to any software maker. While some of the databases are public domain and are therefore free, other databases cost money. The price of the software usually reflects the kinds of databases that the software producer includes with the program.

Another factor that distinguishes programs is the actual program that accesses the databases—its interface and search engine. Features to look for include ease of use, search

capabilities, flexibility, and support. Personal preferences (such as Macintosh vs. PC) also come into play at this point.

Finally, consider how the software producer markets the program. Some Bible programs appeal to the masses through lower cost, basic tools, and a few popular translations; often no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew is needed. If you have little or no training in the Biblical languages, you may want to consider E-Sword. This is a free program that has several translations, some good research tools, and a basic search engine.³ At the other end of the spectrum are BibleWorks and Accordance. They advertise themselves as premiere software for exegesis and research. While there is an attempt to appeal to laypeople, it is clear that their focus is exegetes who are serious about studying the original languages. Someone without any language training could use BibleWorks and Accordance in a limited way but would not be able to employ all their powerful features.

The two programs most commonly used by the faculty and students at FBBC&TS are BibleWorks and Accordance. In the following section, we will highlight some of the similarities and differences of these two programs.

Similar Features

(1) Word studies. While Accordance and BibleWorks function in different ways, they are capable of performing many of the same tasks. By simply dragging your mouse over tagged terms you can parse instantaneously and use lexicons such as BDAG, Louw-Nida, HALOT, and BDB.⁴ After selecting a default lexicon, you can read the lexical entry for any term by simply touching the cursor on the term.

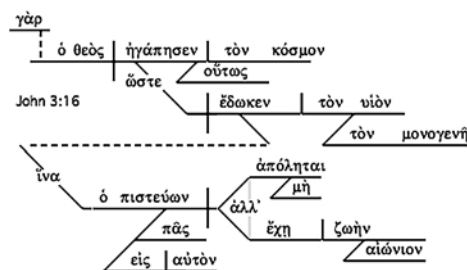
Integrating the lexicons with the Biblical text is a wonderful time saver. For example, in a Greek class here at Faith the students are required to look up and record the definitions of several terms in Ephesians 1:1–14 in the standard Greek-English lexicon, BDAG. Students who complete this assignment manually spend an average of four hours, while students who use Accordance or BibleWorks often finish in less than an hour.

(2) Lexical and grammatical searches. Beyond using the lexicons, you can conduct simple word and phrase searches in the original languages or any English version in all or just part of the Bible. For example, perhaps you are looking for the phrase “root of bitterness,” but you cannot remember where to find it. After choosing a search version, let’s say the NKJV, you can type in all or part of the phrase in the search engine and quickly discover that it occurs in Hebrews 12:15. Now your attention shifts to the term *root*. Either by using Strong’s numbering system (for those with no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew) or through your own knowledge of Greek, you can search for all the instances of *rhiza* (the Greek term meaning “root”) in the New Testament. In under a second you find that *rhiza* occurs seventeen times in sixteen different verses. At this point, you can investigate each passage to discover any parallel uses of the term that might shed light on Hebrews 12:15. This kind of research is invaluable in understanding a term’s semantic range—all the different ways Biblical authors use a term.

Both Accordance and BibleWorks are also capable of doing complex lexical and grammatical searches and anal-

yses. Their respective search engines use the same databases (morphologically tagged texts) to find grammatical and syntactical relationships. Here is a practical example. In a Pastoral Epistles course offered at FBTS students were required to write a philosophy of pastoral ministry based on the imperatives Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus. Without Bible software, a student would have to hunt for the commands verse by verse. With BibleWorks or Accordance, however, a student could easily isolate the imperatives by taking some specific steps. First, you must limit your search to just the Pastoral Epistles; next, you must select a morphologically tagged text as your search version (this is how the search engine finds inflected meaning); last, you need to search for verbs in the imperative mood. The results of the search show that there are ninety imperatives in the Pastorals. These kinds of lexical and grammatical searches are incredible; they are limited only by your creativity and expertise. The powerful search engines in BibleWorks and Accordance are the single most important feature that separates them from lesser programs like E-Sword.

(3) Sentence diagrams. Both BibleWorks and Accordance have sentence diagramming tools that enable the exegete to display graphically the grammar and syntax of a passage. Many pastors find this step invaluable in sermon preparation. A sentence diagram shows the thought flow of the Biblical author and helps the exegete distinguish the central ideas of a passage from the subordinate ideas.



(4) Multiple version displays. Both programs allow you to display multiple versions simultaneously in a variety of formats. For example, you can create and display your own customized parallel Bible based on any version available. In addition, both are capable of importing text into word-processing programs such as Microsoft Word—a very helpful feature for writing papers, sermons, and lessons.

Differing Features

(1) Platform. Perhaps the greatest difference between these two programs is that Accordance runs on Macintosh (Mac) whereas BibleWorks runs on Windows (PC). Emulators are available, allowing Accordance to run on a PC, and vice versa, but the performance is not as stellar as in the native environment.

(2) User-friendliness. In most reviews, user-friendliness clearly favors Accordance, as is the case with most Mac products. Loyal Accordance users tend to emphasize user-friendliness as a key selling point. Some students at Faith have actually switched from BibleWorks to Accordance because of this very feature. The new interface in BibleWorks 7, however, is now more intuitive and

easier to use than earlier versions have been. To enhance user-friendliness, BibleWorks has also produced some very helpful tutorials and has excellent customer support. Concerning Accordance's tutorials, a training seminar DVD to help consumers use its more powerful features has just become available.

(3) Cost. Stated simply, Accordance users usually spend more money than those who use BibleWorks. The structure of how you purchase the programs is entirely different. BibleWorks is available for a set fee of \$350. What you receive for your money is very impressive: over ninety translations (including KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, NET Bible, NLT, plus many foreign translations), Greek and Hebrew texts (including UBS4, NA27, Majority Text, Textus Receptus, BHS, and LXX), and an array of lexicons and reference tools.⁵ New in BibleWorks 7 are helpful features such as integrated satellite maps, sentence diagrams of the entire NT, audio Greek and Hebrew flashcards, and advanced grammar and textual criticism resources. There are more resources ("modules") available (BDAG, LSJ, HALOT, etc.) for additional fees, but the bulk of the program is acquired in the initial purchase.⁶

Accordance, on the other hand, is completely a modular program. The program itself is just \$39, but it includes very little (only KJV and ASV). Most of the resources in BibleWorks are also available in Accordance but must be purchased individually. With Accordance you purchase the modules that you desire and build the program the way you want it. This is a great feature of Accordance because you purchase only the tools that you will use. Starting out, most people spend \$200 to \$400. After the initial purchase, as your studies take you in different directions, you can purchase the tools that suit your specific needs. Some modules for Accordance are not currently available in BibleWorks (e.g., NIDNTT, NIDOTTE, IVP Library, etc.) and vice-versa (e.g., BDF, EDNT, etc.).⁷

Conclusion

Bible software is a wonderful tool for the church today. If used properly it can enhance and strengthen the ministry of those who "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). In his final charge to Timothy, Paul commands him to "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:1, 2). Foundational to this chief charge is the task of faithful exegesis of the Scriptures—solid exegesis precedes relevant exposition. While Bible software can never replace the rigors of linguistic study or a real knowledge of the exegetical method, it can assist and enable contemporary expositors of God's Word to fulfill Paul's imperative in a more efficient manner. We hope this article will help you decide whether investing in a Bible program such as Accordance or BibleWorks is right for you and your situation.

¹ For examples of typical exegetical mistakes see D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).

² For a helpful and technical discussion of various Bible software programs for Windows, see H. Van Dyke Parunak, "Windows Software for Bible Study," *JETS* 46 (2003): 465–95. He concludes that "Logos Library is the leader for users whose primary need is access to recently published electronic books," but that "for serious students of the original languages, the robustness, speed, and flexibility of BibleWorks' searching capabilities make it the clear choice" (495). For a positive review of Logos Library see Andy Naselli, "Review of the Scholar's Library: Gold, Version 3 by Logos Bible Software," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 11 (2006): 151–60.

BIBLE SOFTWARE IS A WONDERFUL TOOL FOR THE CHURCH TODAY. IF USED PROPERLY IT CAN ENHANCE AND STRENGTHEN THE MINISTRY OF THOSE WHO "RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH" (2 TIM. 2:15).

³ You can download and use E-Sword free of charge at www.e-sword.net.

⁴ BDAG is the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.), by W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. Louw-Nida refers to the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2nd ed.) by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. "HALOT" stands for *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. BDB is the *Hebrew-Aramaic and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. Briggs.

⁵ UBS4 (United Bible Society) and NA27 (Nestle/Aland) are editions of the Greek NT. BHS (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) is the Hebrew OT. LXX is the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the OT.

⁶ LSJ is *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed.) by Liddell, Scott, and Jones.

⁷ NIDNTT is the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* by C. Brown. NIDOTTE refers to the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* by W. VanGemeren. IVP Library is made up of several valuable and useful dictionaries. BDF is the *Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* by Blass, Debrunner, and Funk. And EDNT is the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* by Balz and Schneider. For more complete and up-to-date information, visit their web pages: www.bibleworks.com and www.accordance-bible.com.

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Technology: Slave or Master?



Shaun Walker

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines technology as “the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, esp. in industry.” I smiled as I read the words “practical purposes.” Have you ever tried to use technology only to find yourself struggling to accomplish anything practical with it? With so many forms of technology and so many confusing terms and definitions, where does a person begin? Occasionally an audiovisual magazine shows up on my desk showcasing the latest technologies to be used in worship centers. Testimonials extolling the pizzazz and excitement of motorized lights and High-Def screens abound. Perhaps you have found yourself wondering what role technology should have in the gospel ministry. With words like “podcast,” “vodcast,” and “blog” increasingly becoming household terms, technology is something a church must consider.

How can a gospel ministry effectively and appropriately use technology?

A Guiding Principal

Perhaps the most practical piece of advice one should follow in considering various forms of technology is the phrase, “Technology is a great servant, but a horrible master” (Covey, Stephen R. *Focus: Achieving Your Highest Priorities*. 2003). Whatever you do, don’t use technology just because it is the “latest” or “greatest.” Use technology when it effectively and appropriately serves your larger ministerial objectives.

If you regularly find yourself serving technology instead of having it serve you, eliminate it—or at the very least educate yourself to ensure that it does serve you. If you can never get it to truly serve you, stop using it. Technology rightfully used is technology that serves. Technology used “just because” is wasted effort. Apply this principle to all areas of technology—even with things as simple as voice mail, email, and instant messaging. Whenever technology becomes a master in our lives, we are woefully upside-down. We must ever be cautious to “not be brought under the power of any” (1 Cor. 6:12). Having said that, let’s consider some ways technology can be useful in our efforts to introduce people to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Church Website

When I greet a first-time visitor my question, “How did you hear about Highlands Baptist Church?” is almost invariably answered with, “On the Internet.” Although the Yellow Pages is still a needed resource, the Internet is becoming more and more mainstream in its use for directory information. Young singles to widowed seniors alike have used the Internet to find area churches and eventually end up in our auditorium.

Because the Internet is such a go-to tool for obtaining information it is prudent for a ministry to put diligent efforts into a website. As you develop a site, make sure it is both attractive and professional. Although homespun websites can give a local church Internet exposure, the exposure is often not adorning “the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Titus 2:10). If your ministry does not have someone capable of developing an attractive and professional website, look into various professional service bureaus that specifically cater to churches. Harvest Media is one such option that immediately comes to mind. Energies invested in developing, deploying, and maintaining an attractive and

professional church website are well spent.

As you develop your website begin by identifying what you are trying to do with it. Don't try to do everything, because then you'll accomplish nothing. If you intend your website to primarily be a social portal for church members, make sure you don't ostracize the unchurched. Let your homepage function as a "launch pad" for online visitors to obtain more information about various ministries or for members to view other member-only services. Member-only services might include a directory, a blog, and a ministry calendar. All of these services can easily be set up, especially if you host your own website.

Remember, your website is an extension of the gospel ministry, so it should showcase the gospel. Furthermore, as you write content for the site, remember your audience. And finally, what you say online about your ministry should be an exact representation of what your ministry is in actuality.

Sermon Podcasting

Another amazingly useful tool is that of podcasting. Podcasting is distributing media files (i.e., audio sermons) over the Internet for playback on portable media players and computers. We have had people from nearly every corner of the globe—including China, India, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Norway, and Germany—download sermons from our podcast feed. Podcasting is a great way to widely broadcast preaching.

Originally we posted sermons online through our main website. A person would navigate to our website, locate the desired sermon, download it, and then listen to it. Before we switched to podcasting, I had to find out if a change would genuinely serve our church members better. I started asking and quickly discovered it would. Yes, there are a few people who still want a cassette tape, but the vast majority can be instructed how to use a podcast feed. For the remaining hold-outs, we do offer our sermons on CD.

Again, it's not about having the latest technology. It's all about having technology serve you. With our sermons now distributed as a podcast (via a blog), a person can automatically keep up-to-date. He can listen to a sermon online, download it for later, or instruct his computer to automatically download the latest sermons and transfer them to his iPod. (By the way, this was all done with free software on our webserver with a wordpress-powered blog.)

Video

Which would you most likely do—read a brochure or watch a video? I have found that most people prefer to watch a video. While printed material is still an essential part of the gospel ministry, video, when appropriately used, can also make an effective contribution. Instead of doing a promotional video about various church ministries and programs, we created a video that serves us as a "video brochure."

Although a church *includes* programs it is not in and of itself merely "programs." Neither is it facilities, nor is it a club existing simply to meet people's social needs. The church is people! It is a body of believers who are continually being changed from glory to glory by the power of God through the gospel. What better way to use video than to showcase changed lives through the power of knowing Jesus Christ! Yes, our video briefly touches on various

ministries (and programs) of our church, but it does so in a way that (to the best of our ability) elevates the power of the gospel as seen in changed lives.

Every guest receives a visitor packet with a DVD inside it. This includes our "video brochure" as well as a twenty-minute gospel presentation. (Both of these videos can be viewed from our website: www.hbcm.org.)

Video streaming has also served us by effectively distributing our video material. Our website has links that stream our church video brochure and Gospel Presentation System. Guests have watched our video online and decided they wanted to come visit because of what they saw. Additionally, each worship service (excluding our mid-week prayer service) is live broadcast to the Internet. A link found on our homepage gives access to this live video stream. Traveling businessmen, moms with sick children, and bedridden recovering cancer patients have all used this feature to participate in our worship services when they could not be physically present.

Video Projector

To whatever extent you decide to use a video projector in your ministry, here are some ways we have used it to advance our gospel ministry. Occasionally we will put the words of the instrumental offertory on screen for people to follow while the hymn is being played. This encourages and facilitates the listeners to be thinking about the words of the hymn. The end result is an offertory that is both edifying in music and in word even though no words were spoken.

Additionally, the video projector serves us Sunday morning. Each week the preacher creates a simple slideshow of his outline including any key texts that he doesn't plan to ask the congregation to take time to turn to during the sermon. This slideshow is then advanced by someone other than the preacher. This enables the preacher full liberty to preach and not be encumbered by running slideware. This on-screen outline (and sermon handout) assists the audience to remain actively engaged with the preached Word.

Final Caution

In your implementation and use of technology always remember technology must never replace gospel dependency. "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD" (Prov. 21:31). Technology has never spiritually changed a person nor will it. Technology will never win a soul to Christ. As "wise" as technology may appear and as "cool" as it may sound, only the gospel is the wisdom of God. Technology alone is but mere foolishness. God has omnisciently chosen to use the "foolishness" of the gospel to change lives (1 Cor. 1:17ff). We must never use technology to replace the gospel, nor should we use it to enhance the gospel. The gospel doesn't need any enhancement. Technology is merely an instrument that can be effectively used for proclaiming, broadcasting, and exalting the glory of God as found in the beautiful Person of Jesus Christ.

