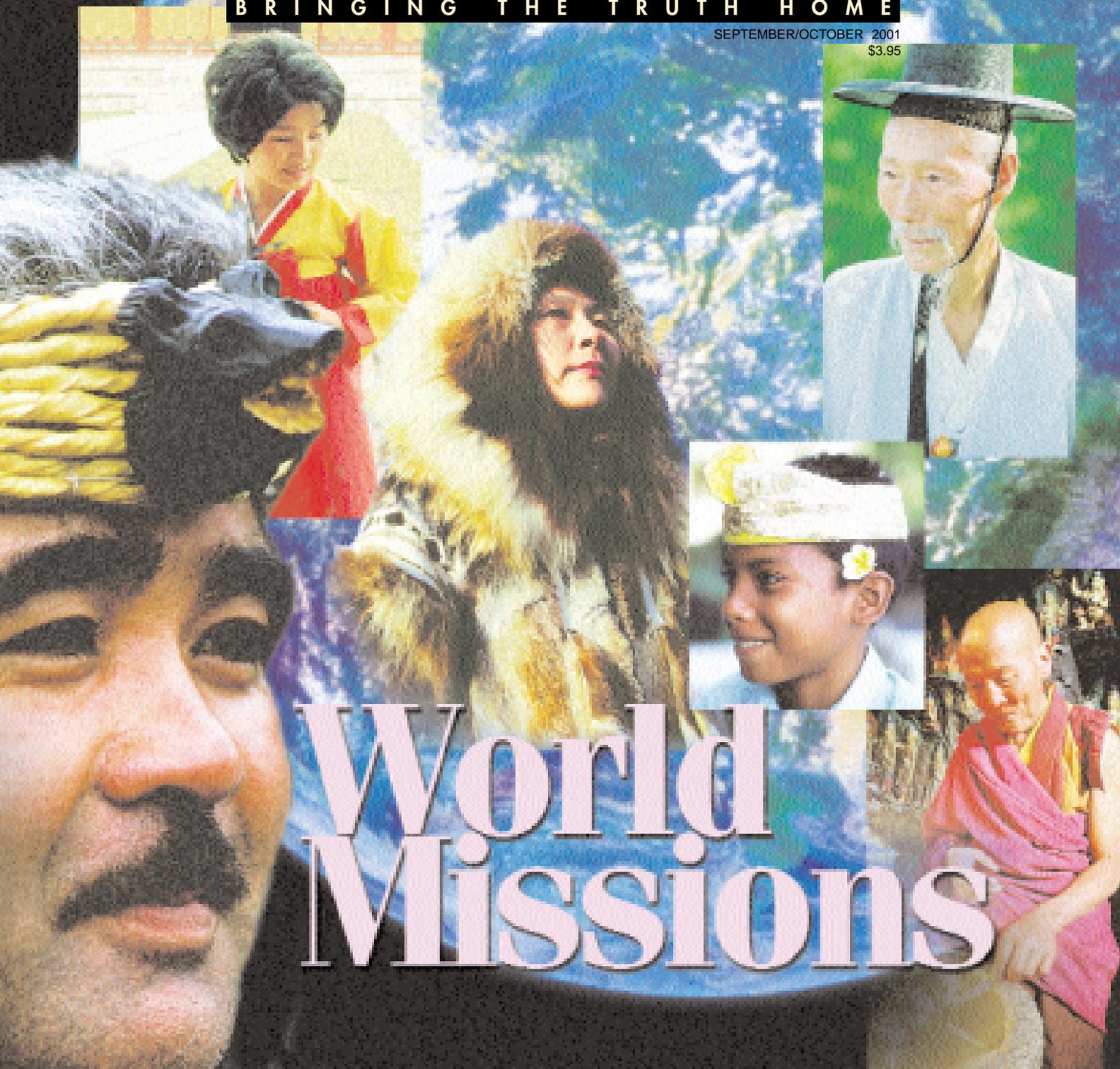


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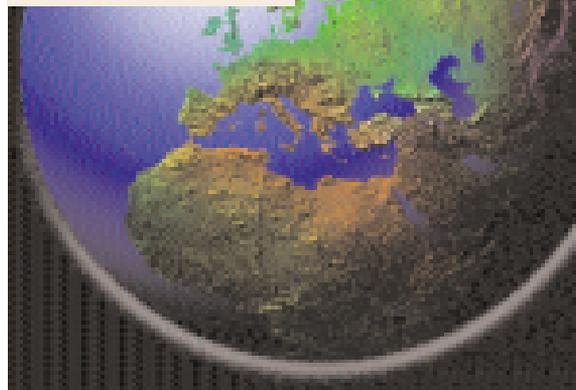
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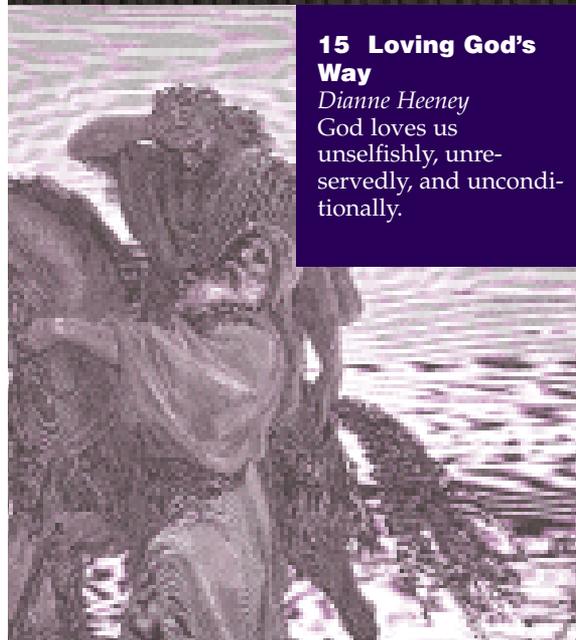
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It appears that Brother Schmidt [Mail Bag, July/August 2001] has totally missed the point of the eternal quality of the precious blood. A prayerful, re-reading of Hebrews 9:1-28 should help dissolve the fog. According to John 21:17-27, sometime between dawn of His resurrection day and eight days later, Jesus ascended to the heavenly sanctuary and completed the blood-offering requirement and fulfilled the type established in the tabernacle offerings. . . . We don't know how much of the precious blood of Christ was sprinkled on the mercy seat—perhaps all; type fulfillment would only require *some*, as the high priest took *some* into the sanctuary and drained the rest onto the ground at the base of the brazen altar (Lev. 9:8-9; 16:11-14).

*Pastor Frank Workman
Troy, OH*

In your July-August issue you had a couple of quotes that I thought were sort of idiotic. When I read the one from Barbara Streisand, all I could think about was, here is just another whining, sniveling, poor losing Democrat. . . . She probably does not know that our Lord is the one who put our elected officials where they are. As for the statement that Mark Steyn made, that was just so idiotic it wasn't worth printing. Your magazine is the greatest and I hope you keep up the good work.

*Herbert M. Curtis Sr.
herbleesr@webtv.net*

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Greetings in His precious name! I am David Mang Sum, from Myanmar, pastor of New Testament Baptist Church. I do thank the Lord for putting me into His precious work. I recently learned that you have been publishing a wonderful magazine, *Frontline*, for many years. When I read this magazine I have been blessed tremendously by it. I hereby request that you could send me your magazine on a regular basis; I would appreciate it. May God bless you as you serve Him faithfully. Thank you so much for your kind attention and care.

*David Mang Sum
Yangon, Myanmar*

I will keep promoting *Frontline*. It would be too bad to lose such a good magazine. Increase our bulk subscription as requested.

*Robert Crane
Pillsbury Baptist
Bible College
Owatonna, MN*

Behind the Lines

(Continued from page 5)

phrases and philosophies are not our marching orders. Whatever the Word of God says, do that. Do it the way God says to do it. "If ye love me, [ye will] keep my commandments" (John 14:15); "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

Is the mood of Jesuit ethics alive and well in the spectrum of Fundamentalism today? Are our people being brainwashed by the news media, the literature of secular humanism, pragmatism, the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and the uncertain messages heralded from some Fundamentalist pulpits and schools today? I believe the answer must be a resounding yes!

We need to beware of the mood of New Evangelicalism. History repeats itself.

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The Mood of New Evangelicalism

Fundamentalists lost their battle during the great Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy at the turn of the century because of their strategy of fighting from within their denominations.

From the 1920s to the 1960s, Fundamentalist churches, schools, missions, and publishing houses flourished. Within the movement, however, the “Jesuit ethic” of New Evangelicalism reared its ugly head. That ethic, also called “Jesuit Casuistry,” means “a rule of orthodoxy is to be ready to say that black is white, if the church demands it” (i.e., the end justifies the means).

The pulpit of every fundamental Baptist church is potentially one pastor away from New Evangelicalism. Due to its encroaching influence, many people in the pew show an affirmation toward Fundamentalism but embrace the ideology of New Evangelicalism.

The mood of New Evangelicalism involves a disparate attitude regarding the Scriptures. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). The serpent in Genesis 3 beguiled Eve with that perverted ideology. He counseled circumvention of the authority of the Word of God in order to reach the objective of becoming like God. Satan has not abandoned his “garden theology” strategy. History chronicles his slimy trail of cunning and craftiness as he tries to bypass obedience to the word of God through “situation ethics.” It is important that a Christian base his beliefs and practices squarely upon “Thus saith the Lord” because Bible principles never change.

The mood of New Evangelicalism

produces a mind-set that rationalizes disobedience. But we, as fundamental believers, must have a “set mind,” which is the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). Our thinking must be His thinking. Our seeing must be as He sees. We do not judge what we see by what we see. We judge what we see by what God’s Word says about what we see. Many times, I heard Dr. Bob Jones Sr. emphasize, “It is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right.” We cannot circumvent obedience to the Word of God and piously proclaim that we have reached our goal of honoring God. In Romans 3:8, Paul asked, “Let us do evil, that good may come?” The answer is obvious: God forbid.

The Word of God stands as our absolute rule for faith and practice. A Biblical philosophy produces a spiritual mind-set or mood. If there was ever a time to be certain we are building our philosophy, *our beliefs*, on the impregnable rock of the Holy Scriptures, it is today. For a man of God to have discernment, he must have the ability to see issues and trends from God’s perspective. We cannot cultivate a proper mind-set unless we possess a set mind. We cannot convey the mind of Christ to our people unless we steadfastly uphold the Word of God as our mind-set.

Alien philosophies abound, and some march triumphantly within Fundamentalism. Let’s look at what the purveyors of spiritual dissonance would have us accept as our Biblical perspective.

Personal preferences

replace Biblical principles. In other words, Christian “liberty” supersedes God’s principles concerning personal choices about where we eat, what we wear, where we sell, and what we read and listen to.

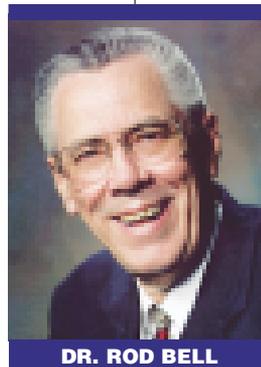
Peer pressure determines practice. That philosophy means nothing more than the fear of man. Too often, peer pressure, rather than the blessed Holy Spirit, controls our actions. God’s Word teaches, “The fear of man bringeth a snare” (Prov. 29:25).

Popularity takes priority over Biblical precedent and principle. Man has an ego, and he wants to be popular. God desires us to seek His approval. Leadership within Fundamentalism has experienced debilitation and disgrace when placed upon the altar of humanistic philosophy and intellectual attainment. Twisted ambition, such as when we give honor to men and covet honor given by men, must be smothered. A Biblical perspective seeks the power of the Holy Spirit in order to honor God.