Shaun Walker serves as the assistant pastor at Highlands Baptist Church in Centennial, Colorado. Amongst other pastoral duties he oversees, develops, and maintains the technology needs of the ministry. To see some of the ideas discussed in this article visit the Highlands Baptist website at www.hbcm.org.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Our Lord always intended that joyfulness define the Christian life. He wanted us to enjoy life and all He gives us; however, the joyful life must have Christ at its center. Everything we do as believers must have a Biblical perspective. Time spent working or relaxing must be done to the glory of God. Every thought and every action must be considered through the prism of God’s Word. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). The Bible is not a collection of “thou shalt not,” but rather a guidebook that gives the believer wise principles to follow while warning of possible dangers. In addition, a shepherd who cares for his sheep will make every attempt to guide and protect the sheep from potential harm. Today we frequently see Christians being ruined by the effects of the Internet; hence this article, written as a note of caution, is worthy of your consideration. Please read it with an open mind. Ask the Lord to point out anything in your life that needs to change so that you may be a better servant, fit for the Master’s use.

History presents us with a glaring lesson. With every new medium, Satan eventually assumes control. This fact should not come as a surprise, since the Scriptures warn that Satan is “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). While we are blessed with the benefits of technology, we must also be aware of the potential risks and negative impact it can have on our lives as believers. Unfortunately, no one—no country, organization, or company—is in charge of the Internet, and Satan has indeed taken a firm hold on this medium. With its advent we have become deluged with information, both good and bad, at the simple click of a mouse. Research has certainly become faster and perhaps more interesting. However, along with its advantages have come immense problems. This invaluable source of information has the vast potential for pollution, tarnishing its value for everyone. Studies show that the vast majority of the Internet is contaminated with pornography, and to ignore the potential risks is both negligent and ill-advised. However, before you dismiss this article as a legalistically



A Biblical Perspective on MySpace and Facebook

Michael Gray

participating in the activity on MySpace, if the unsaved world views it as unwholesome, why would Christians desire to get as close to it as possible?

Soon an apparent “safer” alternative became available. Facebook was started in 2004 by a Harvard student and eventually included all Ivy League Schools (hotbeds for liberalism and political socialism). Facebook is now recognized nationwide, and some suggest that it is one of the top ten most visited sites on the Internet. “Facebook was named as the second most ‘in’ thing among undergraduates, tied with beer and sex and losing only to the iPod.”¹ Though Facebook has not received the negative attention of MySpace, it is certainly not without controversy: concerns have been raised recently regarding security and privacy issues. The ITS department at the University of Texas at Austin, not known for its conservatism, expressed the following concern about Facebook on its website:

It’s hard to imagine making a new friend without hearing their voice, seeing their eyes or getting a sense of their personality from body language or other visual clues. But more and more people are finding and making friends online on social networking Web sites such as MySpace and Facebook. These sites, sometimes referred to as “friend-of-a-friend” sites, allow users to build online profiles and share personal information, photographs, and opinions in order to connect with new people through established friends.

directed rant, please know that it is not written in judgment of anyone’s actions. It is a mere warning of potential dangers.

Pop culture has given way to new sites known as *social networking sites*, which provide many with the ability to communicate at unfathomable speed with anyone, at any time, and from anywhere in the world. One such site, MySpace, was introduced in 2003 and gained popularity immediately. However, it did not take long for it to become extremely controversial. Even the secular world considers MySpace to be widely contaminated by pornography and sexual predators. While it may sound harsh to say that the Christian has no place par-

Many people who use these sites feel as though they can express themselves openly and find like-minded people quickly. However, the anonymity and friendly nature of these sites has also opened up a whole other level of security concerns on the Internet. While you may meet new friends online, you may also be coming into contact with malicious people misrepresenting themselves. These are people you wouldn't want to know. Social networking sites have become popular with Internet thieves and sexual predators looking to take advantage of the openness of the people on these sites and the large amount of personal information that can be found.²

Remember, the above paragraph was written by the unsaved. Believers must acknowledge the potential dangers and be aware of the possible stumbling blocks. "There is no one beyond the power and pull of the Dark side of the Internet—no one. No matter how godly, how influential, how popular or how old—no one. Not your parents, not your pastor, not your youth leaders, not your counselor, not your best friend, not even you."³

I am not implying that all Facebook activity is sinful; the technology remains neutral. However, as with any other form of entertainment, the believer must use discernment. Everything we do in life must line up with our goal and purpose—to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). This philosophy must have more than mere mental or intellectual assent. The heart must truly be in agreement. Being a part of Facebook may not be sin, but it certainly has the potential to become sinful. Please consider the potential dangers and fortify your walls of defense.

It has the potential to become an idol. Anything that takes preeminence over our relationship with the Lord is an idol. We must constantly monitor our lives to see if there is anything placed before the Lord. Having friends and communicating with those friends is important, but has it become too important? Many retort, "But I have to have my friends!" Would you be happy and joyful without your friends? If all your friends were taken away from you, would you be satisfied with Christ alone—would He be sufficient? If you were unable to communicate with your friends for a period of time, would you become unhappy or irritated? Your answer to these questions will determine whether your friends have become an idol.

In addition, consider the temperament of your friends. Are your friends the type of friends whom the Scripture would define as wise? Unfortunately, many would rather compromise spiritually and maintain friendships with the wrong kind of friends. God is a jealous God and wants preeminence in your heart and life. Ask the Lord to use His Word to reveal your heart attitude. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

It has the potential to cause mistrust. Most of these sites have a friend or buddy list that allows for quick and easy communication, the majority of which is small talk and idle chatter. However, this freedom opens a door for mistrust,

especially among married couples. How many husbands would be uncomfortable if their wife spent hours talking on the phone to another man? How many wives would find it upsetting if their husbands spent hours communicating with another woman? The number one problem in marriages is communication. Communication on a regular basis with another man or woman can sow the seeds of mistrust and swing wide the door to potential disaster. Trust in any relationship can be easily lost and very hard to regain (Prov. 16:28; 18:21).

It has the potential to become a stumbling block. If the Internet, specifically Facebook, causes you temptation, then it is a stumbling block. Are you tempted to communicate with those you know you should be avoiding? Are you tempted to post and/or read messages and view pictures you know are inappropriate? Are you tempted to continue communication with those of the opposite sex when you know your spouse or parents would not approve? Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 8:13, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." In the whole scheme of things, meat was simply not that important to Paul, and he was willing to give it up if he thought it would cause another to stumble. Are you willing to avoid something, even legitimate, for the sake of another? Has your Facebook account become too important? Has it become a stumbling block?

It has the potential to nurture pride. The overall attitude of a site like Facebook is, "It's all about me!" It is nothing but pride that says, "I am important, and what I have to say is important." Many take pride in the length of their friend list and get caught up in having more friends. Pride is also revealed in the statements, "I would never fall" or "I would never do that!" However, the Scripture warns in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" We would also be wise to remember the words of Paul: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

It has the potential to waste valuable time. When Thomas Edison invented the moving picture machine, which later became the movie projector, he called it "a champion time waster." I wonder what Edison would think of the Internet. The Internet and sites such as Facebook take time and have the potential to steal time from other important things. How much time do you spend with your cyberfriends as compared to friends at church? How much time do you spend posting messages as compared to the communication with your family, spouse, or children? How much time do you spend on the Internet as compared to reading and studying God's Word? Does your Facebook time infringe on your faith and/or family time (Prov. 21:5)?

It has the potential to cause future problems. I am reminded of the significant words of a childhood song, "Oh, be careful little eyes what you see, Oh, be careful little ears what you hear." Perhaps we need to add an additional line: "Oh, be careful little hands what you type and/or post." The Internet gives a false sense of anonymity, and

many will post things that they would never say in person, and furthermore would be embarrassed should someone they know read it. There is no such thing as complete anonymity or complete privacy on the Internet. Many ministries and future employers conduct searches to learn about you, your habits, and your character by what you post on the Internet. What you write or post today may come back to hurt you and your testimony tomorrow. As a teacher of mine used to repeat ad nauseam, "A word to the wise should be sufficient." "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Prov. 22:3).

It has the potential to threaten your security. With the rise of any new medium comes the opportunity for crime, and the Internet is certainly no exception. While you have easy access to a wealth of information, others have easy access to you and all your important information. Some may argue that if someone really wants to find out your information he can with very little effort. While that may be true, we certainly do not want to make it easier for him! Sites such as MySpace and Facebook are breeding grounds for a variety of predators. Be careful (Prov. 14:26)!

When considering whether something is legitimate or not, many Christians spend far too much time asking the wrong question: "What's wrong with it?" Instead we need to ask the more appropriate questions: "What is right about it? Will my activity or words glorify God? Will this activity help me in my walk and edify others? Would I be willing

to give it up for the sake of others?" The answers to these questions will reveal your true heart attitude.

Please be reminded that this writer does not stand in judgment of anyone nor their Internet activity. We answer to a holy God and He judges the heart: "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:10). God knows your heart. He sees all your activities. No one is above temptation. We are only sinners saved by the grace of God. If you frequent social networking sites such as Facebook, I urge you to reevaluate your activity. Is your participation worth the undeniable risks?

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil. Proverbs 4:23-27

Michael Gray is senior pastor at Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/facebook#_note-CNN.

² <http://www.utexas.edu/its/secure/socialnetworking.php>.

³ Rand Hummel, *The Dark Side of the Internet* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2004), 15.

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Ministry through Church Websites

Most churches realize that having a good website is invaluable in informing potential new visitors about your ministry. However, that same website typically does not provide the level of detail necessary in assisting your members as they minister together in their local church. News, schedules, directories, and other materials are often printed and distributed on paper at significant expense and effort.

A *members-only website* offers online access to your day-to-day ministry information, yielding some key benefits.

It stays current. A well-designed website can easily be maintained to provide the latest and most accurate versions of your ministry materials. A more advanced site will also offer editable databases, such as an online church directory, which can be easily searched for phone numbers and other family contact information. Links to online mapping services give one-click access to directions.

It's printable. Even a well-connected congregation will at times need to hang schedules on bulletin boards or will have members who are not on the Internet. The same central database easily provides current reports for printing without having to keep track of multiple lists. A current pdf phone list can be downloaded to print or save to a PDA, for instance.

It can include a variety of media. Share photos, video, and audio recordings much more immediately and inexpensively than producing disk copies for distribution. Brochures and flyers can be shared in full, rich color without printing costs. A good website will make this easy to do, without requiring a great deal of technical knowledge on the part of the user.

It's secure. Using the same technology that commercial websites use for security, a church website protects its

members' personal information from unwanted access. Good procedures for verifying user identities—such as not sharing passwords even among family members—keeps everybody safe. An ad-free environment also makes your church website a safe and trustworthy source of information.

It can be personalized for various groups. Your congregation has different groups with differing ministry needs. A website that can manage groups can also provide easy group e-mails, printed labels for mailing, and a shared location for materials and prayer needs. For instance, the latest updates from your missionaries can be securely shared for your members to bring before God in prayer. Event management tools such as online signup and e-mail reminders help keep your busy members on track.

It can facilitate working together. All aspects of the site should enable and encourage leadership and teams to share information among themselves easily. For instance, a shared journaling system allows pastors and deacons to swap notes and assign follow-up visits. Corrections to phone numbers and addresses can be made immediately, and visits can be made knowing what was accomplished on previous visits.

A good church website is an electronic meeting hall that enables your church members to obtain information, view schedules, and communicate with one another. Effective websites must be secure, well designed, and easy to use. The possibilities are nearly endless in connecting members with one another in the cyberworld. Let's use technology for the glory of God and the growth of His people!

David LaRocque is a web, music, and photo enthusiast in Raleigh, North Carolina. He offers advanced church website services online at www.WithOneMind.com.

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The mission and purpose of SermonAudio.com is the preservation and propagation of solid Bible preaching in its audio form for this generation and the next. It's also a great personal evangelism tool, as people may be more open to listen to sermons in their homes even if they never walk through a church door.

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SermonAudio was most recently featured in a *USA Today* article on technology and religious teaching (<http://www.sermonaudio.com/go/usatoday>), as well as some years ago on FOX News national cable, WorldNetDaily, and other local television stations and newspapers around the country—including a recent appearance in our own local newspaper, the *Greenville News* (<http://www.sermonaudio.com/go/newspaper>).

There is a large, active listening audience on SermonAudio.com, hungry for solid Biblical preaching as indicated by the more than one million sermon downloads each month! Easy-to-read Download Reports in pdf format are sent to all churches to show exactly which sermons people have downloaded and the general geographic location of these listeners. Each month there are listeners from every state in the USA and from over 180 different foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Iceland, and Nepal, to name a few.

For years, SermonAudio.com has consistently ranked in Google's top search results when searching for audio sermons, and the site currently receives over 14 million pageviews per month. Over 174,000 subscribers receive our site's weekly email newsletter (over 64,000 of whom are pastors and church leaders), and countless more visit the site anonymously. Faithful churches can tap into this large audience to extend their pulpit influence to both laymen and pastors alike!

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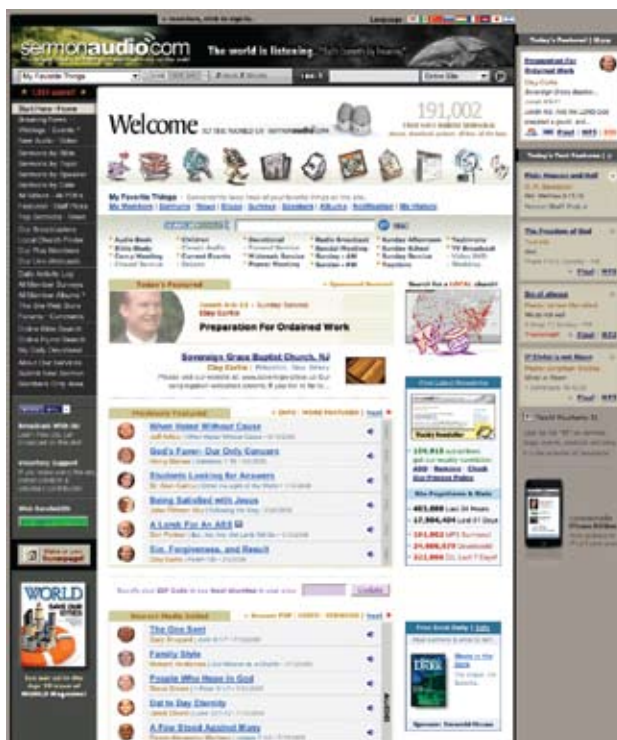
this nation's troubles is strong, gospel-preaching churches, and so we've made it our business to help and promote the local church in any way that we can.

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what a new evangelistic opportunity! You can email sermons to friends and family as you normally do. But if they receive their email on the iPhone (or iPod Touch), they will be directed to the sermon in the iPhone Edition and may be much more willing to listen while on-the-go!

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You Need to Project If You Want to Be Heard

Throughout my time in ministry I have noticed a lingering aversion throughout Fundamental churches to the use of media and technology in general during worship services. I realize that many pastors rightly fear the distracting overemphasis of audiovisuals, which is weekly showcased nationwide in New Evangelical churches.

Some Fundamental pastors, however, have taken full advantage of these tools as viable enhancements to their services with their sole motive being to increase clarity and visibility for their congregations. Some churches weekly project their sermon outlines, hymn lyrics, and preservice announcements on the auditorium screen while others still believe such practices would somehow be a compromising breach of tradition.

I do not claim to have the wisdom to fully expound all angles of this argument and provide in writing the perfect balance of church audiovisual use for our day. I would, however, like to present some thoughts for consideration that will include both a Biblical perspective on the subject as well as some modern benefits that exploring these venues could bring to your church.

The Importance of Clear Communication

To begin, I am reminded of Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 14:7, 8 where he states, "And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" Paul understood the value of clarity. While confronting the confusion caused by improper use of tongues in the early church, Paul teaches the Corinthian believers that clear communication is of the utmost importance within the church. I am compelled, then, to apply this truth to the subject of media and technical ministry. In a world where the common man processes information visually through onscreen product demos or PowerPoint presentations, investing in technology and techniques that enhance clarity may be well worth considering.

The question then arises, "How far do we take this and what do we look to for a standard?" In this subject, as every other, I can take my cues from the ministry example of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have been infinitely impressed with the practical genius that Jesus displayed through His use of the "media" and "technology" of His day. Clearly, Christ used the resources available to Him to enhance the clarity of His message.

Christ's Use of Amplification

Jesus' public ministry largely involved open-air preaching and teaching. At a time when no electronic amplifica-

tion of sound was available, delivering the message of the gospel to multitudes of people could have proven a difficult task. But Jesus understood these difficulties and used all the resources available to Him to ensure that the Word of God was clearly heard and understood. Mark 4:1 states, "And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land." Christ made the waters and knew that the sea could amplify His words and create a balanced distribution of sound across the shore. When He spoke from the boat, His voice reverberated off the waters to give every listener an equal opportunity to hear His message.

I simply make the point that Christ's desire was for every individual to clearly hear the message. In the same way every pastor should ensure that every congregational member has an opportunity to hear the preaching of the Word clearly. Well-placed microphones, an up-to-date sound desk and equipment, a trained technical ministries crew, and even proper building construction can all be used to bring clarity to your church's preaching and teaching ministry. It is worth the investment of money, research, and manpower to ensure that every believer comes to an acoustically balanced auditorium where the worship in song and the Word of God can be heard and understood without hindrances.

JESUS USED THE VISUAL SCENE BEFORE THE DISCIPLES TO ENHANCE HIS MESSAGE AND ADD A CLARITY AND POIGNANCY THAT WOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

Christ's Use of Object Lessons

Matthew 18:1-3 states, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Here Jesus places a child before His congregation as an object lesson to teach on offences in this life. He then referenced this child multiple times during this difficult message. You can almost see Jesus pointing to the child or holding the child close when He says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10). It is powerful to think of how Christ used the objects available to Him to touch the hearts of His

congregation and enhance His preaching.

We too have resources available to us as object lessons. Holding a baby in your arms while preaching that God's Word must be our sincere milk to grow by would connect our audience to the message in a powerful way. The use of a short dramatic monologue before the preaching could arrest the attention of the congregation and, through its content, ready them for the message at hand. Asking for audience participation is a great way to produce involvement, for even Christ asked the Pharisees in Luke 20:24, "Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?" before He answered their tempting questions. Using the objects and pictures available to us as Christ did will greatly clarify the message and make the texts of Scripture come alive before the congregation.

Christ's Use of Visual Aids

During a recent tour of the Holy Land I visited the Hermon River Springs located at Caesarea Philippi in northern Israel. Caesarea Philippi in Jesus' day was a setting dominated by the worship of Syrian and Greek gods, with pagan temples littering the area. Many of these temples were carved out of the huge rock face of the southwestern slope of Mount Hermon. As our guide taught us of the significance of this place as a first-century center for pagan worship, I was reminded that Christ used this very location as the backdrop for His powerful lesson on the Church and its Foundation. Matthew 16:13 states, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" As Peter gave his great confession that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, our Lord answered him in verse 17 and following, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 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."

Jesus took His disciples to the pagan-dominated foundation stones of Mount Hermon and deliberately set Himself against the background of the world's religions to make a point. He wanted to show them a contrast between these rocks over which the gates of hell have prevailed and the coming Church whose foundation Stone was larger and more powerful than anything they knew, a Stone over which the gates of Hell would have no power. I cannot think of any better place in Israel for Christ to have had this talk than Caesarea Philippi. Jesus used the visual scene before the disciples to enhance His message and add a clarity and poignancy that would never be forgotten.

Even during the Sermon on the Mount (which took place on an amphitheater-shaped hill that acoustically amplified His message) Jesus used objects to teach a lesson. In Matthew 6:28, 29 He says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Every man, woman, or child on that hill probably stopped staring at Jesus and gazed down at the grass and flowers beneath them and tried to grasp the reality of Jesus' words.

We, too, must use the resources available to us if we desire to mimic that level of communication. Today, maps and charts, outlines printed in the bulletin, or Scripture verses projected on a screen through PowerPoint are readily available to any preacher. The use of an LCD projector with pictures of the Bible lands could greatly enhance your Sunday evening message. Christ was the Master Teacher, and He had no problem using visual aids to enhance His message. We must be willing to learn from the Master if we desire to preach like Him.

Pastor Jonathan Stanley graduated from Bob Jones University with a BA in Bible and from Heart of America Seminary with a Master's in Pastoral Studies. His passion is for preaching the Word of God and shepherding the flock. He and his wife, Joanna, have two boys, Nathan and Micah.

A Week Well Spent

Comments on the June session at The Graduate School of International Baptist College



"I desperately
needed
this class."

Liza Mendez, Arizona

"A true **ministry to pastors.**" *Pastor Steve Kihlthau, California*

"I learned so much from the **expert instructors.**" *Chung Howe Kwan, Singapore*

"I am now **better equipped** to serve Christ." *Pastor Roger Willis, California*

"I was **challenged** to grow closer to my Lord." *Pastor James Tilson, Arizona*

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2008 Meetings

September 13, 2008

Mid-Atlantic Leadership Conference

Calvary Baptist Church
2000 Broad Ave
Findlay, OH 45840
419.422.6842

October 11, 2008

Mid-America Leadership Conference

Bethel Baptist Church
200 N Roselle Road
Schaumburg, IL 60194
847.885.3230

October 20-21, 2008

New Mexico Regional Fellowship

Northwest Baptist Church
402 San Clemente NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
505.344.5544

South Central Regional Fellowship

Stony Point Baptist Church
7938 Barnett Ave
Kansas City, KS 66112
913.299.4774

October 27-31, 2008

Caribbean Regional Fellowship

Calvary Baptist Tabernacle
PO Box 3390
Carolina, Puerto Rico 00984
787.750.2227

November 10-11, 2008

Southern California Regional Fellowship

Camp Ironwood
49191 Cherokee Rd.
Newberry Springs, CA 92365
760.257.3503

November 13-14, 2008

Northern California Regional Fellowship

Castlepoint Ministries
3700 Country Club Dr.
PO Box 487, Lucerne, CA 95458
707.274.1164

2009 Meetings

January 26-27, 2009

North Central Regional Fellowship

Beth Eden Baptist Church
2600 Wadsworth Blvd.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
303.238.7711

April 6-7, 2009

South Regional Fellowship

The Wilds
1000 Wilds Ridge Road
Brevard, NC 28712-7273
828.884.7811

April 20-22, 2009

Northwest Regional Fellowship

Monroe Baptist Church
1405 West Main Street
Monroe, WA 98272
360.805.6200

June 16-18, 2009

89th Annual Fellowship

Bethel Baptist Church
200 N Roselle Road
Schaumburg, IL 60194
847.885.3230

June 23-25, 2009

Pacific-Rim Regional Fellowship

Dep-Ed ECOTECH Center
Cebu City, Philippines

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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

What's an Evangelical to Do?

In 1989 the National Association of Evangelicals, together with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, sponsored a four-day conference for over 650 Evangelical scholars, pastors, and leaders. The purpose was to discuss which truths of the historic Christian faith that a person must affirm in order to be termed an "Evangelical." Plenary speakers and respondents included Charles Colson, Carl F. H. Henry, J. I. Packer, David Wells, D. A. Carson, John Ankerberg, Os Guinness, and Kenneth Kantzer.

The final product of their deliberations was published in a book of over 500 pages and titled *Evangelical Affirmations* (Zondervan, 1990). It was intended to be a confession of what it means to be an evangelical (14) and to represent evangelical truths that specially need to be asserted and clarified in our day (30).

It is disturbing to discover the issues intensely debated, if not in the plenary sessions, then behind the closed doors of the subcommittees who wrote and edited the final versions of the affirmations. They include such fundamentals as the eternal destiny of unbelievers, the nature of justification, the nature of saving faith, and the inerrancy of Scripture. In some cases, the final statements are conspicuous for what they deliberately omit. For instance, even after both J. I. Packer and John Ankerberg made a very strong case against both Conditionalism and Annihilationism, the affirmation addressing those issues reads only, *Unbelievers will be separated eternally from God*, and, *Concern for evangelism should not be compromised by any illusion that all will be finally saved (universalism)*.

I had occasion a year or so after the conference to ask Dr. Ankerberg how that particular statement ended up being so indefinite. He related to me that his and Packer's public presentations on eternal destiny generated such intense opposition that a number of scholars walked out in protest. In the end, the indefinite statement was the maximum common denominator on which the attendees could agree.

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

Still Debating

Nearly two decades later, conservative Evangelical leaders are still finding themselves constrained to continue defending cardinal doctrines from relentless recasting by other Evangelical leaders. Truths, for instance, as theologically foundational as the extent of God's knowledge (Does He infallibly foreknow the free decisions of men and angels?), the penal substitution of Jesus Christ in the place of sinners (Wouldn't this be tantamount to child abuse?), and the imputation of Christ's blameless righteousness (Doesn't this doctrine need to be abandoned?).

In fact, evangelical debate on some of these doctrines is apparently growing. The authors of a recent defense of penal substitution (*Pierced for Our Transgressions*, Crossway, 2007) relate in their introduction, *After rumbling away for a century and a half behind the closed doors of the liberal scholarly academy, criticisms of penal substitution have recently been voiced by several influential evangelical theologians and church leaders, provoking a storm of controversy within the Christian community* (26). They note, *The misconceived criticisms of penal substitution show no sign of abating, and the resulting confusion within the Christian community seems to be increasing rather than decreasing* (31).

It's stunning. Evangelical leaders forced by other Evangelical leaders to have to debate and recover some of the most bedrock theological truths underlying the entire

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Christian faith. It's like Detroit's automakers being forced to reinvent the whole concept of a wheel. Or the Mayo Clinic's having to recover Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood. Or NASA harassed by aerospace engineers within its own ranks to abandon the Copernican Revolution. It's astounding. How can this be?

Where the Problem Lies

The problem isn't that the fundamentals of the Christian faith haven't been deeply studied and widely circulated historically. I'd like to suggest that the presence of huge unorthodox brambles in Evangelicalism is due, to a large degree, to the way Evangelicals respond to those who call their orthodoxy into question. When a professing Christian leader persistently preaches, prints, and teaches content that raises constant questions about the integrity of his theology, what ought sound, Scriptural Evangelicals do?

At first glance we may be envisioning something like the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood—a fleecy, lumpy sheep's hide, head and all, draped shrewdly but not altogether convincingly over a creature that can't be entirely disguised because of its protruding hairy grey legs, long tail, and slavering fangs. I don't think that's what our Lord had in mind at all.

Scripture's teaching is largely unambiguous. The NT seems to take for granted that its teachings, particularly those having to do with the fundamentals of the Christian faith, are so clear that it expects us to have a high degree of certainty about what they are. This certainty is called *faith*. The NT doesn't call us to have it without providing us with sufficient truth to arrive at it intelligently. The whole intent of the NT's explanations is to *settle* not *start* debates that threaten this certainty.

In some cases, of course, the NT intends to settle a debate by deliberately withholding further information from us. In such cases God expects us to be satisfied intellectually with the extent of what He has revealed. Calvin referred to this contented state as a *learned ignorance*. Not mere ignorance. But a *learned* ignorance, one that has studied sufficiently to know why it must rest content with limited knowledge. But in most cases it seems that God intends for His people to be able to determine not only the fundamentals of the faith but even the vast majority of secondary doctrines that are directly addressed in the NT.

If, then, the NT addresses the question I'm raising—what should I do when professing Christian leaders persistently call into question their own doctrinal soundness—its teaching will be sufficiently clear to hold

us accountable to obey.

I'd like to explore that particular teaching. But I want to do so thoroughly, even if it takes some time and several columns. So we'll start with the first NT text that seems to bear significantly on the discussion.

Matthew 7:15–23

This is one of many NT passages touching on the issue of right and safe associations among God's people. *Associations*. I'm not saying that is the theme of the entire passage, but I am proposing that it is a subject lying very close to its heart, because it opens with a warning about certain people who will *come to you* (7:15). Our Lord here discusses something that, at least in part, has to do with relating to certain kinds of people. *Associations*.

One of the significant values of looking at this teaching on associations before any others is that it is the first one in the NT to issue a warning about them. It is as if we are being introduced to virgin territory. Let's take it that way and assume that we know nothing about the subject of threatening associations. The whole topic begs for a thoroughgoing treatise of first-order exegesis, theology, and application. Space permits only that we sketch in broad strokes. But even a general treatment should shed light on the question of how all of us, Fundamentalists and Evangelicals, are supposed to respond to people who regularly call their own orthodoxy into question.

It is the NT's very first sermon. Jesus is the preacher. Life in His kingdom is the general subject. But there is an imminent threat to kingdom citizens. *Wolves!* But they won't be the kind that attack in broad daylight; they will be a kind that can disguise themselves. They will come looking like *sheep!* Not like goats, cows, horses, or burros—animals obviously different from sheep but nonthreatening to them—but like sheep themselves! They will *come to you*, approaching you for acceptance, *in sheep's clothing* (7:15).

At first glance we may be envisioning something like the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood—a fleecy, lumpy sheep's hide, head and all, draped shrewdly but not altogether convincingly over a creature that can't be entirely disguised because of its protruding hairy grey legs, long tail, and slavering fangs. I don't think that's what our Lord had in mind at all.

I think the key to getting His picture right is the word *inwardly* (7:15). Our Lord seems to imply that you'll never peg this kind of person by scrutinizing his outward appearance. There are no hairy legs in sight. He flashes no alarming teeth. Nose to tail he's every inch a sheep. But *inwardly*, despite the façade, people like this are *ravenous wolves*.

Jesus describes such persons as *false prophets*—religious teachers who are so well-disguised outwardly that you'll only get them identified rightly if you can somehow know them inwardly. What kind of *prophet* or, for our purposes, pastor, theologian, academician, or ecclesiastical official matches His description of being

false but entirely disguised as true? How would such a leader present himself when he applied for acceptance by an Evangelical or Fundamentalist pulpit committee, Bible college or seminary, publishing house, or theological society?

I suspect that if you were on the search committee to fill an endowed seminary chair and took a guy like this to lunch, his verbal testimony would convince. When you talked theology, he'd communicate orthodoxy. If you kept an eye on his demeanor, manner, and general affability, he'd appear nothing less than a thoroughly Christian gentleman. From the way Jesus continues in the passage, I think He intends us to conclude that He's talking about a counterfeit so convincing that even scrutinizing him over lunch would arouse no suspicions. I conclude that because He goes on to stipulate that the way to know these people is by observing what they produce: *Ye shall know them by their fruits* (7:16).

Fruit isn't something that appears at first glance. It may not be evident for quite a while. But when it finally shows, it is infallible evidence. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit* (7:18). Trees cannot produce differently than their botanical nature, Jesus says. A tree is simply *ou dunatai* (not able). Theologically this is rightly called total inability. A pseudoprophet is distinguishable by his total inability to produce the grapes and figs of a true prophet.