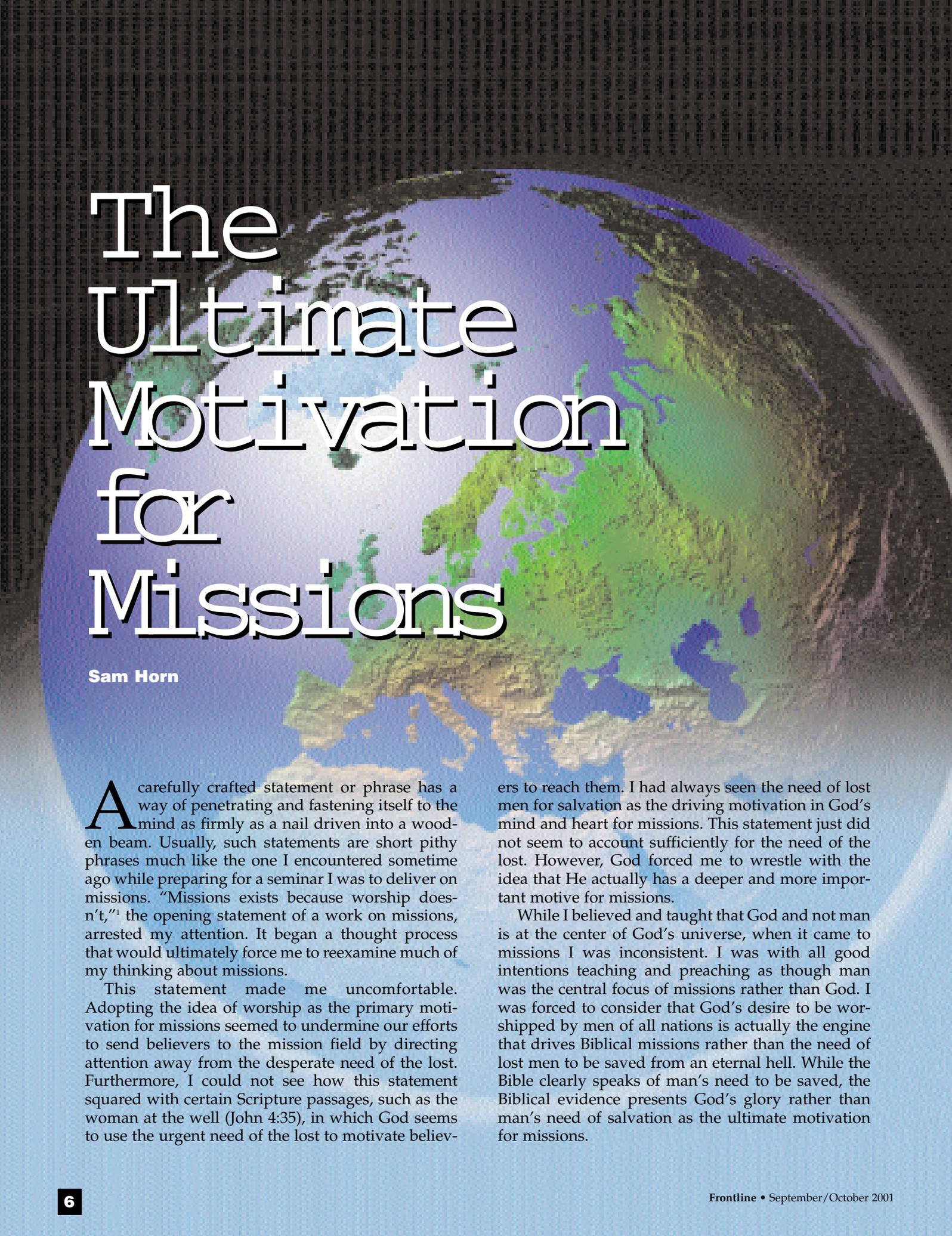
The politics of success overrule the principle of obedience. Pride—individual pride, institutional pride, and intellectual pride—can overshadow our reasoning. While intellectualism can be a blessing, it can also be a curse. The value of education is limited. It is certainly important to present the Word of God concisely and clearly, but no amount of intellectualism will cause the world to accept our message.

Jesuit ethics prevail over Jesus’ principles. The end justifies the means. If it works, then use it. Whatever it takes to get the job done, do it. Those

(Continued on page 4)



DR. ROD BELL



The Ultimate Motivation for Missions

Sam Horn

A carefully crafted statement or phrase has a way of penetrating and fastening itself to the mind as firmly as a nail driven into a wooden beam. Usually, such statements are short pithy phrases much like the one I encountered sometime ago while preparing for a seminar I was to deliver on missions. "Missions exists because worship doesn't,"¹ the opening statement of a work on missions, arrested my attention. It began a thought process that would ultimately force me to reexamine much of my thinking about missions.

This statement made me uncomfortable. Adopting the idea of worship as the primary motivation for missions seemed to undermine our efforts to send believers to the mission field by directing attention away from the desperate need of the lost. Furthermore, I could not see how this statement squared with certain Scripture passages, such as the woman at the well (John 4:35), in which God seems to use the urgent need of the lost to motivate believ-

ers to reach them. I had always seen the need of lost men for salvation as the driving motivation in God's mind and heart for missions. This statement just did not seem to account sufficiently for the need of the lost. However, God forced me to wrestle with the idea that He actually has a deeper and more important motive for missions.

While I believed and taught that God and not man is at the center of God's universe, when it came to missions I was inconsistent. I was with all good intentions teaching and preaching as though man was the central focus of missions rather than God. I was forced to consider that God's desire to be worshipped by men of all nations is actually the engine that drives Biblical missions rather than the need of lost men to be saved from an eternal hell. While the Bible clearly speaks of man's need to be saved, the Biblical evidence presents God's glory rather than man's need of salvation as the ultimate motivation for missions.

A God-Centered Approach to Missions Is Consistent with Biblical Revelation

At the heart of Biblical revelation is God's self-revelation to man. Part of what God chose to reveal in the Scriptures concerns His primary motive for the activities ascribed to Him. That motivation can be summed up in the phrase, "God does what He does for the sake of His name." God's primary motive in the salvation of lost men is "the sake of his name" (Isa. 63:7-14; Acts 15:14; Rom. 1:5). The Scriptures reveal God's primary motive in delivering His children from their troubles is "the sake of his name" (1 Sam. 12:22; Ps. 106:8). God's primary motive in showing mercy to sinning people is "the sake of his name" (Isa. 48:9; Eze. 20:44). God's primary motive in dealing with the wicked is "the sake of his name" (Ex. 9:14-16; Rom. 9:17). Finally, God's primary motive in His dealings with saved men is "the sake of his name" (1 John 2:12; Acts 9:16). Everything that God does is done for the benefit, advancement, and glory of His great name.

In the New Testament, Paul establishes the glory of God as the basis for every activity or area of the believer's life, including the most common and menial of activities such as eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10:31). If God's glory is to be our primary concern and motivation in such things as eating and drinking, how much more should it be our primary concern and motivation in missions?

A God-Centered Approach to Missions Is the Foundation for the Great Commission

Although not the only place in the Bible where the Lord commissioned His disciples to reach the world, the account in Matthew 28:18-20 is certainly the most familiar and is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. Whereas the other commission statements each stress a different aspect of the believer's responsibility to proclaim the gospel³, Matthew's statement sets forth the goal (make disciples from every nation) and the authority for the mission being assigned to the disciples.

A very important particle in verse 19 (therefore) links the reader back to the previous verse where Jesus stands before His disciples and declares He has been given all authority in every realm of the universe. This statement is really the key to understanding the rest of the Lord's statements in the Great Commission. Everything else that follows in verses 19-20 rests on the fact that Jesus has all authority in the universe. Because He has authority (not just because there is a need in the nations), His disciples are obligated to dedicate themselves faithfully to the task of this commission.

A God-Centered Approach to Missions Is the Basis for Paul's Missions Ministry

If a God-centered approach to missions is the foundation of the Great Commission, then the New Testament pattern of those who carried out this commission should reflect this approach. Clearly the most extensive example of missions in the New Testament can be seen in the life and ministry of the apostle Paul.

An overview of Paul's ministry and missionary journeys makes it obvious that he had a great passion and burden for the lost. Paul himself articulates this burden for lost Israel (Rom. 10:1), and he expressed his desire to see Gentiles converted (Rom. 15:16). Clearly Paul was moved by a love for the lost world of his day. However, was this the primary drive that motivated Paul's missionary ministry? Several passages clearly associated with Paul's call to missionary ministry would seem to indicate otherwise.

Paul's testimony to the Galatian Christians indicated God had separated him even before his birth for the specific task of preaching God's Son (Gal. 1:1-15). This passage stresses the preaching of Christ as the primary emphasis and presents the need of the nations as an important secondary emphasis in Paul's ministry.

A second place where this is clearly seen is in Acts 9:15-16. Shortly after his conversion on the Damascus road, God appeared to Ananias and revealed that Paul was a "chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Clearly, God has called Paul to a ministry of advancing "the Name." Perhaps the clearest articulation of this truth can be seen in Paul's introduction of himself and his ministry to the Romans. In the opening verses of chapter one, Paul describes himself as a man separated to the gospel (1:1). However, Paul identifies the ultimate purpose or objective of the gospel, and by association, his ministry in that gospel as being "for the name" (1:5). In his commentary on this passage, Douglas Moo notes, "Ultimately, Paul ministers not for personal gain or even the benefit of his converts, but for the glory and benefit of Jesus Christ his Lord."⁴ Perhaps the following words of a well-known commentator on this passage will best sum up Paul's motivation for ministry.

Why did Paul desire to bring the nations to the obedience of faith? It was for the sake of the glory and honor of Christ's name. For God had exalted him to the highest place and had given him "the name that is above every name" in order that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue

God forced me to wrestle with the idea that He actually has a deeper and more important motive for missions.

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." If, therefore, God desires every knee to bow to Jesus and every tongue to confess Him, so should we. We should be "jealous" (as Scripture sometimes puts it) for the honor of His name—troubled when it remains unknown, hurt when it is ignored, indignant when it is blasphemed, and all the time anxious and determined that it shall be given the honor and glory which are due to it.⁵

active in the verbal proclamation of the gospel? We tend to address this need by painting pictures of the eternal destiny of the lost and their desperate need for salvation. What is the result of such a man-centered approach? The smallest missionary force in decades. If our primary motivation for missions is a love of the lost, then sooner or later our commitment to missions will wane. Our primary motivation for missions should be a love for God!

A God-Centered Approach to Missions Strengthens the Church's Commitment to Modern Missions

It is clear that the early church certainly understood that God's glory was the primary motivation behind the work of proclaiming the gospel, and they reached their world within one generation. In fact, they were so committed to the glory of God and the sake of "the Name" that many of them were willing to lay down their lives for its advancement. Contrast that with the contemporary state of missions. How many are really committed to the cause of missions and the Great Commission? Often we have contented ourselves with giving dollars to missions rather than personally going and have salved our consciences by developing a program of evangelism or visitation in our church for others to carry out. However, how many believers in local congregations are personally

Many believers search their hearts in condemnation, looking for some feeling of benevolence that will propel them into bold evangelism. It will never happen. It is impossible to love "the lost." You can't feel deeply for an abstraction or a concept. You would find it impossible to love deeply an unfamiliar individual portrayed in a photograph, let alone a nation or a race or something as vague as "all lost people." Don't wait for a feeling of love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly Father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God. It is not primarily out of a compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God.⁶

As great as the need of the lost for salvation may be, and as deeply as we may (or may not) be able to love them, these in themselves are insufficient as primary

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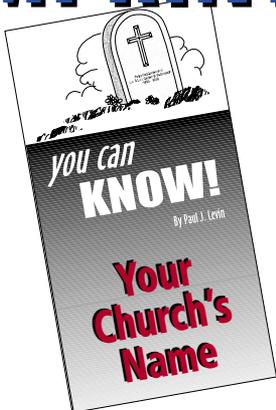
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motives for my commitment to missions. Our love for God, our commitment to the advancement of His name, and our desire and passion for His glory will ultimately be that which render our service in missions acceptable in His sight. Furthermore, a commitment to His glory rather than man's need will force us to focus on faithfulness rather than results and prayer and obedience rather than pragmatic methodology!

The following quotation summarizes the conclusions expressed in this article related to the proper motivation for missions.

Missions is not God's ultimate goal; worship is. And when this sinks into a person's heart everything changes. The world is often turned on its head, and everything looks different, including the missionary enterprise.

The ultimate foundation for our passion to see God glorified is His own passion to be glorified. God is central and supreme in His own affections. There are no rivals for the supremacy of God's glory in his own heart. God is not an idolater. He does not disobey the first and great commandment. With all his heart and soul and strength and mind he delights in the glory of his manifold perfections. The most passionate heart for God in all the universe is God's heart.