But before we assume we're equipped to start testing, we've got to reckon with the last part of the passage too. Here Jesus projects far into the future to the Final Judgment. Surprisingly, He reveals that there will be many, not a few, who plead that not just the appearance of their lives, but even the words and works of their ministries were Scriptural. Their words? *Have we not prophesied in thy name?* (7:22). In this protest, as well as in the next two, *in thy name* is placed emphatically forward. Read it like this: *In thy name (!), have we not prophesied?* As if this is the clinching evidence of their genuineness. And what about their works? *In thy name (!), have (we not) cast out devils! In thy name (!), (have we not) done many wonderful works?* (7:22).

Remarkably, the first question (and the next two as well because of the way the sentence proceeds grammatically) emphasizes not only the fact that they preached and worked in Jesus' name, but also that in the future façade-stripping moment when all pretense is useless, they fully expect Jesus to return a positive answer to their protests. To bring this nuance out we have to word the questions something like the following, *In thy name (!), we prophesied, didn't we? And in thy name (!), didn't we cast out demons? And in thy name (!), didn't we do many works of power?* Considering the context—Heaven's blazing glory, vast and awesome thrones, God the Father high and lifted up, Jesus presiding as King of kings and Lord of lords, myriads of shining angels, final judgment and fearful eternity—these are amazing claims.

There are some counterfeits that you can't detect over lunch, but you can when you hear them preach or if

you spend a little time circulating inside their ministries. But from the passage it appears that there's also a kind of religious leader whom you can't peg over lunch or even when he's in the pulpit or behind the lectern. In words and works he not only ministers in Jesus' name, but he's apparently so divinely empowered that the results are nothing less than supernatural. He exorcises demons! He does many deeds of power (*dunameis pollas*)!

This creates a terrific difficulty for sheep. How are they ever to know if such a wolf is in their midst?

A First Application

Before attempting to answer that question, I'd like to pause long enough to reflect on what appears to be at least one legitimate application of what we've gained thus far. If churches, schools, mission boards, and fellowships can be taken in by theologians and leaders who *don't* betray any sign of their threatening character, what should our posture be toward those who *do*? If we're to be alert lest we be deceived about religious teachers who look like sheep, how are we supposed to respond to religious teachers who don't?

But from the passage it appears that there's also a kind of religious leader whom you can't peg over lunch or even when he's in the pulpit or behind the lectern.

A Much-Debated Example

Let me move to a current illustration of the kind of thing I'm thinking about. For some thirty years now, British theologian and writer N. T. Wright has been openly, unapologetically insisting that almost all Christians for the last fifteen hundred years have misunderstood the doctrine of justification. One of his most widely read books, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Eerdmans, 1997), is lying here beside me as I write. I've culled out just a few of his claims as examples of his teaching.

The discussions of justification in much of the history of the church, certainly since Augustine, got off on the wrong foot—at least in terms of understanding Paul—and have stayed there ever since (115). If you respond that the entire epistle to the Romans is a description of how persons become Christians, and that justification is a central theme, I will answer . . . that this way of regarding Romans has systematically done violence to the text for hundreds of years . . . (117).

What, then, does Wright think Paul taught about justification?

The first mention of justification in Romans is a mention of justification by *works* [he italicizes works for emphasis]—apparently with Paul’s approval (2:13: “It is not the hearers of the law who will be righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified”). The right way to understand this, I believe, is to see that Paul is talking about the *final* [he italicizes final for emphasis] justification (126).

Wright emphasizes “final” justification, because in his view there are two justifications. One justification now pronounces, not (as we have always believed) that one is righteous due to the imputation of Christ’s perfect righteousness, but that one is a member of the covenant family. A justification in the future declares that we are Christians on the basis of works wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. *Present justification declares, on the basis of faith, what future justification will affirm publicly (according to 2:14–16 and 8:9–11) on the basis of the entire life* (129). These words *entire life* are at the heart of Wright’s view of the basis of future justification. To repeat, *future justification will affirm publicly . . . on the basis of the entire life*.

But what about the imputed righteousness of Christ? Isn’t it the entire basis of our justification? Wright puts his answer in italics for emphasis: *The righteousness they have will not be God’s own righteousness*. He continues (without italics), *God’s own righteousness is his covenant faithfulness. . . . God’s righteousness remains, so to speak, God’s own property. It is the reason for his acting to vindicate his people. It is not the status he bestows upon them in so doing* (99).

This denial of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, combined with a present justification (a declaration that we are in the covenant) on the basis of faith but a future justification on the basis of Spirit-produced works, creates a subtle soteriology of faith and works. This is the very kind of thing Galatians is written to refute. Wright therefore reinterprets Galatians. *Despite a long tradition to the contrary, the problem Paul addresses in Galatians is not the question of how precisely someone becomes a Christian or attains to a relationship with God* (120).

This reinterpretation of Galatians makes possible his applying his new doctrine of what justification is to the current polarization within Christendom, especially that between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith impels the churches, in their current fragmented state, into the ecumenical task. It cannot be right that the very doctrine which declares that all who believe in Jesus belong at the same table (Galatians 2) should be used as a way of saying that some, who define the doctrine of justification differently, belong at a different table. The doctrine of justification, in other words, is not merely a doctrine which Catholic and Protestant might just be able to agree on, as a result

of hard ecumenical endeavour. It is itself the ecumenical doctrine, the doctrine that rebukes all our petty and often culture-bound church groupings, and which declares that all who believe in Jesus belong together in one family (158).

A Question

Sorting out Wright’s teaching is difficult because he employs standard theological terms but with new twists. I’ve listened by the hour to several Evangelicals, including Sinclair Ferguson and D. A. Carson, attempt to explain and refute him. I’ve read hundreds of pages written for the same purpose. I’ve profited immensely from these brothers’ hard work. But now that Wright has been so rigorously refuted, I have a question.

If a man’s teaching is so abstruse on justification that world-class Evangelical scholars must devote thousands of hours to attempting to refute him, isn’t there at least an outside chance that the man may not even be a true brother? Especially when he insists that all of them are wrong?

Let me nudge this back into the light of Christ’s warning about wolves in sheep’s clothing. If the church must be alert to the overtures of false teachers effectively disguised as orthodox, doesn’t it need to be even more guarded toward teachers who aren’t? Teachers who announce openly that they, in fact, *are not* orthodox (at least in the sense that Evangelicals have understood that term for hundreds of years)?

I wonder then, at the response of Evangelical men who have carefully studied Wright for the express purpose of refuting him, but who nevertheless seem to continue assuming that he’s truly regenerated. At the very least, why not apply Romans 16:17? *Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*.

Wright’s teaching unquestionably causes divisions (or dissensions). It hinders people from coming to the truth. He himself insists (not admits, but *insists*) that his teaching is contrary to what we have preached for hundreds of years. Why not take both him and Romans 16:17 at their word and just *turn away*?

N. T. Wright seems to be described so exactly in Paul’s warnings that one would think that the apostle knew him personally. If Wright isn’t the kind of person described by Romans 16:17, who is? Or look at Paul’s warning to the Ephesian elders about wolves. *After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them* (Acts 20:29, 30).

Wright is doing everything Paul warns against. Causing dissensions and hindrances. Teaching and writing contrary to the apostolic teaching we’ve learned. Speaking perverse things. Drawing away disciples after himself. So for the flock’s sake and for the Chief Shepherd’s sake, why not play it safe? Just say it. N. T. Wright is a wolf. If he’s not, the burden of proof lies entirely with him. *To be continued.* ☞

Bring . . . the Books

Great Missionaries to China

In 1860 God began to stir up a burden to reach the almost 400 million lost men and women of China. This stirring came through the ministry and passion of a young missionary named Hudson Taylor. Speaking to congregations in England, Taylor used a powerful image to urge on them the need for action.

Four hundred millions! What mind can grasp it? Marching in single file one yard apart they would circle the world at its equator more than ten times. . . . Four hundred millions of souls, "having no hope, and without God in the world." . . . The number is inconceivable—the view is appalling. . . . Do you believe that each unit of these millions has an immortal soul? and that "there is none other name under heaven whereby they must be saved"? . . . It will not do to say that you have no special call to go to China. With these facts before you, and with the command of the Lord Jesus to go . . . you need rather to ascertain whether you have a special call to stay home.

However, Taylor was not the first to have a burden for China. There were others, whose stories are largely unfamiliar to us today, who paved the way for the harvest reaped by Taylor and those who served in the China Inland Mission. Fortunately, there is a short and readable work in which the stories of these unsung heroes has been preserved. Printed in 1947 by Zondervan, J. Theodore Mueller's *Great Missionaries to China* is still readily available on the second-hand book market. In this column as well as the next, I wish to recover some of the forgotten gems that are wonderfully presented in this helpful work.

The first four chapters contain a short explanation of the history and religious beliefs of the Chinese people as well as a brief overview of the history of the earliest Christian missionary endeavors to China. Mueller believes the ancient Chinese were exposed to the truth about God; stories such as Noah's flood are evidenced in certain features in their written language. The earliest Christian influence to China came through a theologically deviant movement known as Nestorianism sometime between 635 and 781. Mueller perhaps speaks a bit too positively about the work of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but quickly moves into the work of Protestant and eventually Baptist missionaries who came to China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The first Protestant missionary was Robert Morrison, who arrived in China in 1807. Although his ministry seemed initially fruitless, by 1819 he had translated the entire Bible into Chinese. In fact, his efforts represented the first of many such projects undertaken by the British and Foreign Bible Society. After twenty-seven years of laboring for Christ in China, Morrison entered his eternal reward in 1834. Mueller closes his account by observing,


"He himself lived in the days of small things, but were they small? He will be known forever as the 'apostle of Protestant missions in China,' and that, indeed, is a title of supreme honor."

Mueller moves us next to the ministry of William Milne who, in conjunction with several other notables, took the Bible translated by Morrison and spread its news far and wide. Milne actually worked with Morrison and, inspired by his example, became one of the leading experts on the Chinese language. He later commented on the difficulty of the task: "To acquire the Chinese language is a work for men with bodies of brass, lungs of steel, heads of oak, hands of spring steel, eyes of eagles, hearts of apostles, memories of angels, and the lives of Methuselah!" In his brief ministry, cut short by an untimely death, Milne established and directed an institute of training for Chinese converts and published a missionary report titled the *Chinese Gleaner*.

The third member of the trio of initial missionary pioneers was Walter Medhurst. His chief contribution, though perhaps modest to the outward eye, was a two-volume Chinese and English dictionary that for many years was the primary tool by which future missionaries obtained the necessary linguistic facility to spread the gospel to places Morrison, Milne, and Medhurst never visited.

Others who followed in the early pioneer years of gospel work in China are included. David Abeel arrived in 1826 as a chaplain for the American Seaman's Friend Society. Samuel Williams set up the first missionary printing facility in 1833. Peter Parker was the first medical missionary to arrive on China's shores in 1834. John Taylor Jones, one of the earliest Baptist missionaries to arrive in China in 1833, was joined two years later by William Dean.

God used these early pioneers and a handful of others to lay the foundation for the road upon which later, better known missionaries carried the gospel message throughout China. While some of their denominational affiliations might leave much to be desired, their character and zeal for the Lord and His gospel were not wanting. And for that they deserve a place of honor in the glorious annals of Christian missions.

Perhaps as we read again the stories of their lives and strive to understand the vision that captivated them, we will rise up in our generation and repeat their labor of love, work of faith, and patient endurance in the ministry of the gospel. 

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

Dr. Sam Horn is Vice President of Ministerial Training and Dean of Graduate Studies at Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin. He also serves as senior pastor of Brookside Baptist Church in Brookfield.

Straight Cuts

Just How Friendly Should We Be? (Proverbs 18:24)

Perhaps you have had an experience like mine. I listened as the preacher announced his text and read Proverbs 18:24 from the Authorized Version: “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” The ensuing message stressed the necessity of the believer to show love for people by going out of his way to be friendly. A chief form of selfishness for the Christian is to be introverted and concerned only with one’s own circumstances and problems. We need to be connected with as many people as possible and develop as many friendships as we can. Obedient Christians are warm, outgoing, engaging, and always ready to interact positively with the people they encounter.

The message that day sounded really good, and I might have gone from the service truly convinced that I need to be as extroverted as possible. There was just one problem, though, and it was a pretty serious one. The version I was reading as I followed the preacher’s argumentation translated the Hebrew text as follows: “A man of many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (NASB). I was just beginning my seminary training and finding the NASB to be a remarkably accurate translation of the Greek text. I hadn’t taken any Hebrew yet, so I was completely at a loss to explain the breathtaking differences between the KJV and the NASB translations. I thought to myself, “When this preacher was preparing for his message, did he even read another translation? Did he consult any commentaries? Why is he not explaining the translational difficulties that must be present in this text?”

These days in our Fundamental churches folks are bringing many different versions with them. Gone are the days when an effective communicator might choose to gloss over translational difficulties. A preacher completely loses his credibility with his people when he fails to explain the translational options present in a particular Hebrew or Greek text. Explaining technical aspects of the original languages in ways the average person in the pew can comprehend is a difficult task, but preachers simply must develop the ability.

With this caution in mind, how should we understand the differences we see among various English translations of Proverbs 18:24? Perhaps a little background concerning the reliability of the Masoretic Text (MT) may help. The Masoretes were Jewish scribes who preserved and copied the Hebrew text during the Middle Ages. They were *fanatically* careful in copying manuscripts. They also engaged in the evaluation of different readings among the manuscripts in their posses-

sion before they standardized the text. If they thought that a scribal error had occurred sometime in the transmission of the text they had received, they would never alter the consonantal text. Instead they created marginal notes called Kethib/Qere readings. These marginal notes preserved alternate readings they considered significant.

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the middle of the twentieth century, most liberal scholars were suspicious of the reliability of the MT. But careful examination of Qumran manuscripts such as 1QIs^a quelled many of their concerns. This manuscript was more than one thousand years older than the oldest MT manuscript of Isaiah we currently had, and yet there were only a small number of significant differences that had arisen due to scribal copying over a millennium! The liberal tendency to emend the MT on the basis of the reading of ancient versions, such as the Septuagint, Vulgate, or Syriac, became far less pronounced. The prime mandate for anyone who translates the Hebrew text into English is this: trust the reading of the MT.

So, what is the state of the MT in Proverbs 18:24? There are no Masoretic Kethib/Qere readings here. The text makes perfectly good sense as it stands. Here is how I would translate it:

A man of [casual] friends is about to ruin himself,
But there is a [very close] friend who manifests
more loyalty than a brother.

This verse is an example of antithetic parallelism. The first line states a proposition, and the second line declares the opposite truth. The word for “friends” in the first line is the general Hebrew term in the OT for a neighbor, acquaintance, or friend, but it is different from the word for “friend” in the second line (a participle from the verb “to love”). In the first line the word “friend” has the same consonants as the verb “to ruin,” a *hithpolel* infinitive construct that is most likely reflexive and used to communicate the idea of something that is just about to happen. The contrasting second line introduces us to the sort of friend one might find only once in a lifetime: a very close friend like a loyal spouse who sticks with us through all the vicissitudes of life.

How can we explain the translation of the KJV? It may be that the translators followed the reading of the Vulgate and Syriac versions. Or they may have adopted the translation of the Geneva Bible. One thing is certain: they departed from the MT and violated the prime mandate of translation. Thankfully they didn’t do that often. ☞

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

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Windows

Compassion Is the Real Difference-Maker

Years ago we were sitting around a conference table in the church offices having a pastoral staff meeting, brainstorming on ways we could reach and keep people. Undoubtedly you have been a part of discussions like this too, trying to insure that the front door of the church is wide open while making certain that the back door is not! We all came to a point of agreement that people will come and stay if they feel cared for.

Then one of the pastors said this: “Instead of trying to communicate ways that we care for people, why don’t we just care for people!” His comment was met with a stunned silence. At first nobody responded, and the air was thick with thought. His tone was certainly not accusatory—but I still think we all felt a bit stung.

Professionals and Professionalism

I mean, c’mon, we’re all professional ministers here! Maybe that was, and maybe that still is, the problem. After all, professionalism is a two-edged sword, isn’t it? On the one hand we should want to be professional in what we do. At the same time, we don’t want to come off as being “too professional.”

Professionalism usually implies a level of distance from those being served while effectiveness in ministry hinges on people sensing and actually seeing your love for them. We certainly cannot be cool or the least bit calculating in this line of work. Our calling requires that we constantly have the right spirit. The truth is that we do need to be perceived as being compassionate—and hopefully it is because we *are* compassionate! I am personally convinced that compassion is the real difference-maker in gospel ministry.

Jude 22 says, “And of some have compassion, making a difference.” I’m sure that we’ve heard plenty of people misfire on this one, making the verse a proof-text for passion in evangelism. But the subject of the epistle is apostasy—specifically how we should deal with the apostates now and, most significantly, how God will deal with them later.

The lesson, then, is this: Some have gone past the point of no return in their apostasy and they will never be retrieved. But those people are to be distinguished from those who can still be saved. Some can be pulled back from the flames as we forcefully confront them, while others will respond to a more compassionate approach. Therefore we are called upon to make these important distinctions in our dealings with them.

Having said that, I still want to reassert that compassion makes the big difference in ministry. I’ll venture out on a limb to say that too many of us have

“apostatized” on this very point! We used to believe in getting with the needy people and showing them that we cared. Today we’ve gotten more sophisticated in our outreach; sadly, care-less ministry has now become the new norm. This needs to change.

Modern technology has not removed from us the divine mandate we have of getting to people. Websites have not excused us from going out to where folks are. “They can find us if they want us” is not the spirit of Christ. Jesus went into the villages and cities to be with the people and to take on their needs. The Biblical pattern is set for us by both the example of Jesus and by His exhortations to go (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15).

A Lack of Zeal

One of our own leading evangelists (you would know him if I named him) has said that as he travels across our country he is encouraged by the doctrinal fidelity in the churches, but at the same time he is discouraged by the lack of evangelistic zeal and purpose. He once told me, “We’re not going out into the communities to reach people like we once did.” So let me ask, “Is your own life and ministry organized for going and showing compassion?”

On this very point J. Oswald Sanders writes this anecdote in his book entitled *Spiritual Discipleship*:

God could doubtless have saved the heathen without the help of a young cobbler, but He didn’t. He took an obscure young disciple from an obscure town, called and equipped him, and used him to initiate the modern missionary era.

William Carey was innocent of systematic theology and missiology at that stage of his life, but he had qualities that uniquely equipped him for that strategic task. He had a passionate love for Christ and a compassionate love for those in distant lands whom he did not know and who did not know Him.

As he worked away at his cobbler’s bench, with a globe of the world in front of him, God was laying on his heart a great burden for the lost. The same compassion that moved the Lord was reborn in William Carey’s heart.

The old saying is still very true, even though it probably sounds as trite as ever: “Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” I must confess that I really don’t care for that expression, mostly because I find it a little bit too convicting!

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

Charles Spurgeon

Concerned about Competence or Compassion?

In Herman Melville's novel *White Jacket* one of the sailors takes sick with severe stomach pains. The ship's surgeon, Dr. Cuticle, is delighted finally to have a patient with something more challenging to his art than hand blisters. He diagnoses appendicitis.

Several shipmates are pressed into nursing service, and the deckhand is laid out on the operating table and prepared for surgery. The doctor goes at his work with verve and skill. He makes his cuts with precision, and on the way to excising the diseased organ, he points out the fascinating anatomical details to the attendants around the table, who had never before seen the interior of an abdomen. He is totally absorbed in his work, and he obviously loves the whole process.

All in all it is an impressive performance, but the sailor attendants are not impressed in the end. In fact, they are, to a man, appalled. Turns out that

So how can we “up” our compassion? I am convinced that compassion is more caught than taught; no level of seminary training can guarantee it. We need to pray it in and then we need to put it on, in the tradition of Ephesians 4:17–32.

the poor fellow, by the time he has been sewn up, has already been a long time dead on the table! The doctor, enthusiastic about his surgery, hadn't bothered to monitor the condition of his patient.

I wonder if we preachers aren't guilty of the same thing. Are we more concerned about our competence in the pulpit or about our compassion for the person in the pew? Of course, both are vitally important and neither should be sacrificed. Obviously we should yearn to strive to excel in both realms. So let's be correct and let's be compassionate, too (both within the congregation and out in the local community as well, reaching and keeping).

For many years our church has had a Deacon-Caring Program. The congregation is divvied up among our deacons, and each deacon is encouraged to initiate regular contact with each family in his group. But honestly, as one might expect, some do better at this assignment than others. It's a difficult thing to mandate care.

Consequently, this is one of the more risky ministries we have; and I can tell you that it leaves us open to considerable vulnerability. When a deacon fails to show care at a time when someone from within his circle is in need of care (and expects it to come), we

suffer as a ministry. So I regularly stress to the men that they need to truly care for their group members, and I have even told them about our now-even-more-famous pastoral staff meeting a long time ago.

Compassion as an Equalizer

There's really no doubt about it, compassion in gospel ministry makes the big difference. In actuality it is a great equalizer: Components such as education, resources, testimony, family, influence, drive, and the like are all important aspects in ministry that can affect our quality of and our success in ministry, but what is most likely to make the greatest impression upon others is our ability to show compassion. Here's why: Compassion has the sweeping capacity to make a difference both in time and in eternity. And it's also powerful enough to make a difference both in the giver and the receiver—and any innocent bystanders who may incidentally witness it!

So how can we “up” our compassion? I am convinced that compassion is more caught than taught; no level of seminary training can guarantee it. We need to pray it in and then we need to put it on, in the tradition of Ephesians 4:17–32. The new man with the renewed mind puts away that which is useless, and then he puts on that which is useful.


In the pyramid of growth we find in 2 Peter 1:5–7 at least four of the eight evidences of maturity are tied directly or indirectly to compassion, with brotherly kindness and charity poured on heavily at the end of the list!

For me, one of the most comforting truths of Scripture comes out of Hebrews 4: our Lord knows all about us, and yet He still cares for us! He is a sympathetic Savior and High Priest. He is never “past feeling” but is always touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

And I believe that He wants to communicate His compassions towards us and through us. His mercies are delivered fresh to us each morning. His compassions never fail. And this means that ours can fail much less often!

Even an evolutionist knows that compassion makes the difference. A student once asked anthropologist Margaret Mead for the earliest sign of civilization in any given culture. He expected the answer to be a clay pot, or perhaps a fish hook, or a grinding stone. Her surprising answer was this: “A healed femur.”

Mead went on to explain that no mended bones are found where the “law of the jungle” and the survival of the fittest reign. A healed femur shows that someone cared. Someone had to do that injured person's hunting and gathering until the leg healed.

The evidence of compassion is the first sign of civilization. And I think its presence may very well be the first sign that viable ministry is taking place too. So go out there and make a difference in your own world today by ministering compassionately! 

Dr. Brad Smith is pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Tuning Out Television

Technological advances have brought new challenges into Christian families. Most families own at least one television set, and many Christians are struggling with a daily battle with television and its ungodly influences. Television has a great impact on our lives: it teaches our children; it trains our culture. Though there is nothing necessarily wrong with having a television set, the potential exists for a great deal of evil to come into the home through this medium.

The average American watches over four hours of television a day. One study recently reported that sixty-three percent of all teens have their own television. Teens between the ages of twelve and seventeen watch an average of twenty-two hours a week.

Those who control the content of the television and movie industry are not friendly to Biblical values. One-half of all those who control the media do not claim to be associated with any religious group; eighty-six percent seldom or never attend church. An astounding eighty-four percent of media moguls believe that the government should not have any laws regarding sex; ninety-five percent believe homosexuality is not wrong. If you are not discerning

about the use of TV in your home, these are the people who are teaching your children.

God's people are allowing people and values to come into their homes through television that would not be permitted by any other means. Television teaches values, but the values taught in most programming are directly opposed to those values of a Christian. Parents and teens must learn to deal with television in a Biblical manner. Three basic principles found in Psalm 101:3 are fundamental to right thinking concerning television viewing. The verse states, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."

It is very important that we understand what God says about what we put before our eyes. There are a number of principles in Scripture regarding the importance of right thinking and right decision making concerning that which we set before our eyes. Psalm 101:3 provides some important guiding principles.

Attitude of Surrender

Surrender to God and His Word is a vital principle in guarding that which comes into your eyes and our mind.

Consider the attitude of surrender that David had toward God reflected throughout Psalm 101:

I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry [shall not be established] in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

The psalmist has an attitude of surrender. His surrender to God is seen in the two words “I will.” One of the areas of his surrender is in his eyes. The psalmist said that he would not put in front of his eyes any wicked, worthless, destructive, or base thing. The word translated “thing” is used 807 times as “word.” And so the verse could be translated, “I will not set, put, or place any base, wicked, or worthless word before my eyes.” Do you tune out the television when bad language is used? Do you turn away from a program that uses God’s name in vain or uses vulgar, base speech?

Surrender Your Eyes

The eyes are the gateway to the mind. Job said “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” Jesus said in Matthew 5:28 that if a man looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. Moral purity is linked to surrendering your eyes, the gateway to your mind. Psalm 119:37 urges us to “turn away [our] eyes from beholding vanity.” There is a great deal of emptiness on television from which we must turn away our eyes.

Ecclesiastes 6:9 tells us that “better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire.” Your eyes should be focused on that which is right and good. Proverbs 4:25 reminds us to “let [our] eyes look right on, and let [our] eyelids look straight before [us].” Surrendering your eyes to God means that you are willing to turn away, turn off, or tune out the television set when wickedness appears.

Your eyes are the mirror of your inner being. What you see, that which you look at, is what you think upon and in time will act upon.

Surrender Your Mind

Television and the media will directly affect your mind and your thinking. We have already noted the godless thinking of those who control the media. Second Corinthians 10:5 tells us to cast “down imaginations [reasonings], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” You must put up barriers to protect your mind from the vanity and wickedness shown on television.

First Peter 1:13, 14 reminds us to “gird up the loins of [our] mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.” God states in Ezekiel 11:5, “I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.” The psalmist prays in Psalm 19:14, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”

The Bible tells us to renew our minds in Romans 12:1, 2. If you are feasting on trash, you are not renewing your mind; you must be feasting upon the truth. Philippians 4:8 enjoins, “Whatsoever things are pure . . . think on these things.”

Your thinking leads to your actions. If you are not guarding your mind or the minds of your children, your family will suffer the consequences of the influence of wicked thinking. Proverbs 23:7 asserts, “For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Romans 8:6 gives a warning and a promise: “to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Your thinking can lead to death, or your thinking can lead to joy and peace.

Personal Aversion to Sin

The second great challenge in approaching television Biblically is to see sin as God sees it and to respond to sin in the same way that God responds. You must hate sin—you must have an aversion toward it. The psalmist says, “I hate the work of them that turn aside.”

Hatred means that you have an emotional attitude toward persons and things that are opposed, detested, and despised and with which you wish to have no contact or relationship. Responding Biblically to television means that you must have the same attitude toward sin and evil as God does.

The psalmist says, “I will not put or place before my eyes any worthless, base or unprofitable act; I absolutely and utterly oppose it. I detest it. I don’t want to have any contact at all with it.” To be sure every believer needs to grow in hatred of sin, and one of ways that you can prove how much you hate sin is to respond to television Biblically.

There are at least two reasons believers should have an aversion to sin.

The Love of God Demands It.

God’s love for people necessitated His hatred of evil. He loved the world so much that He sent His Son to die in payment for sin. Psalm 97:10 asserts, “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil.” Your love for God requires hating evil. God opposes evil, and if you love Him, you will have an aversion for evil as well. Proverbs 8:13 states, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”

The Law of God Demands It.

The longest psalm in the Bible—Psalm 119—focuses upon the law of God. Your respect and love for the love of God demands that you hate that which God hates. Psalm 119:104 relates, “Through thy precepts I get understanding:

therefore I hate every false way." In verse 113 the psalmist says, "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love." Verse 128 tells us, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Verse 163 offers this gripping reminder: "I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love."

Adoption of Separation

"It shall not cleave to me." The word "cleave" is used often in the Old Testament of things physically sticking to each other. It also carries the sense of clinging to someone in affection and loyalty: you have strong affection for another, so you "cleave" to him or her. This is the word that is used to describe the marriage relationship. It also means to keep close to someone or something. The Word-filled believer adopts an attitude of separation from evil.

Godly people do not cleave to sin; they cleave unto the Lord. Deuteronomy 10:20 declares, "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave." Believers are not to cleave to this world; they are to cleave to the Lord and have a loyal, loving affection our God and His Word.

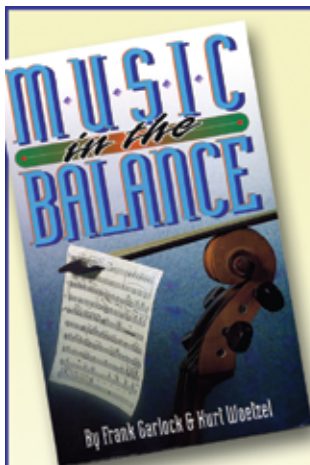
Are you cleaving to the Lord? Do you have a strong affection and loyalty and desire to be close to Him day in and day out?

God's people must separate from sin. We are told in 2 Corinthians 6:17 to "come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing." Paul exhorts us in 2 Corinthians 7:1 to "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The prophet Isaiah cautions in chapter 52, verse 11, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing." The apostle Paul declares in Romans 16:19, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." One of the primary reasons that many Christian young people are not simple concerning evil is the failure to control television's influence in the home.

Believers are commanded to separate from sinners as well as from sin. Solomon warns in Proverbs 9:6, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." We are to separate from those who do not love God. Believers are not supposed to be like unbelievers; they are to be different, holy. Romans 1:32 describes those who oppose God as "knowing the judgment of God" and "worthy of death." This verse goes on to warn believers not to take pleasure in those who do things worthy of death.

God's people must exercise discernment, caution, and prudence in dealing with television. If you have an attitude of surrender, you will yield your eyes and mind to the Lord. Living Biblically means that you have a personal aversion toward sin because the love of God demands it and the law of God necessitates it. Dealing Biblically with television requires separation from sin and from sinners.

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On the Bible

The Bible is different from other writings. It is superior to anything else we might read. It is unique. The Bible is the only extant writing from the God who created and sustains this world. Other writings that claim to be from a deity lack the authenticating evidences needed to make them worthy of man's serious consideration. Most "religious" writings throughout the ages have recorded only endeavors of men to seek to know or understand God. The Bible contains the direct "thus saith the Lord."

One Person stands out supreme above even the Bible itself—the God-man. The Bible tells of the Son of God who was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and came forth from the tomb as a humble Servant of the Lord. The entire book is about Him! It looks forward to His appearance. It records in detail His actions and teachings. It stresses how He fulfilled the Old Testament predictions of His coming. It relates detail of His further ministry after His resurrection. And it predicts that He is coming again, even giving some of the details of that future glory.