This truth, more than any other I know, seals the conviction that worship is the fuel and goal of missions. The deepest reason why our passion for God should fuel missions is that God's passion for God fuels missions. Missions is the overflow of our delight in God because missions is the overflow of God's delight in being God. And the deepest reason why worship is the goal in missions is that worship is God's goal. We are confirmed in this goal by the biblical record of God's relentless pursuit of praise among the nations. "Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!" (Ps. 117:1). If it is God's goal it must be our goal.⁷

Dr. Sam Horn is Executive Vice President of Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin.

¹ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), p. 11. Although Piper would not claim to be a militant Fundamentalist and many of our readers will rightly disagree strongly with the way he chooses to apply certain passages of Scripture or the ministry associations he maintains, he has made a significant contribution to the literature on missiology that should be read and discussed by

Fundamentalists.

² This is not to minimize the soteriological concern that God has in missions. Clearly, the Scriptures present the salvation of the lost as a key component of Biblical missions. In my thinking, this has to do with the means rather than the end of missions. The ultimate end of missions is the glory of God and the advancement of His name. The means by which this goal or end is to be achieved is through the salvation of people from all the nations of the earth. We have no grounds for relaxing our commitment to evangelism. Rather, we have a much higher motivation for our evangelistic efforts. When we realize what is at stake is the honor and glory of God and

not just a human soul (as valuable and precious as that soul may be), we begin to understand the urgency of the Great Commission and the need for our total commitment to missions.

³ Other commission statements can be found in Mark 16:15 (stressing the breadth of the commission); Luke 24:47 (stressing the content of the message); John 15:16 (stressing the results of the message); and Acts 1:8 (revealing the pattern and power behind the message).

⁴ Douglass Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), p. 53.

⁵ John Stott, *Romans: God's Good News for the Word* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1994), p. 53.

⁶ John Dawson, *Taking Our Cities for God* (Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 1989), pp. 208-209. The above quotation can also be found in *Let the Nations Be Glad*, pp. 38-39.

⁷ *Let the Nations Be Glad*, p. 15.

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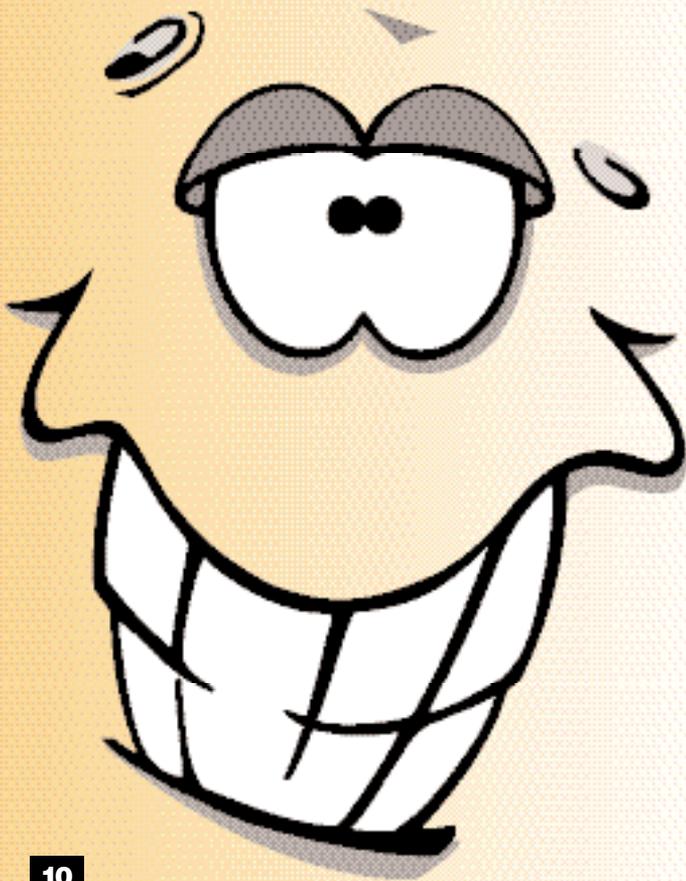

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Moo If You Must (But Talk to Me)

Rick Armstrong



The handsome Spanish waiter had taken the orders of everyone at the table, and Anna prepared to order her first breakfast as a new missionary in Spain. However, she didn't even know what the menu items were, much less how to pronounce their names. Nevertheless, she was determined to communicate her request in one way or another (hunger does that to one).

When the waiter asked, "¿Qué desea usted?" (What would you like?), she started to say "h-h-uee-v-v-o." The waiter smiled kindly as if not understanding, so she tried another tactic. She blurted out, "Cluck, cluck, cluck," and flapped her arms. Then she oinked like a pig for a few syllables, followed by a "moo, moo," imitating Old MacDonald's barnyard. Everyone at the table laughed at her odd form of communication.

Then the waiter, speaking in a beautiful British accent said, "So you would like some eggs, ham, and milk. Will there be anything else this morning?" Anna turned four shades of red, and everyone else nearly rolled with laughter. It just so happened that the Spanish waiter had been raised in England and was enjoying the show as much as the missionaries.

It is not often easy to communicate with those of other cultures, but often they understand us and want us to talk with them more than we think they do. Moreover, they (seldom) laugh ungraciously at our mistakes since they realize that they make them too as they strive to speak English.

Every missionary soon learns to laugh at himself while restraining his show of merriment at the expense of others. For example, in Spanish a man learns never to express his embarrassment by saying he is "embarazado," because he soon learns that he has just claimed to be pregnant.

In my first sermon in Spain I tried to suggest that a wife might try to have some nice potatoes (That is spelled with an "e", right?) prepared for her husband when he arrived home from work. However, I pronounced "patatas" with a "d" and the word came out "patadas". I struggled to understand why that was so hilarious to the folks, until they explained that I had just suggested that the wives prepare some good hot "kicks" in the pants for their husbands each evening! (I guess they liked the idea.)

Any missionary can keep you laughing at him by telling you story after story of his struggles with language, and you can probably tell some wild stories of foreigners who came out with some real "doozies" while trying to learn English.

However, mistakes like these often cause us to be unnecessarily afraid to talk to others, while other misunderstandings with language and culture might cause us to be suspicious of them. For instance, if a Spaniard says that you "molesta" someone, he does not mean that you "abused" anyone, but rather that someone was just "bothered" by something you did. Yet, one can be quite "molestado" by misunderstanding their "accusation."

If we allow some minor misunderstanding to keep us from befriending a neighbor, we may miss a great blessing. When my father was unconscious for a month, we questioned whether it was even worth attempting to talk to him. A kind nurse strongly encouraged us to say anything to him, never knowing what might jolt him to reality and encourage him not to give up, even though we did not know if he understood us.

Often we doubt if a “foreigner” understands us, and we feel it is not worth the effort to talk to him. However, if we could hear their testimonies, our lives would be changed forever.

Talk to Hector. Listen to him tell of the Sandinista invasion of Nicaragua. You will hear of his position as a former teacher and administrator in a grade school, followed by his time in prison for his political views. He can tell you thrilling stories of machine gun fire raking the prison as he hid under his bunk, leaving him to be one of the few to come out alive. Then you will hear of God’s miraculous provision as this “man of the world” turned into a man of God by the Lord’s saving grace and is now raising his family on near minimum wage jobs because he lacks credentials to teach in California.

Speak with Felipe. Hear him tell of Haiti’s naked children with balloon-sized stomachs filled with infection because of the lack of nutrition, living in straw shacks and bathing in muddy, germ-infested rivers. Listen as he speaks of legless men in the Dominican Republic who “walk” along the roads by swinging their torsos on their hands. Then hear him tell of the great riches he has in Christ.

The stories are endless. Hear Raul’s story of his life in a Cuban political prison, his flight to freedom as a refugee, and later his discovery of greater freedom in Christ. Listen to Lola’s story of her flight on foot over the snow-capped Pyrenees mountains after the Spanish civil war. Observe God’s grace at work helping her raise children in France and Switzerland until her husband is invited to study (and later teach) in a Baptist seminary in America.

One after another tell of how the Lord brought them to America where they could hear and believe the good news of the gospel. When they were in their lands, many cried, “Yankee, go home.” Now they often hear similar words spat at them.

God blessed our attempts to talk with my father. By a miracle of God he is now at home recuperating well. I like to think that our talking to him when he understood nothing helped revive him.

I know that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Therefore, I want to talk and be heard so that others may believe. God has brought many from foreign lands to find faith in Christ here. Every Sunday folks from more than a dozen Spanish-speaking nations meet in our church to praise the Lord for sending folks here to talk to them of Christ. Talk to them, and talk to God on their behalf—even if you have to cluck, oink, and moo to do it. It won’t be as hard as you think.

We do not even know how to talk to God as we ought, but He says He can “interpret” what we ask in prayer. In Romans 8 He says that His Spirit intercedes with “groanings which cannot be uttered.” Praise the Lord that He seeks to understand our needs and communicate with us. Likewise, He can help us to overcome our embarrassment so we can love, talk to, and pray with folks from other cultures, even if we do laugh with (at?) each other from time to time. No, I’m not embarrassed to tell them of Christ so they can have faith in Him. (And I’m not “embarazado” either!)

Rick Armstrong is a missionary to Hispanics in California serving with Gospel Fellowship Association Missions.

The Tradition Continues...



Jesus Christ, the ultimate Servant, made Himself of no reputation. Kneeling as a slave before house guests, He “poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (John 13:5).

From the beginning, “We’re here to serve” has been the motto at Northland Baptist Bible College. At Northland, “servant leadership” isn’t a marketing cliché; it’s our ongoing message, as represented by the “Be Great. Serve” towel presented to each senior at graduation.

We’re looking for surrendered men and women, those who are totally abandoned to the cause of Christ.

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25

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THE WALL
HEAVEN

Witnessing with Tracts

Ruth Bumgardner

I trusted Christ as my Savior at the age of 29 after reading the Bible for nearly two years. Now, as I approach the age of 53, I look back and sadly reflect that in my whole lifetime I received only one gospel tract, and that from a 16-year-old boy only three years ago. That means I went an incredible 50 years without receiving a single gospel tract.

I was reared in the Roman Catholic Church, baptized as an infant, and sent to parochial schools. In my mid-twenties, the Lord started to draw me to Himself. I got a Bible and just began to read. My search was uncertain; I only knew that I wanted to know God. I was persistent, and the Holy Spirit was gracious in directing me through the Scriptures. It would have been so helpful if I had been given a tract with even the Romans Road to direct me, but no gospel tract crossed my path.

God tells us that He works all things together for good. The “good” I see coming out of this situation is that I have a burden to give out tracts—ones that clearly explain the gospel. Some believers doubtfully protest, “How can anyone get saved that easily, just by reading a short tract?” They do not allow for the Holy Spirit’s preparation of the heart. I *know* that my heart was prepared, and I would have devoured any tract if I had known there was such a thing.

The Bible tells us, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matt. 7:12). I thank the Lord for withholding a

gospel presentation from me for as long as He did so I would have a clear understanding of just how important a good tract can be in the hands of someone whose heart has been prepared by the Holy Spirit. The following incidents are some of the ways I have personally seen the Lord work. I know that only eternity will show the effectiveness of my obedience in giving out His Word in this special way.

The Lord brought about an unusual divine appointment in the winter of 1999. I left a grocery store, just having tried to give a tract to someone and finding that I didn’t have one. I was a bit irritated with myself and made a mental note to put some more tracts in my purse when I got home.

I went to my car, but instead of starting the car and going home, I sat there and thought about what had just happened. All at once I was overwhelmed by the fact that God had given me the ability to give out gospel tracts easily. I know I have been given much boldness in this area.

Just recently I had been considering a number of limitations in my life, wanting to do things in the Lord’s work that I wasn’t free to do. The Holy Spirit impressed upon my heart to praise the Lord for my boldness and ability to give out tracts and to offer myself to be used further in that way. So I sat there praising God for His gift of boldness and offering myself to be used in whatever way He would choose. It was one of those times when God’s presence was

BRIDGE
of Life

GOD'S
SIMPLE PLAN
OF
SALVATION

very real to me.