The Bible is radically distinct from all other writings in that it reports at great length the resurrection of its leader. No other instigator of religious ideas predicted his own resurrection from the dead—and then actually fulfilled that prediction. Jesus clearly claimed that He had the power to accomplish His own resurrection, and over five hundred witnesses gave testimony to His coming from the tomb and walking again among men. This one event above all others certifies the genuineness of the message of the Bible.

No other book declares a purpose so great as does the Bible: that every one—anyone and without limit—who puts personal trust in the work of the Messiah will have a new walk with God and an eternal existence with all the redeemed in the presence of God and His angels. The Bible is the power of God unto salvation. Whether conveyed as part of a testimony, preached, written, or proclaimed from the housetops, it is the "dynamite" that can break the hard crusts of the ungodly. Its truths may be presented in story or song; the power is undiminished. The Bible is the spiritual bread that men need in order to subsist and to grow.

The Bible contains a record of history that we can trust. Fictitious stories about leaders in our American Revolution soon were related along with records of actual events. Although the Bible contains some fiction (parables, etc.), historical sections record actual historical events, remarkable as they may have been. God intertwined the work of His fingers with lives and events in astonishing ways to achieve His purposes.

The Bible declares that God has worked through the centuries to fulfill a special plan, calling forth a single individual from Mesopotamia and promising to settle

his descendants in a hilly land and make a special nation of them. God brought forth from slavery in Egypt this group of Abraham's descendants and performed miracle after miracle for them, eventually getting them settled in Canaan. Though they were taken into captivity, God brought them back again to maintain a national existence in preparation for the first coming of His Messiah.

God introduced to His people a distinctive set of rituals that they were to observe until the time of the fulfillment of the reality they pictured, accomplished at the crucifixion of the Lamb of God. Along with instructions for the tabernacle, God gave His people simple, clear, moral and social commandments to supplement the oral remnants of His earlier instructions from the time of Creation. No other set of laws throughout all history even comes close to the moral standards of this Book.

Perhaps no other book in existence so faithfully records the persistent failure of a people to live acceptably according to the social/religious mores of that tribe or nation. Humans tend not to record failures. They whitewash or omit what they are not proud of and greatly boast of things they consider commendable. The Bible, however, give God's viewpoint of a people, not that of historians paid to record what will make their leaders appear honorable.

The Bible, in detail, records the shift in the divine plan through history from the one nation, which had been brought into existence and maintained through several centuries, to a totally different arrangement for the work of the Creator. The nation was not fully set aside, but a different unit among men was instituted. At Pentecost God began drawing His people together in small congregations. Some of these units were in Israel, but they were also formed in every nation where the gospel was preached.

For those who wonder about the origin of things, the Bible presents God's brief report of how He went about Creation. For those who endeavor to find some unity and comprehensive understanding of the world in which we live, often called a worldview or life view, the Bible sets forth a complete, consistent explanation. God has provided all man needs to live properly with himself, his neighbor, his enemies, and to be ready for the final judgment to come.

God has indicated that His Word will endure forever. What we say is soon forgotten. Pictures or words last longer. After a thousand years in the dust, few achievements of men can still be discerned. The Good Book from the living God will persist through the vagaries of time and on and on through the endless ages of that eternity ahead.

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A photograph of two men in a river. The man on the left, wearing a white shirt and dark pants, is standing waist-deep in water with his right arm raised. The man on the right, also in a white shirt and dark pants, is standing waist-deep in water, facing the first man. The water is murky and brown. The background is a blurred green landscape.

WAIST DEEP IN MUDDY RIVERS

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Truth from a Teacup

Debbie Garbutt

Several years ago, on one of those “milestone” birthdays that some of us might like to overlook, my husband gave me a china teacup with a gold rim and pretty pink flowers along the top. That was the beginning of my collection of teacups. Since then, friends and family have given me several cups and saucers for birthday, Christmas, or “just because.” I love to start my day with a cup of hot tea while I have my devotions, and each cup reminds me of a special person or event in my life. God often uses commonplace things to teach us, and He has used the teacup to remind me of three timely truths from His Word.

The first truth is that genuine beauty has little to do with appearance. The artists who designed my cups chose their motifs, color, and textures with one goal in mind—each wanted to make his cup pleasing to the eye. God has created each of us to be beautiful in His eyes, but the embellishments that He considers beautiful are very different, because His goal is not the same. If God were concerned with making us beautiful in appearance, things such as color, size, and shape might be of utmost importance. Instead, God longs to see the beauty of salvation, holiness, and good works in our lives. Ezekiel 16:14 reads, “And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.” True beauty begins with the cleansing away of the filth and ugliness of our sin when we trust Jesus as our Savior. “I will greatly rejoice,” Isaiah wrote, “for he hath clothed me with salvation.”

God also says that holiness is beautiful. Psalm 29:2 tells us to “worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.” When we deal with sin promptly and strive to live a holy life, we adorn ourselves with something that is beautiful in God’s eyes. In addition, Timothy instructs us to adorn ourselves “not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Tim. 2:9, 10). Every little act of kindness and helpfulness further adds to our godly beauty. The truly beautiful woman is saved and striving to live a holy life that is characterized by good works.

The second truth is that each of us is created especially for a unique purpose. It is interesting that even though I have many different cups and saucers, they are just that—different. They share the basic design of a cup, but not one of them is the same as any other.

The shapes, sizes, colors, are all different. Each cup and saucer was made to match perfectly with a particular pattern of china.

Ladies, there are not two of us the same. I may claim a kindred spirit with someone or share an interest with another, but there is no one just like me. God created us all women, but we’re very different from one another. The combination of our size, shape, color, interests, abilities, likes, and dislikes is unique to each of us. We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14). Just as each teacup is designed with a certain pattern in mind, we are designed with a particular plan in mind. It is God’s plan, and He has designed us to fit His purpose for our lives.

The last truth is that real strength is “hidden.” Let me explain. One of my teacups is so delicate that a grown man could quite possibly break it just by squeezing it in his hand. That same cup, however, can support many times its own weight on its rim when the cup is set upright in a saucer. The secret to its strength lies in the position of the cup.

So it is with us. When we are in a proper relationship to our Lord, we are able to tap into His everlasting strength. Even the physically weakest saint can be strong “in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10). Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian believers was that Jesus Christ would strengthen them “with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). We often fool ourselves into thinking that we can somehow handle the temptations of Satan and the trials of daily life, but the truth is that we are powerless without the strength of our Savior. We are reminded in John 15:5 that “without [Christ we] can do nothing.” Just as the teacup must be resting on its base to support weight without cracking, so we must be resting in our Lord to find strength for each day. When we are not in the right relationship to Him, we are like a teacup laid over on its side and can be easily crushed by temptation and trouble.

Perhaps you, like me, delight in a good cup of tea. The next time you pour a cup for yourself or to share with a friend, remember that true beauty is godliness, that you are uniquely designed for God’s purpose, and that your strength lies in resting in Him.

Debbie Garbutt is a pastor’s wife and homeschool mom. Her husband, Alan, pastors Bible Baptist Church in West Point, Mississippi, where they have served for seven years.

Science, the sweet talking goddess that but a short time ago smilingly disposed of the Bible as a trustworthy guide and took the world by the hand to lead it into a man-made millennium, has turned out to be a dragon capable of destroying that same world with a flick of her fiery tail.
—A. W. Tozer

One thing I have learned in a long life—that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and child-like.
—Albert Einstein

American culture is becoming increasingly secular. . . . Our goals are those of technology and scientific research which in turn can produce for us an endless stream of gadgets. . . . The soul of America has been . . . caught in the sterile junk-web of so-called science.
—W. A. Criswell

We have educated ourselves into imbecility.
—Malcolm Muggeridge

Americans are talking more and more—about less and less.
—Robert G. Lee

Having given rise to the modern world, the Jewish and Christian faiths have now been reduced to ruins by the modern world.
—a Chinese economist

The promise of postmodernism says, “Trust is dead; knowledge is power.”
—Os Guinness

The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.
—Solomon; Ecclesiastes 1:8

The older you get, the more it takes to fill your heart with wonder, and only God is big enough to do that.
—Ravi Zacharias

There is now not a single moral conclusion about behavior or character traits that a teacher could base a student’s grade on—not even those most dear to educators, concerning fairness and diversity.
—Dallas Willard

We live in an age so impregnated with lies that even the virtue of blood voluntarily sacrificed is insufficient to put us back on the path of truth.
—Simone Weil

There is nothing so vulgar left in our experience for which we cannot transport some professor from somewhere to justify it.
—George Will

There is a sense in which we need to be “kept abreast” of what is going on in the unfolding history and culture around us. I suspect, however, that more contemporary pastors will lose both their walk with God and their ministries over having too much information about contemporary society than having too little. William Wordsworth said, “The world is too much with us. . . .”
—David M. Atkinson

Within the last century man has leaped ahead in scientific achievement but has lagged behind morally, with the result that he is now technically capable of destroying the world and morally incapable of restraining himself from doing so.
—A. W. Tozer

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

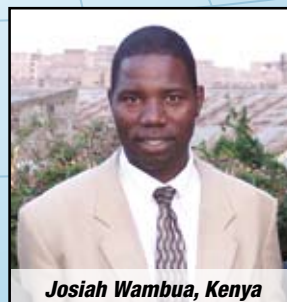
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Regional Reports

An Upper Midwest FBF Conference was held at Pillsbury Baptist Bible College on April 25-26, 2008. The event began on Friday evening with a dinner for pastors and their wives and then a general session with Dr. Brad Smith speaking. On Saturday coffee and doughnuts were served followed by a general session at which Dr. Bob Crane spoke. During that day 11 workshops were offered. Time was allotted to visit exhibitors and to fellowship. After lunch Dr. John Vaughn closed the meeting with our last general session.

Over 570 churches and pastors in five states were sent a brochure notifying them about the conference. The preaching was excellent, our spirits were uplifted, and we are anticipating another meeting in 2009.

The Bible Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, pastored by Phil Golden, hosted the **Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the FBFI**, on March 10-11, 2008. The theme of the meeting was a continuation of the 2007 National Meeting's theme: Igniting Ministry Passion.

All of the speakers applied the theme to various aspects of the Lord's work. Joel Mosier, youth pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Sellersville, Pennsylvania, rang the opening bell of the meeting with an impassioned message about setting

an example of integrity for the next generation. Bob Harrison Jr., pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Baden, Pennsylvania, dealt with the passion needed in prayer. Herb Taylor, pastor of Skyline Baptist Church in Front Royal, Virginia, shared thoughts about stirring the passion of a church's congregation for involvement in ministry. Daryl Jeffers, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Clymer, Pennsylvania, well known for his consistency as a pastor, spoke about how he has seen the Lord touch hearts with that over many years of ministry. Kristy Wright, wife of Doug Wright, pastor of Keystone Baptist Church in Berryville, Virginia, conducted a session with ladies dealing with the theme. John Vaughn, president of the FBFI, closed the meeting with a capstone message on igniting ministry passion in fellowship.

Special music was provided by the host church and by Joe and Shirley Elza. Joe is a blind pastor in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area. Shawn Trueman of Campus Light Ministries lead the singing.

Attendance was exceptional, with people coming from all over the region. Several mission boards were represented with attractive displays.

The fellowship shared was a blessing to all who were there. The church provided a luncheon that was enjoyed by all who came.



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The Lord's Path for His People (Part Two)

Jerry Sivnksty

In my last article I discussed the fact that the Lord has a path for His people. But often His children get off His path and tread the by-paths of carelessness and carnality. But there is another dangerous by-path that many Christians take—the by-path of compromise. Proverbs 6:27 says, “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” Let’s say that I’m preaching in a church to a congregation, and as I’m preaching, all of a sudden the pulpit bursts into flames. The people are shocked by the sight of the fire, but I look at the flames and throw my arms around the burning pulpit. What’s going to happen to me? Well, my clothes will be burned, my flesh will be burned, and I will turn into a literal “fiery evangelist.” A person cannot embrace fire and not pay the consequences. The same is true of a Christian who gets on the by-path of compromise.

The first area of compromise deals with believers associating with unbelievers. Second Corinthians 6:14, 15 says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”

For years I have spoken at youth camps across America. At one camp, a young lady came to me with an urgent prayer request. She said, “I would like you to pray for my unsaved boyfriend.” I replied, “Why are you dating an unsaved young man in the first place?” She said, “I believe it is the Lord’s will for me to date him.” I told her, “It is not the Lord’s will to date him, because the will of the God and the Word of God are always in agreement with each other.” She didn’t like my counsel, got upset with me and walked away. No Christian is to violate God’s command and deliberately date or marry an unsaved person. If a Christian does so, he will be in a relationship of light with darkness and righteousness with unrighteousness.

Another area of compromise deals with Fundamental churches cooperating with unorthodox churches. Second Corinthians 6:15 emphatically states, “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” Many years ago I had a heat-

ed discussion with a man about a well-known religious leader. This leader had men on his platform who denied the inerrancy of Scriptures, a literal burning Hell, and many other important doctrines. Paul wrote in Romans 16:17, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.” The teaching is crystal-clear—avoid them! Now back to the heated discussion I mentioned. This man said to me, “Let me ask you a question. Isn’t he seeing people saved in his meetings?” I took a debate class in college and one key in debating is to counterattack by asking your opponent a question before answering his. So I said to him, “Let me ask you a question. Would you have this man in your church to preach?” He said, “No, I wouldn’t because of his associations.” I then said, “What is the Lord honoring, the man or the message?” He agreed that it was the message. The Lord will always honor His Word but not the person who goes contrary to His Word. Dr. Bob Jones Sr. always said, “It is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right.” It is never right to cooperate with people who deny the Bible, no matter how well-known they are. Someone might protest, “But they are so sincere; who are you to judge them?” I am not the one who is judging—it is the Lord and His Word!

Taking the by-path of compromise leads to limited spiritual discernment. Beware of churches that hold joint meetings with all different kinds of denominations; they are not concerned with preaching Bible doctrine but rather with having “unity with diversity.” This is heresy! Second John 10 solemnly warns, “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.” Stay on the Lord’s path—you will always come out at the right place. Psalm 66:12 says, “Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.”

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

PAUL'S PASTORAL EPISTLES

Reorientation to the Pastoral Epistles

Since the early 18th century, Paul's epistles to Timothy in Ephesus and to Titus in Crete are known as the Pastoral Epistles even though Timothy and Titus did not function as pastors in the modern sense of the office. Both men were appointed by Paul as temporary apostolic representatives with oversight authority on their respective fields. Both anticipated replacement (2 Tim. 4:9, 21; Titus 3:12). The label "Pastoral Epistles" is appropriate, however, because their content revolves around church life—the appointment and conduct of ministers as well as the behavior of the church. That is why the "pastoral" label should not lead the average church member to assume that these letters have nothing to do with him. Because the church was constructed to be run congregationally, every believer needs to understand the qualifications, responsibilities, and behavior that God outlines in these letters for the church and its leadership. Here God's people discover what the Lord of the churches expects of them and their leaders.

"The Pastoral Epistles as a group are the most valuable source extant for understanding the life of the church in the transition period between the close of the pioneer days and the emergence of the institutional organization" (Merrill Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 342–43). Tenney highlights the distinctive character of the Pastorals. "For one, the growth of heresy is more apparent." Paul has had to deal periodically with various heresies in other letters (e.g., Galatians, 1 Corinthians, Colossians). But warning against a proliferation of heresies is a recurring theme in the Pastorals. Because of the threat of heresies, the Pastorals place "greater stress on formulated creed" and the importance of teaching and sound doctrine. Balancing this emphasis on sound doctrine (orthodoxy) is sound living (orthopraxy). Good works are the essential complement and evidence of a profession of the truth. "Creed and life are never divorced in the Bible," especially in the Pastorals.