When I got home, I went to get a few tracts to keep in my purse. As I was going through the drawer where I kept them, the Holy Spirit impressed upon my heart to take a few foreign language tracts, one of which was Lithuanian.

That afternoon I went shopping, and as I walked to one of the stores I noticed a lady trying to help an elderly lady in a wheelchair to get into a car. I went over and asked if I could help. When she said yes, I noticed that she had an accent. When I had finished helping her, I asked her from what country she came. You guessed it—Lithuania! The older lady spoke very little English; she too was Lithuanian. I told them that I had something for them, and I pulled out the tract that the Holy Spirit had impressed upon my heart to put in my purse. Of course, because it was in their native tongue, they gladly accepted it.

This experience seems unbelievable, yet it's true—our God is sovereign! He is not only sovereign, but He is all wise and His timing is perfect, as the following incident shows. One day my husband asked me to go for a walk. I agreed, and as we were leaving the Holy Spirit impressed upon my heart to take a tract with me, and not just any tract, but specifically a fairly lengthy booklet. I thought, *To whom would I give a tract on a walk with my husband?*, and I ignored the Spirit's prompting.

Then my husband went inside to get a hat, and I stood outside waiting. The Holy Spirit again prompted me to get that tract to put in my pocket; I finally obeyed and went inside and got it.

Finally we started on our walk. As we got to the end of our lane, we heard a car stop behind us. A man got out of the car and yelled toward my husband, "Sir! Sir! Can you help me? I'm lost!" We turned around and he ran towards us waving a map, saying again, "I'm lost!"

The man was from out of town and needed directions to a local business and to a hotel at which he was registered. When I was finished giving directions, I pulled out that tract and said, "Sir, would you take the time we saved you to read this booklet tonight?"

He said, "I sure will!" He was really appreciative and thanked us.

My husband observed all of this. After the man left and we continued on our walk, I shared with my husband how the Holy Spirit had impressed upon my heart to take that tract. I also shared with him how I believed our walk was delayed to time it perfectly for that divine appointment.

I'm nobody special—just one of those ordinary people in a good Bible-believing, fundamental church. My talents aren't great, but my God is. His Word tells us that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world . . . That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1:27, 29).

Whether your talents are big or small, use what you have to sow the seed of His Word when you can. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

There are people around you every day whose hearts the Holy Spirit has prepared, and they are waiting for the seed of His Word. Will you give it to them?

Ruth Bumgardner is a freelance writer living in Cherry Valley, Illinois.

First Peter 3:15 says, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

Ways to be ready:

1) AT HOME

- by the door
- in the guest room
- in correspondence
- in books loaned out

2) IN YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS

- on your desk
- a counter display
- in correspondence

3) ON YOUR PERSON

- in your purse
- in your car
- in your pocket

- Have a variety of tracts.
- Keep them clean and neat.
- Most importantly, see that they give a clear presentation of the gospel and that you can answer the questions of those to whom you give them.

Some fine Gospel tracts:

God's Simple Plan of Salvation by Ford Porter. This is available in many languages (also in Braille) and extra-extra-large print (good for nursing home visitation). It gives a VERY clear presentation of the gospel. (*Lifegate, P.O. Box 5, Monrovia, IN 46157*)

New Birth by Paul J. Levin. I often give this out along with a Lifegate tract. It is set up in a question-answer format. This is the one I gave out to the Lithuanian ladies, and is available in several languages. (*Bible Tracts, Inc., P.O. Box 188, Bloomington, IL 61702, bibletractsinc@juno.com*)

Hidden Treasure by Becky Vaughn. Becky's picture on the front of this tract causes people to want to read it. I find this especially good to give out in a hospital or to anyone in the medical profession. (*Hidden Treasure, (864) 322-0700*)

The Bridge by Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. This is a clear pictorial tract in small booklet form. You could easily use this tract to "walk" someone through the plan of salvation. The visual is very helpful. (*Majestic Media, (810) 598-1919*)

Truth (also in another format entitled "The Data Explosion") by John Van Gelderen. An excellent tract that takes the reader through a clear presentation of the gospel. It's the one I gave to the "I'm lost" man. (*Preach the Word Ministries, (800) 656-7896*)

“What Do You Want Me to Do About It?”

Mike Tardive

As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you (John 17:18).” What does this mean? How is this supposed to change my life? Many modern-day parables serve to illustrate forcefully for us what Jesus meant when He made this statement. One such parable came before our young church and helped us to understand more clearly Jesus’ words.

Two young boys were swimming in a local canal, as many of the local kids do in the summer months in Dublin. One boy was 13 and the other was ten; they were best friends. The ten-year-old attempted to jump across the canal and fell short. He slipped back in, and apparently his leg got entangled in a shopping cart that had been thrown into the canal. When he failed to come back up from the water, his friend dove into the water to save him. Tragically, the struggling ten-year-old clutched him in a panic, and they drowned in each other’s arms. Our hearts, as well as many in the community, were touched and broken to hear this tragic story. Some of our Sunday school kids were schoolmates of these boys.

What an example this 13-year-old was of our Lord Jesus, who gave Himself unreservedly to save us. As all men “fall short of the glory of God” and remain entangled with sin, men are perishing and living on the verge of a horrific eternal death. But the One who calls us friend left the throne of glory, plunged Himself into this sin-cursed world, and gave His life for us that we might live. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Contrast this with another incident that was in the Dublin newspaper a couple of summers ago. When a family was picnicking at a nearby lake, their five-year-old son waded out into the shallow water in the summer heat. Eventually he waded into a dangerous spot, and it quickly became apparent that he was drowning. None of the family members could swim either, but they all began frantically to do what they could to try to help the perishing boy. It soon became obvious that they needed help, since they did not have what they needed to save him. They spotted a woman nearby who saw what was happening. They desperately ran to her and begged her for help. But they were horrified when she coldly responded, “What do you want me to do about it?” She then hastily got into her car and drove off. This dashed the parents’ last hope, and their little boy drowned. The grieving parents, when discussing the incident later, were devastated by the

attitude of the woman. The mother said, “Even if she had given her towel, it might have been a lifeline to my son.”

Many, like the woman in the story, say by their inaction and apathy, “What do you want me to do about it?” Then they continue to do nothing or very little. Maybe this woman felt ashamed later when she thought about what she had not done. It is possible, as she read about herself in the newspaper the next day, that she had deep regret. Perhaps it was out of fear that she did nothing. It could be, had she had to do it all over again, she would have responded differently and done something. But the hard fact remains that when it was time to act, she did nothing, and the boy perished. She did not plunge in the water to save him; she did not give her towel for a lifeline; she did not show any concern as she went

about her business.

But the same is true of many Bible-believing Christians. They respond to the fate of the multitudes with, “What do you want me to do about it?” When faithful pastors all across the country preach the clear commands of our Lord, they respond by their inaction, “What do you want me to do about it?” While the untold millions still remain untold, their lives say, “What do you want me to do about it?”

How thankful we are for the many who are like the boy who gave his life attempting to save the one whom he loved. How about you? Which of the above-mentioned people would describe you? Are you plunging in at great cost, like your Savior, to reach the lost? If you are not plunging in, are you giving what God has given you as a lifeline so others can plunge in? Are you, at the very least, showing enough heartfelt concern that you pray every day for the perishing multitudes before you go off about your business? Or will you be like this infamous woman, pretending not to know what to do, and going on your way? It is too late for those who have already perished without the Savior. For the millions who have yet to hear and be saved, the time is now. What will you do?

“If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?” (Prov. 24:11, 12).

Michael D. Tardive serves as a missionary to Ireland with Baptist World Mission.

Loving God's Way

Dianne Heeney



If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the lord shall reward thee (Prov. 25:21-22).

Unselfishly, unreservedly, unconditionally . . . this is how God loves. A Jewish lawyer once asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus, in his reply, instead answered the question, "Who is he who loves as God commanded?" The lawyer was brought to a point of self-realization—the "Aha!" feeling we experience when our eyes are opened to the personal application of some spiritual truth. Perhaps we can find some enlightenment through the parable Jesus shared.

Unfortunate Mishap

In Luke 10:25-35 we read the account of the "Good Samaritan." The scenario begins with a man who is molested by thieves while traveling from Jerusalem (the main worship center for the Jews) to Jericho (a headquarters of sorts for priests and Levites). This road, known by the Romans as the "red and bloody way," was an 18-mile stretch often frequented by robbers. This Jewish man was beaten, robbed, and left for dead. While he lay unconscious, two Jewish religious leaders happened upon him. Both the priest and the Levite took notice of him, evaluated his condition, and crossed to the other side of the road and continued on their journey.

Unsatisfactory Excuses

Why did both of these men demonstrate such appalling disregard for another human being? Perhaps they were concerned for their own safety on that treacherous path. It could be they assumed the man was beyond help. Maybe they had appointments to meet at the temple and didn't want to be late. Or possibly the prospect of being inconvenienced by being made "unclean" was a factor. But didn't the law command better treatment than this for an *animal* belonging to a brother, or even to one's enemy (Deut. 22:4; Ex. 23:4, 5)? Such blatant neglect for a fellow Jew was contemptible.

Unlikely Benefactor

As irony would have it, a Samaritan gentleman happened along the way. Historically, the Samaritans and the Jews had no dealings with one another (John 4:9). The Samaritans were despised by the Jews because of their mixed Gentile blood and for their different worship, which was centered at Mt. Gerizim. This individual, in spite of this stigma, "came where he was" instead of just observing from a distance, then he "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." He wasted no time tending to the needs of the man. He did not pause to consider whether this Jew would do the same for him. He simply and spontaneously helped. He esteemed another better than himself (Phil. 2:3)

and, after using some “home remedies” of the day, he chose to walk and let the wounded man ride his beast. He then took him to a place of safety and stayed the night with him, setting aside his own plans. Verse 35 tells us that he paid the innkeeper what would have been equivalent to two days’ wages to cover costs and also pledged to “foot the bill” for anything further that was spent. His compassion was manifested in a most excellent and unselfish manner.

Unexpected Conclusion

Now Jesus draws an application from the story. The lawyer is expecting an answer to his question, “Who am I to love?” Instead, the conclusion Jesus brings defines the person who loves in a godly fashion. This scholar was very familiar with the particulars of the law, accurately quoting a combination of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 (Luke 10:27). He knew what the law said, but the performance of it in an unconditional, unselfish, and unbiased manner was something else. The Lord Jesus knew that the Jews did not consider Gentiles, especially Samaritans, their “neighbors.” In His infinite wisdom, He forces the lawyer to admit that it was not the Jewish leaders in this example who were eager to demonstrate *agape* love toward their fellow Jew. Rather, it was one who would be considered an inferior, an enemy. In replying to Jesus’ question, “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?” it seems the man cannot even bring himself to say the word “Samaritan.” Jesus carries the painful application a step further and admonishes, “Go, and do thou likewise”—be like this man whom you would despise. This prideful man is artfully and duly abased by this “Aha!” experience.

Uncommon Kindness

The type of loving that pleases God is not easily found in our society today. The Bible says in John:13:35, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” This is one of the earmarks of the believer—something that serves to set him apart in this world. There is an interesting progression in the art of loving God’s way that should not be overlooked. First, we are to love others *as we love ourselves* (Matt. 19:19). Secondly, we are told to love others *more than* we love ourselves (Phil. 2:3, 4). Finally, we are to love *as God loves us* (John 15:12).

What about you today? Do you demonstrate “Samaritan spontaneity” in your efforts to be “neighborly”? Do you first count the cost? Do you extend yourself in

the most excellent way possible? Or do you do just enough to salve your conscience when another has a need? Are you willing to be inconvenienced or perhaps stretched financially? Do you reach out to those who seem “beyond help” or are not “your type” of people?

We are not told in this Scriptural account whether the lawyer took Jesus’ challenge to heart. Did he go away sorrowful and persistent in his ways as the rich young ruler in Matthew 19? Let us not go away from this powerful lesson unchanged. It has been said that the only things in this life which are eternal are God’s Word and people. May we live our lives each day as if we truly believed it.

Diane Heeney is a freelance writer living in Pinedale, Wyoming, where she and her husband are assisting in the ministry of a growing church.

There is a Master worthy of service

in whose bondage we are truly free.

There is a King worthy of loyalty

in whose service we are joyful and holy.

*Though there be a thousand calls
for our allegiance,*

only One is worthy of our commitment.

*Though there be a thousand promises
of fulfillment,*

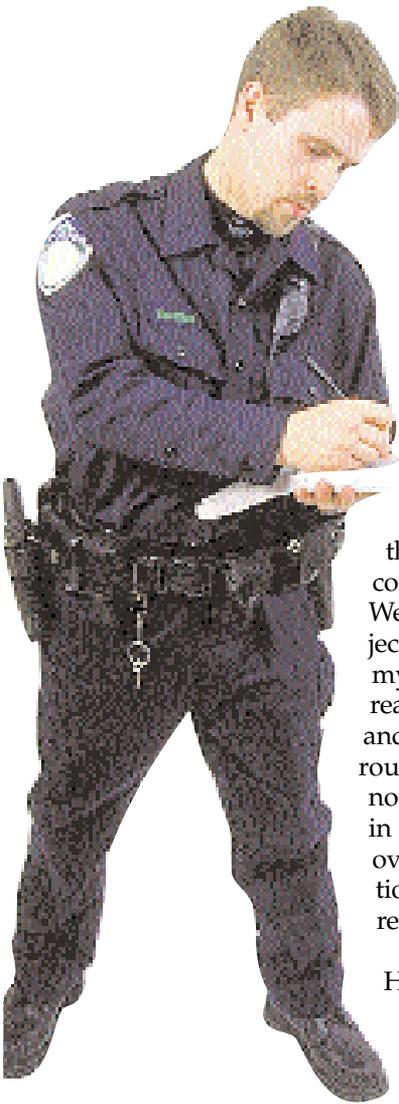
our hearts are satisfied only in Him.

The pursuit of a solid academic education at FaithWay Baptist College is rooted in a Spirit-filled walk with God. By saturating our lives with His Word, renewing our minds through His truth, and submitting our hearts to His will, we become truly free to serve Him Who alone makes us joyful and holy.

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The Penalty

Tim Bell

It was the spring of the year and I was taking my nephew back to college. He had come to visit us on the weekend, and we only lived a couple of hours from the school. We began to discuss a certain subject, and as the uncle I had to give my opinion of the matter. We were really getting into the conversation and I became oblivious to my surroundings, and that's when I noticed this nice blue light flashing in my rear view mirror. I pulled over and heard that familiar question, "Can I see your license and registration please?"

I knew my goose was cooked. He asked me if I knew how fast I was going and I said, "No, but I know I was speeding."

He said, "Yes, you were doing 92 to be exact." I believed then I was going to

the county jail.

He walked away and then he came back and asked, "Did you have your seat belt on?"

Again I had to say "No," and then he walked to his car.

He was back there for a long time, and my mind was racing. *What have I done? Is there something else that I have done that I don't know about? Have I not paid a ticket? Or is the name "Bell" just the wrong one in this part of town?*

After 20 minutes or so he called me back to his car. I looked at my nephew and said, "Take care of my children." I walked to his car, and he told me to get in on the passenger side, so I did. He was a big man, and he got in and began to tap on his clip board. He kept taking long deep breaths and then he said, "You do realize that I can have your car impounded and you will lose your license, and then you will have to come to traffic school for at least a year!"

"No sir, but if that is what I deserve then so be it."

He looked at me strange and said, "I have been cursed at and spit at all day, and you are the first person who has been honest and willing to admit his fault. What am I going to do with you?" Well I had a great idea for him!

Then he said that he would give me a ticket for not having my seat belt on and for me to pay the fine by mail or by

appearing in court. I signed the ticket and began to get out of the car. That is when he grabbed my arm and said, "Wait! I am not done with you yet." He turned off the inside dome light and then the radio and then the outside flashing lights. He turned and with tears streaming down his face he began to unfold his burden to me. He told me that he had just received Christ about a year ago and that he truly wants to serve the Lord. His wife has been in "wicca" and she is trying to bring her two young sons into this cult as well. He did not know what to do. I prayed with him and gave him a book, *The Bondage Breaker*, by Neil T. Anderson. We both wept that day by I-240, and the presence of the Lord was very real inside the patrol car. We parted company, and I took my nephew on to school.

About a month later I was having a very low kind of day and was asking the Lord for some kind of encouragement from somewhere. I went to the mail box and found a letter addressed to me from North Carolina. I opened it and read the following:

You probably never thought you would hear from me again, but I wanted to tell about the difference you made on the night of our meeting. The battle had been a strong one. I have stood toe-to-toe with the adversary for almost a year now, not counting the years I gave to the locusts when I did nothing as Satan and his demons gained a stronger and stronger hold in our home. I was tired and beaten. The attacks were more and more severe. The constant fighting between Cathy and me had brought me to the place where I was ready to capitulate. I was about to give her up and leave her. But our Lord knows when we are about to break. That is why he allowed me to clock your vehicle out of the hundreds passing every minute. Our God is good, isn't He? I saw that night how the Lord is faithful and how a man can be used mightily through his righteousness. Had you displayed any hint of the deception, irritation, or disrespect I am accustomed to, it would have been just another traffic stop like the other 20 that day. You admitted your infraction and spoke with kindness and respect even though you were facing an unpleasant experience.

Let's face it, most people are not happy to see me unless they have problems or want me to face the things they are afraid to face. Your Christlike attitude opened the door for me to ask for your help at a most critical time. You gave me great encouragement through the book. It is a valuable resource in

my struggle. Satan almost had his way with me but I realize now that he would like nothing better than for me to let a precious soul slip into darkness. He would love to break up our home. I am the last cord holding my precious wife back.

Thanks for your encouragement. Please continue to pray for our home. There are two little boys' souls at stake as well.

P.S. The \$25 is to pay your fine. I had to write you a ticket for something, but I can at least pay your penalty.

Tears began to stream down my cheeks. At the bottom of the note was his phone number. I called him, and we both rejoiced at the goodness of God. It wasn't until a while later that it really hit me. *That is what Christ did for me!* I was lost and deserving of hell and should have been sent there. But Christ looked down and said He loved me and that He wanted to give me the opportunity to live with Him. So He came to this sinful earth and took my place and paid my penalty of sin with His precious blood. What a perfect picture of what Christ did for us.

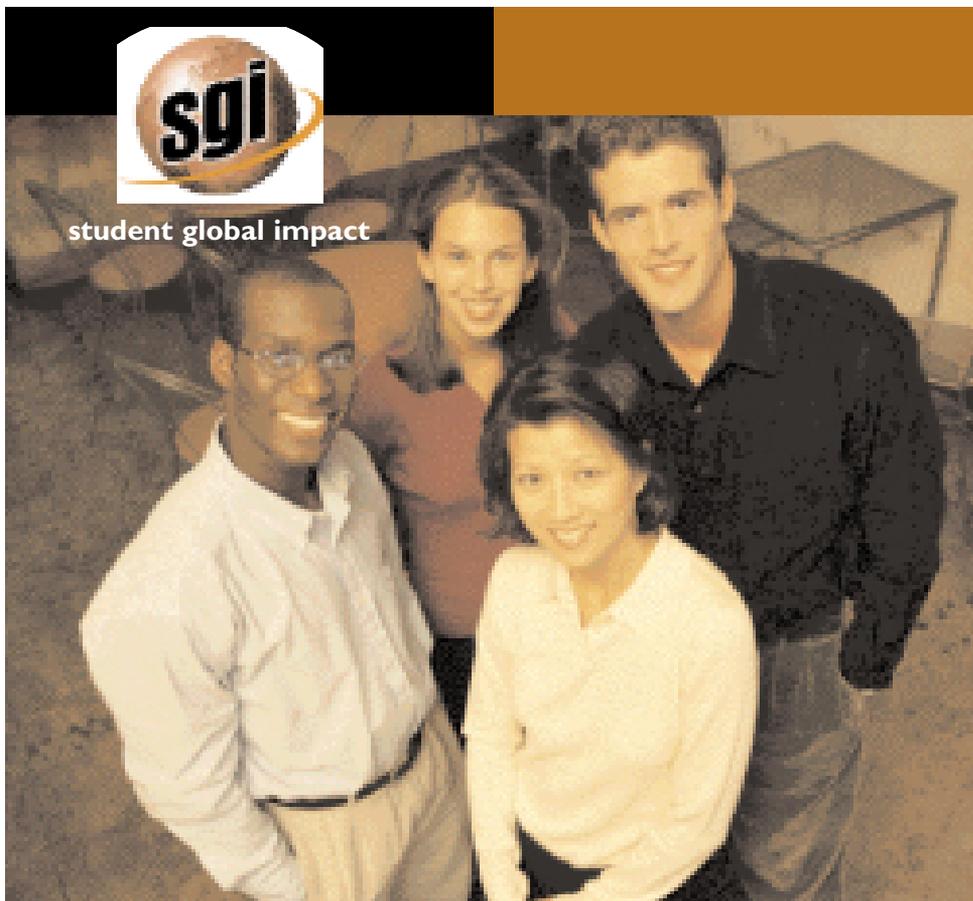
He paid my penalty.

God's precious Son, the ultimate sacrifice, gave of Himself. Without any conditions, He truly paid the penalty for my sins. Then I began to think of how God answered my prayer that day. He sent this letter to me just when I needed it the most. Our God is so good. You never know when your influence and Christlike response will be the tool that could help a soul in need.

Tim Bell serves on the pastoral staff at Tabernacle Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



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FBFI NEWS AND EVENTS

Bob Whitmore, Managing Editor

Frontline Sunday Time

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New FBFI and Frontline E-mail Address

Please note that the e-mail address for *Frontline* and the FBFI has been changed to FBFLINE@mindspring.com.

FBF Web Site Is Back— with a New URL

The FBF web site is now found at www.fbfi.org to reflect the new name of its parent organization—Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International. It may take us a while to get the web site back to where it was a year ago, but we are working on it as time permits. We

appreciate your patience and your prayer on our behalf.

New FBFI Research Secretary

Dr. Gordon A. Dickson, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio, has accepted the position of FBFI Research Secretary. Dr. Dickson has also been added to the Executive Board.

Bley Called to Active Duty

Wayne Bley, chairman of the FBFI Chaplaincy Commission, has been called to active duty.

2001 Meetings

November 5-6

Pastors' Retreat
Fort Tuthill (USAF Retreat Center)
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Contact: Dr. Kevin Schaal
Northwest Valley Baptist Church

4030 W. Yorkshire Drive
Glendale, AZ 85308
(623) 581-3115
KevSchaal@juno.com

NOTE: This is an overnight pastor's retreat that begins at noon on Monday with lunch. The schedule will include preaching, fun, and fellowship. The retreat will end at noon on Tuesday. Because of the type of accommodations this is NOT a retreat where wives can be included. The pastors will be sharing several large A-Frame cabins. This is a good setting for college and high school age preacher boys to rub shoulders some men already in ministry. It will be a great environment for encouragement and mentoring.

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“The Soulwinning Conference was a blessing and challenge to me in many ways. One particular phrase from the conference that stuck in my mind is to ‘have souls on my eyeballs.’ I took that phrase with me to Africa over Christmas break, asking the Lord to put ‘souls on my eyeballs,’ to keep my focus on the lost.”

—**Josh Rice,**
junior Bible major

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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

That Glorious Company: The Commentators!

There are few writings worth reading twice. But one I've enjoyed several times more than twice is the first chapter of C. H. Spurgeon's *Commenting and Commentaries*, entitled "A Chat About Commentaries." Spurgeon loved books. His autobiography contains an entire chapter about his library, numbering by his death some 12,000 volumes, several thousand of which were commentaries. The prince of preachers began his chat about them advising, "In order to be able to expound the Scriptures, and as an aid to your pulpit studies, you will need to be familiar with the commentators: a glorious army, let me tell you."

A glorious army. Not everyone agrees, of course. Some preachers who ought to know better have described them as "dishes of dead men's brains." Nearly 50 years ago Thomas Horne described the mindset of such preachers in his *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of Holy Scriptures*: "By some, who admire nothing but their own meditations, and who hold all human helps in contempt, commentaries are despised altogether, as tending to found our faith on the opinions of men rather than on the divine oracles" (I, 353). But Spurgeon had the last word on such lofty pretensions when he observed, "It seems odd that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to them, should think so little of what He has revealed to others."