Recurring Concern in the Pastoral Epistles

Though it is not the theme of the Pastoral Epistles, these letters place a recurring emphasis on warnings and responses regarding heresies, false doctrine, and foolish teachings.

- **1 Timothy**—1:4, 6, 7; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5, 20, 21
- **2 Timothy**—2:14–18, 23
- **Titus**—1:14; 3:9, 10

Contrasting the Pastoral Epistles

1 Timothy

Design—To instruct Timothy in matters of right doctrine, church order, and ministerial practice.

Key Verses—3:14–16

Summary—Primarily professionally instructive: a letter from a minister to a minister about ministers and the ministry.

Titus

Design—To instruct Titus on ministering to a difficult people.

Key Verses—2:14; 3:8 (*the essence of the epistle in miniature; each statement punctuates a motivation passage central to the letter's argument*)

Summary—Exhorting and exemplifying the Christian life to new converts in a difficult culture.

2 Timothy

Design—To counsel Timothy with personal instruction, exhortation, and encouragement.

Key Verses—4:1–8 (*Paul's emphasis on both personal exhortation and ministerial responsibility and accountability*)

Summary—Primarily personally exhortative: a letter from a minister to a minister about himself, his life, and his ministry.

In 2 Timothy . . . Paul writes on a much more personal level. He wants to encourage Timothy to be loyal to him and to the gospel, to suffer willingly, to rely on Scripture, and to visit him soon in Rome. It is not primarily a public letter, but a [window] into the apostle's heart (Mounce).

That is not to say that exhortation regarding the instruction of others is absent (cf. 2:2, 14), but that this emphasis is secondary to Paul's counsel to Timothy personally (cf. 1:6, 8, 13, 14; 2:3, 15, 16, 22, 23; 3:14ff.; 4:1ff.).

Circumstances Surrounding 2 Timothy

Paul's second letter to Timothy in Ephesus (4:19; Onesiphorus lived in Ephesus) informs Timothy that Tychicus would shortly relieve him, freeing Timothy to pick up Mark and come to Paul in Rome (4:11, 12). Woven into this rather earthly purpose for the letter are final words of personal exhortation, warning, and encouragement.

Second Timothy was the last of Paul's letters and was written from a prison in Rome during the years

(2 TIMOTHY)—NOT FOR PASTORS ONLY (PART 3)

AD 64–68. . . . After the burning of Rome in July AD 64, Nero, to stop criticism of himself, blamed the Christians, and Christianity was made an illegal religion. Sometime thereafter Paul was apprehended and faced certain death (Kent, *Pastoral Epistles*, 243).

Apparently as a result of Paul's first hearing (4:16), he was granted some reprieve. He seems, however, to see the handwriting on the wall. His end is surprisingly inauspicious for an apostle of such renown. He was deserted by virtually everyone except Luke (4:9–11, 16), and yet he is not alone nor despairing (4:17, 18). According to tradition, Paul was beheaded at the third milestone on the Ostian Way outside Rome in AD 67 under the Neronian persecution—exiting the kingdom of Rome only to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (4:18).

Content of 2 Timothy

It is difficult to trace the linear progression of the letter because it is, like many letters, highly occasional and personal in nature.

1:1, 2—Greeting

1:3–7—Personal Expressions of Affection and Encouragement

- Paul reminisces with joyful gratitude over Timothy's heritage, and exhorts on that basis.

1:8–18—Preempt Your Fear: Don't Be Afraid or Ashamed of Suffering (note 1:8, "therefore")

- 1:8–11—"Don't be ashamed"
- 1:12–15—"I'm not ashamed"
- 1:16–18—"Onesiphorous was not ashamed"

2:1–7—Perpetuate Your Faith: Through Instruction (2:1, 2) Backed Up by Example (2:3–6)

- 2:3, 4—As a soldier, endure hardship
- 2:5—As an athlete, obey the rules
- 2:6—As a farmer, feed your own soul first

2:8–13—Put Your Suffering into Perspective

- 2:8—Remember Christ's example
- 2:10—Remember the mission
- 2:11, 12—Remember the reward
- 2:12, 13—Remember the consequences

2:14–26—Purify Your Ministry and Motives

- 2:14—Pass along the promise and peril (cf. 2:11–13)
- 2:15—Present yourself a diligent minister

- 2:16–21—Purge unhealthy teachings and associations
- 2:22–26—Pursue pure motives and company and a worthy ministry

3:1–17—Prepare Yourself for Peril

- 3:1–13—Sin: the fight ahead facing the minister
 - human depravity (2–4)
 - false professors (5–9)
 - certain persecution (10–12)
- 3:14–17—Scripture: the only authoritative alternative and adequate preparation for the minister

4:1–8—Preach the Word (note 4:1, "therefore"—though not in the critical text)

- A sobering witness (1)
- A seasonless charge (2–5)
- A servant's testimony (6–8)

4:9–21—Penultimate Matters

- Final News and Closing Requests

4:22—Benediction

Key Emphases in 2 Timothy

In addition to the Pastorals' emphasis on *sound words and doctrine* and warnings about *false teachers and teaching*, 2 Timothy includes some distinctive emphases.

- *(do not) be ashamed* (4x, more than any other NT book)

This exhortation has a poignant edge. The desertion of Paul by so many other associates (4:16) would seem to suggest that everyone knew the potential danger of associating with Paul, let alone verbally defending him. Timothy, too, must be aware of the potential danger of such an association. But there are worse things than prison—being ashamed of the Lord and of His people, for instance, especially when they are at their most vulnerable (1:8). It *may* be that Timothy himself ended up in prison because of this very association that resulted from making this very journey (4:9, 11, 13, 21). Hebrews 13:23 mentions Timothy's anticipated *release* from an otherwise unrecorded imprisonment.

- *suffering/persecution* (12 references under various terms)

1:8—*share with me in suffering [evil]* (*sugkakopatheō*)

1:12—*suffer* (*paschō*)

2:3, 9—*endure hardship/suffer evil* (*sugkakopatheō*)

Continued on next page.

At a Glance Continued

2:10, 12—endure (*hupomenō*)
 3:11 [2x]—persecutions (*diōgmos*)
 3:11—afflictions (*pathēma*)
 3:11—endure [suffering] (*hupopherō*)
 3:12—suffer persecution (*diōkō*)
 4:5—endure affliction/hardship/evil/trouble (*kakopatheō*)
 See also 4:10, 14–18.

Conclusion

Second Timothy is Paul's farewell letter of final requests to Timothy; indeed, 4:6–18 sound very much like a final setting in order, settling of accounts, final arrangements. That context adds a poignant pathos and urgency to the contents of this letter. Interpret both the force and focus of its contents in that light.

The deep conviction of the writer that he was about to be put to death for holding the Christian faith (4:6–8) is to be kept in mind in all discussions of this letter.

Paul does not envisage writing anything further to Timothy, nor perhaps to anyone else. . . . The letter is written in the shadow of the scaffold and is to be seen as what Paul considered to be important in his last communication to a trusted subordinate. Not least of the letter's values is that it shows the way a Christian martyr should face death. Those who live comfortably in secure communities should not belittle this contribution, for in many lands with anti-Christian governments, people still die for their faith . . . and accordingly it is well that we appreciate Paul's attitude to dying for Christ (Carson, Moo, Morris, *Introduction to the NT*, 379).

In that context, Paul expresses as much concern for what he leaves behind him (4:1–5) as for what lies ahead of him (4:6–8, 18).

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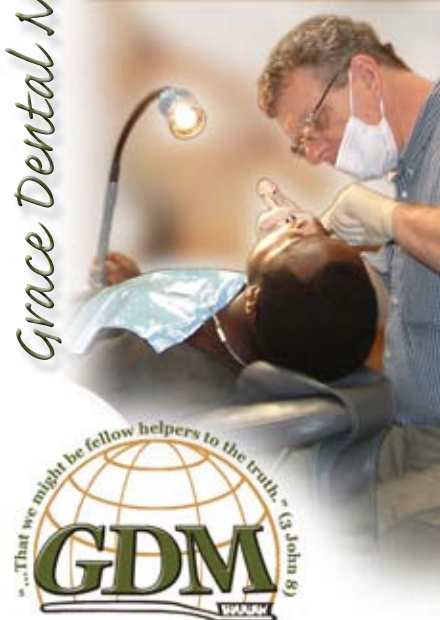
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Ahmadinejad Rantings

While this particular article is not new, believers are reminded that enemies of Israel are working in ways that God clearly revealed they would. Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has predicted the disappearance of the nation of Israel, citing their sixty-year record of "genocide, plunder, invasion, and betrayal." He has also ranted against the "satanic power" of the United States. His public statements follow his apocalyptic vision that Mahdi (the twelfth imam of Shiite Islam, who disappeared nearly 1000 years ago) will reappear along with other notable religious figures, including Jesus Christ. This appearance will end tyranny in the world.

This article can be referenced at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=080602124328.f6eyi8y1&show_article=1.

A Muslim Temple Mount

In November of 2007 the Annapolis summit was convened largely for the creation of a Palestinian state.

While Muslims had little passion for Jerusalem before the nineteenth century, many insist that both Jewish temples are fabled stories and that the Temple Mount has always been Muslim. In an interview last year Taysir Tamimi argued that the Western Wall was really constructed as a place

to tie Muhammad's horse. He also argued that the Al Aqsa Mosque was built by angels.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas stated, "Jerusalem and the Temple Mount belong to the Muslims, and any Israeli action that offends the mount will be answered by 1.5 billion Muslims."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=65919>.

Federal Court Rules against Military Policy

In his May 22 article of the *Denver Post*, Gene Johnson reported on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' reinstatement of Maj. Margaret Witt's lawsuit against her October 2007 honorable discharge from the US Air Force. Her dismissal from the Air Force ranged around her long-standing sodomite relationship with a civilian. She sued the Air Force in 2006 after being suspended without pay in 2004. Others have sued over similar dismissals, but until recently their suits had not captured any judge's favor.

In the decision, Judge Ronald M. Gold wrote, "When the government attempts to intrude upon the personal and private lives of homosexuals, the government must advance an important governmental interest . . . and the intrusion must be necessary to further that interest." Witt's response to her victory was, "I am thrilled by the court's

recognition that I can't be discharged without proving that I was harmful to morale."

This article can be referenced at <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5iusf0qzmyeUxdw-g2DKh42LzkNwD90QDLHO0>.

The Boy Scouts vs. Philadelphia

In spite of the 2000 Supreme Court decision that upheld the Boy Scouts' First Amendment right to bar gays from organization membership, the organization has continued to face a public backlash from smaller municipal governments.

Pennsylvania's Cradle of Liberty Council oversees approximately 300 Boy Scout Troops in a tri-county area, serving nearly 70,000 children. The Scouts invested \$1.5 million in renovations back in 1994. They have spent nearly \$60,000 annually in building maintenance. However, the council has been paying just one dollar annually for its use of the public building that has housed it for the last eighty years. Recently they were given until the end of May to change their policies. If the Boy Scouts refused to change the policy barring sodomites from leadership, then the city of Philadelphia threatened to charge "fair-market value" of \$200,000.00 annually. The Scouts have sued the city to maintain the present arrangement.

In 1982 the city adopted a nondiscrimination policy that included, among other

things, "sexual orientation." City Solicitor Shelly Smith stated, "We are not punishing them for not admitting homosexuals, but they cannot get free rent and violate our policies. . . . I think they think that their First Amendment rights trump our local ordinance."

This article can be referenced at http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D90U76EOB&show_article=1.

New Prosecution Standards

News came out of London recently of a boy described only as "a minor" who is being prosecuted for the content of his placard in a recent demonstration. What did this placard say? "Scientology is not a religion. It's a dangerous cult." Police gave him fifteen minutes to remove the sign. When he did not, it was confiscated by the police. The young boy was reported as being "threatening, abusive, or insulting." Chief Supt. Bob Bastoble was quoted by saying, "The City of London Police upholds the right to demonstrate lawfully, but we have to balance that with the right of all sections of the community not to be alarmed, harassed or distressed as a result of other peoples' behaviour."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1997376/Boy-faces-court-for-Scientology-placard.html>.

One-World Religion

In February Walter Veltroni, the leader of the Italian Democratic Party, proposed the creation of "an Organization of Religions [*sic*] Nations." His idea is to create a "palace of religions" in Rome that would correspond to the United Nations building in New York. This would be a place of meeting and dialogue for all of the world's faiths. According to Veltroni, the idea has already gained the support of Pope Benedict XVI as well as the Secretary of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/Feb20/2093.html>.

More Educational Bias

On April 24th of this year, the Institute of Creation Research Graduate School, a ministry of Dr. Henry Morris, was denied the ability to confer degrees in the State of Texas. In spite of the positive recommendation of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's site team and the affirmation of the THEBC Advisory Committee, Commissioner Raymund Paredes recommended that the ICRGS not be granted the right to confer degrees. His recommendation was unanimously endorsed.

Joe Stafford, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs, justified the decision by applying the Texas code against "fraudulent" and "substandard" college and university degrees. ICR was given no opportunity to respond to the allegations in the meeting, although thirty minutes were granted to activists opposing the philosophy and direction of ICR.

Under Texas law, ICR has the right to appeal the decision of the commission. At

NOTABLE QUOTES

Whoever has tried self-denial can give in his testimony that they never experienced greater pleasure and joys than after great acts of self-denial. Self denial destroys the very root and foundation of sorrow, and is nothing else but the lancing of a grievous and painful sore that effects a cure and brings abundance of health as a recompense for the pain of the operation. — Jonathan Edwards

I have discovered that if you train a man, he becomes what you are. But if you serve him, the sky is the limit as to what he can become. — Unknown

Men are not deeply influenced with extemporized thought—J. H. Jowett

The world has its own system of goals and rewards. Many Christians so covet the rewards offered by the world that they are willing to set aside their distinctiveness as followers of Christ. They want to be like Christ—but they also want to receive what the world has to give. . . . However, Christ has taken us out of the world and separated us from it that we might be his witnesses to it.—Dwight Pentecost

Gold is not less gold because it is mingled with alloy, nor light less light because faint and dim, nor grace less grace because it is young and weak. But after every allowance, I cannot see how any man deserves to be called "holy" who willfully allows himself in sins, and is not humbled and ashamed because of them. I dare not call anyone "holy" who makes a habit of willfully neglecting known duties, and willfully doing what he knows God has commanded him not to do. Well says Owen, "I do not understand how a man can be a true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow, and trouble."—J. C. Ryle

In man's nature, the heart is the central power. As the heart is, so is the man. The desire and the choice, the love and the hatred of the heart prove what the man is already, and decide what he is to become. Just as we judge of a man's physical character, his size and strength, his age and habits, by his outward appearance, so the heart gives the real inward man his character; and "the hidden man of the heart" is what God looks to.—Andrew Murray

this writing the decision is still pending.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.icr.org>.

The WCC Turns 60

A celebration was held at the World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, this past February to celebrate the organization's sixtieth year. The theme of the celebration was "We Intend to Stay Together."

The WCC was formed in Amsterdam by delegates from 147 churches from 44 countries. Today they encapsulate 349 types of churches from 110 countries and boast a representation of over 560 million individuals worldwide.

US Methodist Bishop Sally Dyke chided the division found within the ranks of the WCC, stating, "It breaks Christ's heart that some of you cannot accept my baptism, ordination, and consecration in the United Methodist Church. As a result, the body of Christ is broken by us along with the scandal of our own divisions."

General Secretary Dr. Sam Kobia emphasized that the WCC must major on poverty, environmental destruction, increasing violence, and the HIV and AIDS crisis. He issued caution to Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations for growing by proselytism (taking members from other churches) and for not accepting Roman Catholics and Orthodox church members as equal partners.