For my part, I'm glad to walk with all the wise men I can, even if I must have their brains served up in books. My shelves are lined with these urns. They are the surrounding witnesses whose sitting silently affords me the rare fellowship of welcomed stillness yet instant coun-

sel when I ask. I love the company of the commentators.

But whose company to choose? There are thousands from which to pick. Wilbur Smith, 36-year editor of *Peloubet's Notes*, counted 284

in his library on the book of Revelation alone, not including another 60 or so on that same book in the larger comprehensive commentary series (Lange, Meyer, Alford, etc.). I doubt I'll ever amass (or wish to) anywhere near that number of volumes on any single book of Scripture, but through the years they do tend to gather.

In 1997 our church completed a five-year study of Romans. I find on counting that I accumulated 60 volumes on that particular book. And there were additional works that I did not myself possess but consulted in other libraries. I can also remember standing in the basement of Kregel's immense used bookstore in Grand Rapids no more than ten years ago and reminding myself that I needed to hunt up commentaries for my section on John, which at the time, as I recall, numbered only a dozen or so authors. February of 1999 ushered our church into a Lord's Day morning series in that Gospel, and I find now that my section on it has increased to nearly 70 volumes. Not all, of course, are equally valuable. Some are of no value. I thumb disappointedly through some books and am reminded of Spurgeon's sarcastic observation about a commentary authored by a man named Pyle: "A pile of paper, valuable to housemaids for lighting fires," he quipped. Both money and shelving are too short in supply to squander on such as that.

So how does one know a good commentary? All I can do is talk about what I find useful for myself and trust that no one will take it as a criticism if I differ from his own preference. If I can exercise that liberty, then here, to my way of thinking, is the basis on which good commentaries are chosen and the characteristics of those that are best.

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

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The Basis For Evaluating Commentaries

I choose commentaries based upon my hermeneutics, my approach to Scripture interpretation. I'm looking therefore for commentators whose hermeneutics are consistent with my own. This means that their analysis reflects a clear understanding of the difference between (1) what a text says and (2) what a text means by what it says.

What a text says is determined by investigating it (a) literally (as opposed to figuratively or symbolically), (b) grammatically (or syntactically), (c) historically, and (d) contextually. These four processes are initial and tend to be objective.

What a text means by what it says is determined by concluding its ramifications (a) theologically and (b) applicationally. These two processes are final and tend to be more subjective.

A good commentator, like a good pulpit expositor, reflects his understanding of the difference between these two issues by dealing with them sequentially, analyzing first what the text actually says before finally branching out into theological conclusions or applications. Few commentators, however, embody the best of both worlds. They tend to be either examinational or practical (focused upon practice), but rarely both. If I

the edited sermons of popular preachers seldom pass muster for commentaries. Preaching by nature is far more homiletic than hermeneutic. In addition, for the sake of popular appeal, publishers deliberately edit out of sermons whatever real textual investigation they may have originally included. As sermons, such diluted writings may contribute interesting illustrations or warm devotional thoughts. But as commentaries on the actual text they often merely restate what most well-taught Sunday school children can see for themselves.

This is particularly the tiresome vice of many works on the narrative portions of Scripture. They almost invariably read, for instance, "Now we see here that David went to such and such a place. We notice that he talked with so and so. So and so said this and that to him. Obviously they were having an argument." Well, if we see, we notice, and things are obvious then the reader noticed them for himself. He needed no man to teach him. Incredibly, such superficial explanations are often concluded with equally jejune applications, such as, "We all have disagreements with other people. But we need to learn to be patient with others. We can actually learn something from anybody," etc. If these myopic guides are what some of the brethren equate with commentaries, then it's no wonder they've determined to find their way alone.

There are exceptions to this weakness. To name just a few, the sermonic commentaries of David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, particularly his treatments of the Sermon on the Mount, Romans, and Ephesians. James Montgomery Boice's messages through Genesis and Romans are quite exploratory. W. A. Criswell did outstanding sermonic commentary work on the Book of Revelation, published in one volume by Zondervan in 1969. The extended set of commentaries on the New Testament preached by John MacArthur is helpfully expositional. To a lesser degree so is the Preaching The Word series by R. Kent Hughes. Preachers will find his two volumes on Luke to be especially good.

Two older sets of sermons which are not published as "commentaries," but which nevertheless include a tremendous amount of outstanding exposition, are *Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible* (21 vols.) by the Cambridge pastor Charles Simeon, and *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (17 vols.) by Alexander Maclaren. Maclaren, the peerless expository preacher of his era, is especially good. Almost always his insight unlocks something critical but overlooked by even the most careful contemporary commentators.

Ordaining counsels could have a great ministry with the next generation by providing every man on whom they lay hands with a set of Maclaren and exhorting the new preacher to use it!

Having begun to mention names, I trust that no one will take these or any further recommendations here as broader endorsements of the men themselves, their associations, and most certainly not of their every theological position. On those bases Fundamentalists are often compelled to discipline by Scriptural separation

A good commentator, like a good pulpit expositor, reflects his understanding of the difference between these two issues by dealing with them sequentially, analyzing first what the text actually says before finally branching out into theological conclusions or applications.

were forced to choose one over the other, I would opt for the former since my theology is settled and pastoring yields its own ever-widening stream of applications. Happily, however, the company of the commentators is multitudinous! So bless yourself and your people with a large fellowship of them.

The Characteristics Of Good Commentaries

The cardinal characteristic of a good commentary is that it answers questions. That's because disciplined expositors begin their preparations by asking literal, grammatical, historical, and contextual questions about the text. A good commentary, therefore, answers some of those questions. Better commentaries answer more of them. The best answer all. But they do so in two ways.

Insightful. Good commentaries answer questions insightfully not superficially. Their answers penetrate beneath the surface of what is obvious. For this reason,

men who nevertheless say some helpful things. We're dealing now with just one issue—the degree to which a commentary attempts to answer our questions about the text. Judged by that criterion alone, these sermonic commentaries and sermon series mentioned are useful.

Faithful. Let me add now the second characteristic of the way good commentaries answer questions. In addition to doing so insightfully, they do so faithfully, not skeptically. That is, their explanations stem from adherence to what the text obviously says rather than agnosticism about it. Skepticism should not be mistaken for insight. What the text plainly says should be expounded faithfully. I want to be careful, however, not to be misunderstood on this point.

Some evangelicals misinterpret a Fundamentalist's insistence on faithfulness as his turning a blind eye to scholarship. In *Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue*, John Stott lists eight tendencies of what he perceives to be “the mind-set styled Fundamentalism.” The first is “a general suspicion of scholarship, and science, which sometimes degenerates into a thoroughgoing anti-intellectualism.” This surprisingly uninformed caricature begs the question of what can be safely accepted as trustworthy scholarship. Fundamentalism has historically welcomed the light of believing scholarship but Scripturally criticized what is otherwise.

That's not to say that all commentaries written by unbelievers are without any redeeming value whatsoever. William Barclay, for instance, though Neo-orthodox at best, rarely twists texts to his unorthodoxy. He displays a general respect for their wording—a faithfulness in presenting their obvious sense—even though it contradicts his positions.

I wouldn't look to such a commentator for the wisdom of God the natural man can never understand (1 Cor. 2:12-16), but I might, as in the case of a Barclay, profit from his word studies, cultural data, and literary illustrations.

In other words, a commentator may be rejecting of the text's theology personally but faithful to its wording professionally, just as a Shakespearean scholar may differ personally with the moral lessons of the great bard's plays while at the same time conceding faithfully that Shakespeare taught these things. He may say, “I don't personally believe this, but it's obvious that Paul did and here is where and how he said so.”

But when a commentator's bibliography includes not a single conservative and when his notes consist largely of disgorging other highly credentialed but unbelieving men's esoteric denials of what the text obviously says, I'm done with him. Like the proverbial king parading self-deceived before the fawning, he wears no clothes, and I don't line up for long to look.

Between these two extremes, those who belabor the obvious and those who deny it, there are commentaries that answer my questions with both faithfulness to the text and penetrating insight into its depths. They are, to repeat, insightful not superficial, but faithful not skeptical, and so they are in keeping with my

hermeneutics. They approach the text literally, grammatically, historically, and contextually. Let's look now at how good commentaries answer our questions about these four issues.

Answering Our Questions

Literal Exegesis. Literal exegesis takes the “meaning of language in its plainest, most obvious, and often most concrete sense.” It is generally contrasted with figurative interpretation, which hunts for hidden messages beneath the surface of the text's literal language. I hesitate to go much further than this definitionally, since to do so with some brethren is to step into a quagmire. For this reason, even some texts on homiletics skirt the subject. Thankfully, literalness or lack thereof is readily recognizable in a commentator's treatment of the other three areas of exegesis. He views the grammar, history, and context as literal. Or he does not do so.

My hermeneutics calls for a literal treatment of these issues. William Cowper (composer of “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood”) argued for it in a rhyme we might do well to paste on the title page of our favorite copy of the Scripture, right under its words, “The Holy Bible.”

A critic on the sacred text should be
Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free;
Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,
From fancy's influence and intemperate zeal;
For of all arts sagacious dupes invent,
To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,
The worst is—Scripture warped from its intent.

One of the most sobering summons to literal exegesis I've come across is found in John Calvin's commentary on Galatians 4:22ff. Please don't skip lightly over it. It says what most of us believe but with broader historical perspective. You may even find yourself deciding to include it in the introduction to your next sermon.

As the apostle declares that these things are “allegorized,” Origen, and many others along with him, have seized the occasion of torturing Scripture, in every possible manner, away from the true sense. They concluded that the literal sense is too mean and poor, and that, under the outer bark of the letter, there lurk deeper mysteries, which cannot be extracted but by beating out allegories. And this they had no difficulty in accomplishing; for speculations which appear to be ingenious have always been preferred, and always will be preferred, by the world to solid doctrine. . . .

For many centuries no man was considered to be ingenious, who had not the skill and daring necessary for changing into a variety of curious shapes the sacred word of God. This was undoubtedly a contrivance of Satan to undermine the authority of Scripture, and to take away from the reading of it the true advantage. God visited this profanation by a just judgment, when he suffered the pure meaning

of the Scripture to be buried under false interpretations. Scripture, they say, is fertile, and thus produces a variety of meanings.

I acknowledge that Scripture is a most rich and inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom; but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which any man, at his pleasure, may assign. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us

Figurative interpretation makes the mistake of beginning with imagined applications. Theological bias makes the identical mistake of beginning with cherished positions. In both cases the text's literal meaning is overridden.

embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions, which lead us away from the natural meaning.

Having quoted Calvin, let me recommend his commentaries through someone else's words:

Next to the perusal of the Scriptures, which I earnestly inculcate, I exhort my pupils to peruse Calvin's Commentaries, which I extol in loftier terms than Helmich [a 16th-century Dutch Protestant theologian] himself; for I affirm that he excels beyond comparison in the interpretation of Scripture, and that his commentaries ought to be more highly valued than all that is handed down to us by the Library of the Fathers; so that I acknowledge him to have been possessed above most others, or rather above all other men, with what may be called an eminent gift of prophecy.

This estimation of Calvin as a commentator was held by none other than the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius. It illustrates convincingly that integrity of exposition commends itself to everyone, even those opposed to us theologically.

That raises the subject of the influence of our theology upon our ability to interpret literally. Literal exegesis is not only the contrast to figurative interpretation but also to that which is theologically biased. I stated earlier that both theology and application (or creed and

conduct) are to be conclusions about meaning reached only after determining what the text actually says. Figurative interpretation makes the mistake of beginning with imagined applications. Theological bias makes the identical mistake of beginning with cherished positions. In both cases the text's literal meaning is overridden.

What explanations, for instance, does a Pentecostal commentator offer about the nature of the tongues at Pentecost? What does a pedo-baptist say about Lydia's being baptized with "her household" (Acts 16:15)? How does an Arminian define foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1:2) or explain Romans 9? In each case the options are two: commenting literally, according to what the passages are actually saying, or on the other hand, doing so with theological bias. Perhaps no preacher has ever set the standard for an unbiased literal exegesis any higher than Charles Simeon, whose sermons I recommended earlier. Here is, in my estimation, a classic statement of the right approach.

The author feels it impossible to avow too distinctly that it is an invariable rule with him to endeavour to give to every portion of the Word of God its full and proper force, without considering what scheme it favours, or whose system it is likely to advance. Of this he is sure, that there is not a decided Calvinist or Arminian in the world who equally approves of the whole of Scripture . . . who, if he had been in the company of Paul whilst he was writing his Epistles, would not have recommended him to alter one or other of his expressions. But the author would not wish one of them altered; he finds as much satisfaction in one class of passages as in another; and employs the one, he believes, as freely as the other. Where the inspired Writers speak in unqualified terms, he thinks himself at liberty to do the same; judging that they needed no instruction from *him* how to propagate the truth. He is content to sit as a learner at the feet of the holy Apostles, and has no ambition to teach them how they ought to have spoken. I love the simplicity of the Scriptures; and I wish to receive and inculcate every truth precisely in the way, and to the extent, that it is set forth in the inspired Volume. Were this the habit of all divines, there would soon be an end of most of the controversies that have agitated and divided the Church of Christ. My endeavour is to bring out of Scripture what is there, and not to thrust in what I think might be there. I have a great jealousy on this head; never to speak more or less than I believe to be the mind of the Spirit in the passage I am expounding.

That's Biblicism—unvarnished literalism, free from theological bias, in handling the sacred text of Scripture. It's what we must have in a commentator's handling of grammar, history, and context. Lord willing, these are the issues that will be discussed in next issue's column. 



Dr. Mark Minnick is the pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, where he has served on the pastoral staff since 1980. He speaks frequently in churches and at conferences across the nation and ministers regularly on mission fields around the world.

Bring . . . the Books

Campbell Morgan, Bible Teacher
by Harold Murray

We are face to face with an awful indifference to religion. That is due to the passionless condition of the Christian Church, and that in turn is due to the utter uncertainty of Christian people about the authority of the Book of God. . . . Where is the remedy? It is not by the defence of the Word of God, but by its study and by our own return to it until it so consumes us that we shall be able to say, 'O Lord, how I love thy law: it is my meditation day and night.' . . . When our own people, of whatever section of the great catholic Church of Christ, turn from books concerning it to the Book itself, to know it, to understand it, to live in the power of it, then you will have generated within their hearts the passion which it teaches, and for ever more makes possible to send the same message on to those in darkness.

G. Campbell Morgan was born in 1863 at Gloucestershire and was reared in the home of a Baptist pastor. In 1888 he attempted to become a Methodist minister. After taking doctrinal examinations and preaching the trial sermon before the board of Wesleyan ministers, he was listed among the 105 men who were rejected for the ministry that year. Upon wiring the disappointing news to his father, he received the following reply: "Rejected on earth. Accepted in Heaven. Dad." Thankfully, he went on in ministry and became one of the premier Bible expositors of his day.

Perhaps the best biography of this well-known Bible teacher and expositor is *A Man of the Word* written by his daughter-in-law, Jill Morgan. However, a smaller work by Harold Murray, *Campbell Morgan, Bible Teacher* (reprinted by Ambassador Press in 1999) provides a wealth of complementary material.

Murray's little book is a tribute to Morgan's life work and its effect on the lives of those who heard his teaching. Murray records the well-known saying, "You have probably heard of the man who proudly boasted, 'I have gone through the Bible three times.' 'Ah,' said a Minister quietly, 'has it ever gone through you once?' Dr. Morgan not only took his students through the Bible, he made sure the Bible went through them!"

His aim always is to let the Bible deliver its own message, and I know of no one who has demonstrated more convincingly the marvelous unity of the Divine Library. Large areas of Scripture, sadly neglected even by orthodox preachers, have been compelled to yield up rich treasures of truth. Any section he touches begins to speak at once with living voice to our own generation.

Morgan had a passion for doing ministry in an orderly fashion. Murray observed that this passion for orderliness extended beyond organization to his exposition

of Scripture.

He has almost a passion for system. He cannot bear unanswered letters or documents left about untidily. He believes in the most careful card indexing, filing, tabulating, cataloguing. I cannot imagine him doing anything in a slovenly, slipshod way. . . . He has never lived with his head in the clouds, and he can talk as brightly as any other human being on the affairs of the day: but he is always happiest in exposition—the thing that has to be carefully, laboriously, prayerfully worked out in the study and presented in such a way that the hungry shall not be entertained, but fed.

Morgan also had a carefulness about his personal life and testimony that lent credibility to his public teaching ministry. Morgan's father came for a visit soon after his son's marriage.

He came into my home soon after the wedding and looked around, peering into every room. Then, in his own peculiar way, he said to me: "Yes, all very nice. But nobody will know walking through here whether you belong to God or the devil!" I went through the rooms again and I thought, He is quite right. We made up our minds at once that there should be no room in the house henceforth that had not some message in picture text or book for every visitor, which should tell them that we . . . serve the King.

Murray dedicates an entire section of his book to sayings found in Morgan's messages. This little volume adds a dimension to Morgan's life and ministry that is of great spiritual benefit to readers of every age and from every walk of life. It is of particular value to men who are either preparing for the ministry or currently involved in some aspect of ministry. Perhaps the best way to conclude is to let Morgan sum up his own life and ministry.

I have endeavored to speak the things I know. I have many doubts, I have many questionings. There are certain departments of theological thought in which I find myself utterly at sea. I never take them into the pulpit. Sometimes the truths I have tried to teach have all been expressed in one of the sweetest verses in the whole realm of hymnology:

I worship Thee, sweet Will of God,
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live I seem
To love Thee more and more. 

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

Dr. Sam Horn is Executive Vice President of Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin.

Who of us has not wondered about the striking differences between what Paul says regarding Abraham's justification in Romans 4:1–5 and what James says regarding Abraham's justification in James 2:21–24? Paul declares that Abraham, like all true believers, was justified by faith apart from works. James, on the other hand, appears to argue for just the opposite. In fact, on the basis of the Old Testament record concerning Abraham, James concludes that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone (2:24).

Attempts have been made to explain the differences between these two authors by seeing a distinction in their respective use of key terms such as faith, works, and justification. For example, some say that James isn't using "faith" in the sense of true, saving faith as Paul is using it in Romans 4. Rather, James is viewing faith as mere intellectual assent, a simple agreeing with certain facts. Consequently, this kind of faith is what James is criticizing.

In a similar way, it is argued that when Paul uses the term "works" he is referring specifically to works of the Law done in a legalistic spirit. In contrast, when James talks about works, he has in mind charitable deeds which are done out of a spirit of love. From this it is concluded that Paul is ruling out the former while James is insisting on the latter.

Likewise, it is assumed that there are two different meanings for the concept of justification employed by the two authors. Paul means "declared righteous by God." James, on the other hand, means "demonstrated [to be] righteous before men." Therefore, both statements by these men are true and neither is in conflict with the other.

As attractive as these solutions appear, they are beset with difficulties. It is true that James uses "faith" in 2:14–20 in a sense other than of genuine, saving faith. The demons have this kind of faith, James states, and shudder in fear at the coming judgment (2:19). At the same time, his discussion of faith in 2:21–24 parallels Paul's sense of true faith. Here James is describing the faith of Abraham and is holding Abraham up as an example of one whose faith was genuine.

Furthermore, when Paul discusses Abraham's justification in Romans 4:1–5, he is not limiting works just to works of the Law motivated by a legalistic spirit. On the contrary, he is ruling out all works regardless of what they involve or how they are motivated. With Abraham, even works done before the Law was given and which were motivated by Abraham's desire to love

and obey God are excluded.

Lastly, justification means for James what it means for Paul; namely, God's declaring someone righteous. This can be seen in that both James and Paul cite Genesis 15:6 in the course of discussing Abraham's justification. Without question, in Genesis 15:6 God is the One who declares Abraham just and in response to Abraham's faith imputes righteousness to Abraham's account.

What then is the solution to the tension between these two passages? The best answer is that which is found in examining the respective purposes of the two authors. James and Paul are asking and answering two different questions. Paul is asking the question, "How is one saved?" that is, "How is a sinner justified before a holy God?" Paul's answer to that question is "by faith alone, apart from any and all works."

James, on the other hand, is asking the question, "What kind of faith is it that saves?" "What kind of faith justifies?" The answer that James gives to this question is a faith that ultimately produces good works in the life of the one exercising it. For James, these works are not conditions for salvation or for receiving justification. Rather, they are the necessary fruit of salvation and the faith that has obtained it.

For both men, saving faith includes more than simply acknowledging the truth of God's Word or the message of salvation. It also includes the entrusting of one's soul, a committing of oneself to that message and to its author. This the demons had not done.

In 2:21 James does state that God declared Abraham righteous on the basis of Abraham's works when Abraham offered Isaac upon the altar (cf. Gen. 22:1–19). But James is not suggesting that this was when Abraham first obtained a righteous standing before God. On the contrary, this was simply an occasion where Abraham expressed his faith in good works. A reference to Abraham's initial justification is found in Genesis 15:6, a passage James cites in verse 23.

For James, then, what took place in Genesis 22 with the offering of Isaac simply confirmed what had already been recorded in Genesis 15, where God had justified Abraham solely on the basis of Abraham's faith. In other words, Abraham's faithful obedience to God's command in the offering of Isaac was a good work that validated the genuineness of Abraham's faith.

As the adage goes, "faith alone saves, but the faith that saves never remains alone." James' discussion of Abraham clearly supports this adage. Saving faith, according to James, will invariably bear fruit in good works in the life of the one who is saved. ☞

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

R. Bruce Compton is Professor of Biblical Languages and Exposition at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. (For a fuller discussion, see the author's article, "James 2:21–24 and the Justification of Abraham," Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal 2 [1997]: 19–45).

One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works" (Ps. 145:4, 5). Thankfully, former generations who experienced God's mighty acts have spoken of those wondrous works that we might be reminded of the glorious honor of [God's] majesty. Revival accounts glorify God and stir us to seek God's face to do it again. Let's focus on three pages of 20th-century revival history.

We'll begin with the 1921 East Anglia revival in northeast England. Hugh Ferguson pastored the London Road Baptist Church in the fishing village of Lowestoft. The following is an excerpt of a thrilling move of God:

The outstanding feature in the life of the Baptist Church prior to the revival was the weekly prayer meeting. This was held in the schoolroom on Monday evenings with an attendance of up to ninety people seeking God for a great manifestation of His power, especially among the growing number of young people who were attending the services and Bible classes. The people prayed in this way for two years. One member, who had prayed most fervently, died just before the revival began. Prayer reached a crescendo early in 1921.

God then led Hugh Ferguson to invite Douglas Brown for a "mission" (meeting). Anticipation and crowds grew the first few nights. Regarding the third night, we read the following testimony:

We had the church packed in the evening. When our brother had delivered his message, he told the people he was going into the vestry and would be glad to see any who wanted help or desired to surrender themselves to Jesus Christ. I shall never forget that night as long as I live. Our brother passed through the deacons' vestry—up a little stairway and into the pastor's vestry—and he had not been there many minutes when first one came, and then another, and then another. I showed them the way into my little vestry, and then I came down the stairs into the chapel. The people were singing that grand hymn

I hear Thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord, to Thee:
For cleansing in the precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.

As I entered the church again and stood looking at the people, brother Edwards paused for a moment and asked if there were any others coming into the inquiry-room. We had been praying for "showers"

that night and He gave us a "cloud-burst." They came from all parts of the building and filled the deacons' vestry. It was just like waiting outside some theatre; there was one queue down this aisle and another down that. I went to Douglas Brown and said, "What are we to do? You cannot deal with these people one by one!"

So we just opened the schoolroom and in they came—fifty or sixty people to start with. Some of the Christians had the good sense to come with the anxious and help them. I got them together in the schoolroom and began to speak to them in a company. I had been speaking for only a few minutes, the door opened and another batch came in, and all was confusion for a few minutes. Then I tried to speak to them again; and again the door opened and another batch came in. It was a wonderful sight. We got those who had definitely surrendered to Christ to keep on one side; and those who had difficulties we put into classrooms with a good Christian worker to help them and deal with them. Presently there was quietness, and that night between sixty and seventy of my dear young people, those we had been praying to God for—young men and women, from the ages of fifteen to twenty—some sixty or seventy of them that night "passed from death to life" (Stanley C. Griffin, *A Forgotten Revival* [England: Day One Publications, n.d.], pp. 14, 22).