This article can be referenced at the Spring 2008 report from the American Council of Christian Churches.

Compiled by Robert Condict, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International Advisory Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

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

The Need for Expansion in Ethnic Evangelism

Pearson Johnson

The churches to which FBFI members belong have many common characteristics. We hold to the same fundamentals of the faith. We hold to the same Baptist distinctives. We believe separation is necessary to maintain the purity of the church.

Historically, there is another common characteristic we share—we are highly homogeneous in our ethnic makeup (at least in the USA). Our local church is no different. We have historically been a homogeneous church of Caucasians. We have been an accurate reflection of our suburban city, which is over 95% white. However, the demographics are changing. The ethnic diversity of our area is increasing. People are driving farther to attend our church, so our “parish” is expanding. A shopping trip to the nearest mall is an international experience where the bouquet of cultures from our region is on display. Because of these changes in our community, we are making efforts to expand our outreach to people who reflect this variety in our community. More than likely, you are finding that your church is in a similar situation as global cultures become local.

What practical things can a church do to reach out to an increasingly diverse region? What follows here and in the next *Global Focus* are some practices that are helping us open our eyes and hearts to the people that are around us.

Our focus begins to develop by preaching about God’s desire for all people to worship Him. Having a pulpit ministry based on expository preaching has certainly led us to be more Biblical in our thinking as we hear preaching on the implications of the following passages (and others) applied in light of the community in which we live.

Revelation 5:9: Having our church reflect in our community what will be true in eternity—people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation worshipping God.

The book of Jonah: Not allowing our preconceptions to interfere with reaching those whom God has called us to reach and has placed in our community.

Galatians 3:28: Reflecting the theological truth of our oneness in Jesus Christ in relationships within the church.

James 2:1–13: Warning against the sin of partiality based on the ethnic or economic status of people around us.

Our focus is sharpened by evaluating ourselves with honesty and reality. As we studied God’s Word and maintained our commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission by reaching our community with the gospel, we have recognized both the people we had neglected and the opportunities we had before us to reach the nations at our doorstep. We have also had to consciously make an effort to correct our church culture, which was comfortable with and accustomed to its lack of ethnic diversity. It will take a good dose of honesty and reality for you to do this in your church as well.

Our focus is empowered by praying for open doors to reach diverse people. Any work to reach people with the gospel must begin with prayer for God to empower efforts to plan and reach out. The effort continues with prayer for God to burden people, to motivate them for ministry, and to encourage their souls with opportunities and fruit.

Our focus is advanced by encouraging people to move past fear and exclusivity to faith, interest, and relationship building. Through the preaching of the Bible and regular reference to opportunities, people have been encouraged to see coworkers, friends, and neighbors of a different ethnicity in a different light. Rather than being afraid of the diversity, people can become interested in and intrigued by the variety, particularly when they view people Biblically.

Opportunities for relationship building abound as well. Many other ethnic groups are more hospitable than is the average American Caucasian. We have been surprised at how easily relationships can be established with people of other ethnicities once time is committed to doing so.

In summary, our churches must fight against a “retreat” mindset—fleeing from diversity into isolation (or another suburb)—and instead focus on the “advance” mindset of the Great Commission to reach all people. We must maintain a global focus here at home.

In the next issue we will look at some practical steps we can take together to meet the need for expanding our ethnic evangelism.

Church Directory

Calvary Independent Church
Fundamental Beliefs - "True worship quickens the conscience..."



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www.tricityministries.org

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www.bethelbc.org

Rob Campbell, Senior Pastor
Sermons available online

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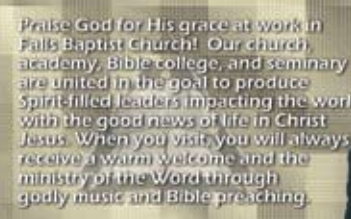

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Praise God for His grace at work in Falls Baptist Church! Our church, academy, Bible college, and seminary are united in the goal to produce Spirit-filled leaders impacting the world with the good news of life in Christ Jesus. When you visit, you will always receive a warm welcome and the ministry of the Word through godly music and Bible preaching.

Pastor Wayne Van Gelderen

Operation Freedom

Tony and Marcy Younce

In the year 1952 a brave young man named Lewis Younce (our dad) joined the Army to serve his country during the Korean War. On the night before Lewis shipped out to Korea, the Chaplain shared the gospel with the unit of soldiers. And ever since that night, when Lewis asked the Lord into his heart to save him, his desire to see souls saved was a never-ending prayer. He was a faithful witness to the very end.

A year ago, at the age of 73, Lewis was the director of the Wellheaders ministry in our church, Troy Baptist Temple. The Wellheaders are members who are burdened for souls and pray for opportunities to meet people "at the well" to give them a drink of the "living water."

Lewis also actively served in one of our church ministries called Operation Freedom, which is a ministry to encourage and evangelize our military troops. One of the young men from our church, Nathan Lee, is serving in the US Navy, and in addition to his assignment, he is assisting the Chaplain onboard the USS *Ramage*. *Ramage* is a guided missile destroyer designed for combat operations against surface, air, and subsurface threats. She is home to three hundred of the nation's finest sailors who are defending the United States.

God built a spiritual bridge to connect Troy Baptist Temple and the *Ramage*. Through Nathan, the Chaplain granted permission for our church to write gospel letters to the sailors. The Chaplain e-mailed us with prayer requests and updates

on how the Lord was touching the hearts of the sailors. The chaplain's and Nathan's e-mails kept us on the edge of our seats as they took us with them on an eight-month spiritual journey out to sea. The Chaplain's foremost request was to pray for spiritual revival on the ship and for souls to be saved. We prayed and sent tracts and handwritten gospel letters and cards to thank them for serving our country. Lewis was so excited and so honored to be writing to our servicemen and women. He was praying that God would deliver his letters to the sailors who need Jesus. Lewis not only rejoiced in his faith; he shared it with others.

On August 23, 2006, Dad wrote his last letter to a sailor. On September 2, 2006, just ten days later, Lewis was killed in a tragic car accident on his way to Canada for a fishing trip. The Lord chose to take our dad home to Heaven that day. How quickly life can change in ten days. This is a reminder that today may be someone's last chance to hear the gospel, and today may be your last chance to tell the gospel.

Dad let us read his last letter before he mailed it; following is a quote from that letter: "We pray for America, its leaders and our service members daily. I remember my days as a young soldier; how at times I felt so alone and unconnected. On the eve of shipping out to the Far East I met someone who changed my life and opened my eyes to an absolutely new and wonderful life. His name is Jesus."

We were thrilled to receive word

from the Chaplain that one of the sailors received Dad's letter and that three sailors on the *Ramage* accepted Jesus as their Savior during their deployment. The *Ramage* has safely returned to their home port this month. "Thank you, Lord!"

We salute our heroes!

Tony and Marcy Younce live in Troy, Ohio, and are members of Troy Baptist Temple. They serve as directors of Operation Freedom. Tony served thirty-three years in the Air National Guard.

Could God give you a burden for China? ... of course He could!

The Chinese American Millennium Partnership, Inc. is a non-profit corporation dedicated to sharing the Gospel with the 1.5 billion people in China. We also seek to educate Americans to the needs of the Chinese people. We use the teaching of oral English as our primary vehicle. We are preparing for a future that will allow a greater, bolder work to be done for Christ!

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Ministry Resources

Audiovisual Resources

Audio-video lighting control and acoustics: Upfits, new construction and design build for all audio-video lighting and acoustic applications. Website includes a checklist for either new construction or upfits. Contact Tim Owens, 1.800.467.3709, <http://www.audioethics.com>.

A/V solutions for churches: See http://bssc.sel.sony.com/BroadcastandBusiness/minisites/house_of_worship/how_index.shtml?DCMP&HOW_07HQS&TechforWorship_eNewsletter_468x60_Nov07.

Bibles/Bible Study

All-in-one Biblical resource: Bible versions and translations, Greek New Testament, Biblical resource sites, ancient world, etc.: <http://ntgateway.com/multibib>.

Audio Bibles, Bible software, church ministry software: <http://www.rejoicesoftware.com>.

Bible Database: Read Bibles online in many languages and translations: <http://bibledatabase.net/index.php>.

Bible Gateway: Read and research Scripture online in various languages or translations; includes advanced searching capabilities based on keywords or Scripture references: <http://www.biblegateway.com>.

Bible.org:

Thousands of Bible study resources and teaching tools; also the home of the NET Bible: <http://www.bible.org/index.php>.

The NET Bible: <http://www.bible.org/netbible/index.htm>.

NeXT Bible: <http://net.bible.org/home.php>.

Bible reading lists, Bible study tools, downloads, and more: <http://www.unboundbible.org>.

Bible study tools: Study helps and Bible searches provided by Crosswalk.com.

Bible tools: A collection of various study helps: <http://bibletools.org>.

Blue-Letter Bible: Over 4,000,000 links onsite to over 165,000 pages of concordances, lexicons, dictionaries, commentaries, images, and Bible versions: <http://www.blueletterbible.org>.

Concordances, dictionaries, and encyclopedias provided by StudyLight.org.

Inductive Bible Study resource: Greek word studies, commentaries by verse, and more: <http://www.preceptaustin.org>.

Internet Christian Library: Services included publishing the *Faculty Dialogue* and sponsoring writing seminars and workshops for faculty that address critical issues facing Christian higher education: <http://www.iclnet.org/icl.html>.

Linked Word Project: A Bible-study program provided by

BJU; study the Bible with exegetical information available at your fingertips: <http://www.bju.edu/bible/bible.php?b=gen&c=1&v=0&d=1&w=0>.

Resource pages for Biblical studies: Resource for serious, scholarly studies of the early Christian writings and their social world: <http://www.torreys.org/bible>.

Blogs/Forums

Sharper Iron: A forum “to publish and discuss news and ideas from a Christian, Biblical, Fundamentalist worldview” intended “to bring fundamentalist Christian brothers and sisters together for the cause of edification”: www.sharperiron.org.

Blogger: Web/Mobile Blogger was one of the first blog-publishing tools. Years after Google bought it, Blogger remains one of the best, especially for newbies. Create a brain-dead simple weblog and let Blogger host it (with a blogspot.com name) using the slew of provided templates, or use it to publish a blog on your own domain: www.blogger.com.

WordPress: Web It lacks the simplicity of Blogger or Vox, but the commercial offshoot of WordPress.org offers some of the best tools of any hosted blogging service: www.wordpress.com.

Church Management Software

ACS Technologies: <http://www.acstechnologies.com>.

Church management software and Web solutions: <http://www.churchmanagementsolutions.com>.

Church Windows: <http://www.churchwindows.com>.

Frieze Consulting: This consulting firm supplies church management resources and church management software: <http://www.friezeconsulting.com/content/view/31/76/>.

Power Church Software: <http://www.powerchurch.com>.

Shelby Systems: <http://www.shelbyinc.com>.

Collaboration services: Share church schedules, news, and directories on your church website; fully secure: [www.AllWithOneAccord.com](http://AllWithOneAccord.com).

Church Ministry Software

Great information on emergency preparedness for churches: <http://www.christianemergencynetwork.com>.

Corporate identity manuals and guides: How to make an identity guide for your church: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2007/08/28/corporate-identity-manuals-guides>.

Commercial Bible Software

Ages Software: Cheap Bible software—hundreds of the most classically acclaimed Christian books that time has offered. Calvin, Luther, Wesley, the Early Church Fathers,

Adam Clarke, and many other writers will well supplement any library: <http://www.ageslibrary.com>.

Accordance Software: Over the years Accordance has expanded from a specialized tool for scholars and pastors to one of the most complete, full-featured, and accessible Bible study programs available. Whether you're doing personal Bible study or scholarly research, you'll find that Accordance remains a breakthrough in power and ease of use; for use with Mac: www.accordancebible.com or 1.877.339.5855.

BibleOne: A Bible software program for Microsoft Windows that includes over 40 Bible texts and Bible translations: <http://www.bibleone.org/main.aspx>.

BibleWorks: An original languages Bible software program that includes Greek, Hebrew, and Septuagint Bibles as well as translations in English, German, Spanish, and many other languages: <http://www.bibleworks.com>.

Cross Country Software: Opportunities to purchase many different kinds of software for Bible study: <http://www.online-bible.com>.

Galaxie Software Electronic Publishing: Provides various tools for Bible study including the Theological Journal Library CDs: <http://www.galaxie.com>.

Logos Bible Software: A software program providing a multitude of tools for studying the Bible. Great search engine (searchable commentaries, references), but pricey: <http://www.logos.com>.

Power Bible: An inexpensive, easy-to-use Windows application for Christian Bible study with 22 Bible translations, 10 Bible dictionaries, 10 topical references, and 20 commentaries: <http://www.powerbible.com>.

WordSearch: Over 40 Bible translations and over 1000 Biblical reference works, totaling over 2400 volumes. Free downloadable version: <http://www.wordsearchbible.com>.

Free Bible Software

E-Sword: Outstanding free Bible software with various downloadable study tools including Bibles, dictionaries, commentaries, etc.: <http://www.e-sword.net>.

Free Bible Software: Offers a free CD with 31 study tools and Bibles, a unique topic-index, and QuickVerse software; this site also offers a different special CD for free each month: <http://www.freebiblesoftware.com>.

Online Bible: <http://www.onlinebible.net>.

Communication

Internet phone connection software: Free video calls, free phone calls to anyone else using Skype. Great way for churches to keep in touch with missionaries: <http://www.skype.com/newtoskype>.

Looking for options with e-mail? Gmail by Google allows you to engage in chats, post calendars online, and more: <http://mail.google.com>.

Computer Resources

Help with software: Information concerning free software; other helpful software and hardware helps: <http://lists.topica.com/channels/software>.

The Worthwhile Company: Provides software development, web design, and web hosting services to enable you to maximize your computing resources: <http://www.worthwhile.com>.

Filters for Internet Content

Barracuda Networks: The Barracuda Web Filter is an integrated content filtering, application blocking, and spyware protection solution: <http://www.barracudanetworks.com>.

BSafe Online: Dedicated to keeping children, families, and small businesses safe while using the Internet: <http://www.bsafehome.com>.

Safe Eyes: A complete online solution for PCs and Macs that makes it easy to block objectionable websites, limit time spent online, monitor instant messenger chats, and control peer-to-peer file sharing: <http://www.internetsafety.com/safe-eyes>.

Desktop Publishing

Free Stock Photo Images:

<http://www.freepixels.com>

<http://www.freedigitalphotos.net>

<http://www.sxc.hu>

Free Video Stock Footage: <http://www.freestockfootage.com>.

Huge Free repository of fonts: <http://www.fontspace.com/>.

Adobe Photoshop for Free for Online: <https://www.photoshop.com/express/landing.html>.

Maps

Print maps for church visitation: <http://maps.google.com>.

Another great mapping tool for visitation: <http://maps.live.com>.

Free USPS Zip Code reference maps for visitation: <http://www.usnaviguide.com/zip.htm>.

Read about the newest technologies with GPS (Global Positioning System) devices: <http://www.gps.gov>.

PowerPoint

Subscription service to help with PowerPoint graphics: <http://www.powerpointsermons.com>.

PowerPoint templates and backgrounds: <http://www.powerfinish.com>, <http://www.awesomebackgrounds.com>.

This page is intended as a guide for pastors and laymen looking for ministry resources. Websites are listed for information purposes; the inclusion of a resource here does not necessarily imply FBFI endorsement of the site's ministry or online content. Readers are urged to use discernment and caution when accessing the Internet.



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