Within three months, a thousand souls were converted! The revival continued well into 1922, affecting northeast England and Scotland, with literally hundreds more converted.

One of my favorite accounts of revival is the Lewis Awakening of December 1949 to 1953 on the Isle of Lewis, off the coast of Scotland. The preparation of the intercessors, a few ladies and men, is most remarkable. The declarer of truth used of God was Duncan Campbell. As the revival continued, Campbell left briefly to Northern Ireland for a conference. The following is one of many glorious accounts of God's wondrous works, taken from Duncan Campbell's biography:

"But Duncan, you can't possibly go! You're booked to speak at the closing meeting. The people will be disappointed." It was Easter Monday, 1952. Duncan had just given an address . . . when he was suddenly arrested by a conviction that he should leave at once and go to Berneray, a small island off the coast of Harris with a population of about 400

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

Charles Spurgeon

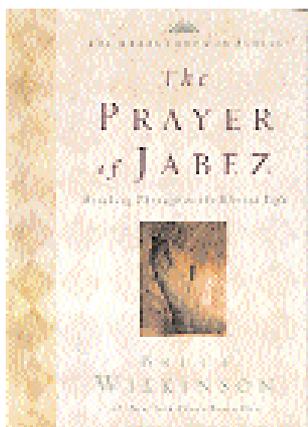
people. Sitting in the pulpit he tried to fight off the insistent urge but the urgency only increased. Eventually turning to the chairman he said: "I must leave the Convention and go to Harris immediately." Objections were valid enough . . . but Duncan was unrelenting: "I'm sorry, I must obey the promptings of the Spirit and go at once." He left the pulpit to pack his case and the following morning flew from Belfast to Scotland. On Thursday morning he reached Harris and took the ferry to Berneray. He had never been there before and knew no one on the island. The first person he met was a sixteen-year-old boy. "Could you direct me to the manse, please?" "The manse is vacant," the lad replied. "We have no minister just now. The men (the elders) take the services," and pointing to a house on the hill, added, "One lives up there." Duncan glanced from the hill to his suitcase, then back to the boy. "Could you please go and tell him that Mr. Campbell has arrived on the island. If he asks what Mr. Campbell, tell him it's the minister who was in Lewis." Ten minutes later the boy came back to say that the elder was expecting him, accommodation had been arranged and a service already intimated for nine o'clock that night! God had gone before. Three days earlier when Duncan was in the pulpit at Bangor, this man was praying in the barn. He had been there most of the day. God had given him a promise: "I will be as the dew unto Israel," which he laid hold of in faith, assured that revival was going to sweep the island. More than that, he was confident that God would send Duncan Campbell. His wife could hear him in the barn: "Lord, I don't know where he is, but You know, and with You all things are possible. You send him to the island." So convinced was he that God would bring him in three days time that he made the necessary arrangements for a mission [meeting]. The first few services were uninspiring. Duncan felt tired and spiritually out of breath, but the elder adamantly affirmed that revival was at hand. One evening as they were preparing to leave the church the old man suddenly took his hat off, pointing excitedly in the direction of the congregation which had just left the service: "Mr. Campbell, see what's happening! He has come! He has come!" The Spirit of God had fallen upon the people as they moved down towards the main road and in a few minutes they were so gripped with the subduing presence of God that no one could move any further. Amid sighs and groans from sin-burdened souls prayer ascended to God on the hillside. The entire island was shaken into a new awareness of God as many lives were saved and transformed during the following days. In this movement . . . the results were . . . deep and abiding (Andrew A. Woolsey, *Channel of Revival: A Biography of Duncan Campbell* [reprint, Edinburgh: The Faith Mission, 1982), p. 139-141).

Revival is of God, but God has chosen to work through human agents who come into union with His promises by faith. The following account beautifully illustrates this truth from the life of James A. Stewart, used of God in Eastern Europe just prior to World War II:

One day in a northern city of Eastern Europe . . . I was concerned because, for no apparent reason, God had suddenly sent revival. In other cities and countries it usually comes after several weeks or even months of throne ministry. But here on the fifth day, the heavens were rent asunder, and we were deluged with heaven-sent blessing. One thousand believers packed the church building each morning for Bible study. Thousands heard the Gospel in the evening in a larger auditorium. So great was the hunger for the Word among the unsaved that there was no room for the believers in the evening service. I asked them to go to their own churches and pray and not take up the seats which should be occupied with unsaved. The spiritual distress among the unsaved was great, as the Sword of the Spirit stabbed their hearts night after night. It was midnight and after before I could leave the building. I was greatly disturbed in my mind and could not sleep, being at a loss to explain the "open windows" (Mal. 3:10). I had arrived unheralded and unknown, only by the invitation of the Holy Spirit. The meetings had commenced on Friday night with some seven people at a prayer meeting! One evening the Lord very kindly allowed me to discover the secret of the blessing. Being afraid that I would not have sufficient power of the Spirit to proclaim the Evangel to the thousands who had gathered, I made my way to the basement of the auditorium in order to have a few minutes more of prayer. I began to pray in the darkness, but it was not long before I felt an overwhelming sense of the majesty of God. I knew right away there was someone else in the large basement, praying. I quietly put on the light, and there I saw at the extreme end of the basement some twelve sisters, flat on their faces before God! They were totally unaware of my presence. They were "inside the veil," touching the Throne, by the power of the Spirit, while upstairs God was working mightily among the unsaved. OH, FOR GOD TO RAISE UP A MIGHTY BAND WHO WILL DARE TO BELIEVE GOD FOR REVIVAL (James A. Stewart, *Opened Windows* [Asheville, N.C.: Revival Literature, 1958], pp. 104-105).

In brief, the accounts given here reveal the ministry of intercession from lives of faith, the preaching of the Word, and the mighty spiritual manifestation of the presence of God, leading the saints to a restoration of spiritual life and the unsaved to a reception of eternal life. Oh how we need true intercession today!

May God use these few pages of revival history to inspire us to seek God's face to once again reveal His mighty acts so that we might have fresh testimonies of God's wondrous works to tell to the next generation. 



The Prayer of Jabez

by Bruce Wilkinson with David Kopp.

Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishing, 2000. 92 pages.

Reviewed by Layton Talbert

Almost certainly, author Bruce Wilkinson (founder and president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries) was as shocked as anyone by how wildly popular this tiny book would become—not merely within the evangelical community but, apparently, within the wider world at large. (It has appeared on both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* Bestseller lists.) Many have enthusiastically jumped aboard the bandwagon with both feet. In other quarters, suspicions are instantly aroused; anything purportedly Christian that becomes that popular must have something wrong with it. Both reactions are probably unwarranted and unfortunate.

The American public, Christian or otherwise, is not currently known for its serious and reflective reading habits. This book could be read aloud in less than two hours. Consequently, the brevity, simplicity, and “cute” size and design of the book (the little hardback will fit in your back pocket) are probably significant factors in its popularity. Another key to its popularity is the impression that it contains a little-known secret to finding direction, fulfillment, and an exciting life of “miraculous” experiences (his definition of “miracle” is part of the problem)—all undeniably appealing promises in our aimless, empty, and entertainment-hungry generation.

By the same token, its unforeseen popularity is perhaps partly responsible for its failure to make certain qualifications and distinctions, the need for which may, in all fairness, have been as unanticipated as its sales. But what about the content and message of the book? Opinions range widely. Many (including some Fundamentalists) have raved about it while, curiously, even some Evangelicals have reacted with dismissive criticism. (According to one such synopsis, the book reduces God to a “cosmic bellhop.” Conservative and Evangelical columnist Cal Thomas was even more detailed in his criticisms.)

The prayer of Jabez itself is undeniably a delightful gem, secreted away in an often-overlooked genealogical roll call in 1 Chronicles 4. It is a good model prayer that has been adopted by many of God’s people long before the appearance of any book about it. Wilkinson attempts to analyze the leading features of this pithy, one-sentence prayer (comprising only a dozen words in the Hebrew text!) and unfold the practical ramifications and potential transforming power of its supplications. Therein lies the first major criticism some have expressed.

At the core of much of the criticism is the potential for misunderstanding that the power does not lie in reciting the phrases of the prayer itself, but in the vision and values behind those statements—and the impact upon us when we adopt that vision and those values as our own. That misunderstanding is probably at least as much the fault of the uncritical reader as the incautious writer. Wilkinson wants the reader to understand “the amazing truths in Jabez’s prayer” that run “exactly opposite to the way you and I usually think.” But sometimes the line is blurred between understanding the truths behind the prayer and mouthing the words of the prayer: “I want to show you just how dramatically each of Jabez’s requests can release something miraculous in your life,” or “take the little prayer with the giant prize and jump into the river” of God’s blessing, or “pray the Jabez prayer every morning.” It is the failure of both reader and writer to maintain this clear distinction that leads some to criticize the book as an attempt to reduce prayer to a magical formula—discovering the right words that “break God’s secret code” in order to get what you want.

That introduces another criticism—the book’s alleged selfish and manipulative philosophy of prayer—where Wilkinson must again be given some credit. Noting that Jabez “left it entirely up to God to decide what the blessings would be,” he asserts that this kind of praying “focuses like a laser on our wanting for ourselves nothing more and nothing less than what God wants.” This sounds more God-centered than self-centered. “All our other needs become secondary to what we really want—which is to become wholly immersed in what God is trying to do in us, through us, and around us for His glory.” This does not sound like manipulation for selfish ends. When this emphasis is forgotten, however, other more general statements can be twisted from their contextual intent: “Why not make it a lifelong commitment to ask God every day to bless you—and while He’s at it, bless you a lot?” (original emphasis). In this case, however, the reader probably bears a larger share of the blame. The writer has been pretty consistently clear on this point—indeed, virtually all of the illustrations he uses throughout the book have nothing to do with personal aggrandizement but with enjoying spiritual blessings

and expanding ministry opportunities.

There are some technical weaknesses. Wilkinson is a little too speculative regarding the meaning and implications of Jabez's name (which has reference to pain or sorrow). Elsewhere he implies that Jabez's own prayer was progressive and developed as circumstances unfolded. ("Notice that Jabez did not begin his prayer by asking for God's hand to be with him. At that point he didn't sense the need. . . . But when his boundaries got moved out, and the kingdom-sized tasks of God's agenda started coming at him, Jabez knew he needed a divine hand—and fast.") His treatment of only the first half of the final petition ("that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me") seems to be a decision of convenience so he can more easily apply "evil" in a spiritual sense of temptation (the context suggests that Jabez probably had protection from harm or catastrophe in mind).

Philosophical weaknesses furnish a more legitimate area of concern. One of these is his generic definition of a "miracle" as "an intervention by God to make something happen that wouldn't normally happen." Not only does this confuse the important Biblical distinction between providence and miracle, but it artificially identifies every unusual occurrence or perceived answer to prayer as a "miracle."

Another philosophical flaw is a tendency to confuse

"blessing" with "success." The underlying assumption seems to be that an increase in successful ministry opportunities is indicative of God's blessing, and that the lack of an increasing number of successful ministry opportunities denotes the absence of God's blessing. This can create an unwarranted expectation on the part of readers which, when not realized, results in confusion, frustration, and disappointment with God or an introspective assumption that there is simply something wrong with them. The Biblical emphasis is on faithfulness, not fruitfulness. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were explicitly forewarned that their ministries would be notably "unsuccessful" in terms of tangible positive influence and results; despite that, they were exemplary successes because they faithfully fulfilled God's commission for them. We plant and water, but God alone gives the increase.

Despite these weaknesses and its obvious New Evangelical orientation, the book contains inspirational illustrations, Biblical principles, and God-centered vision and values. Overall, it is not a great book, but it is a book about great truths. To the degree that it contributes to the reader's expanded understanding and accurate application of those truths, it is a good book.

Dr. Layton Talbert is a *Frontline* Contributing Editor and a member of the faculty at Bob Jones Memorial Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina.

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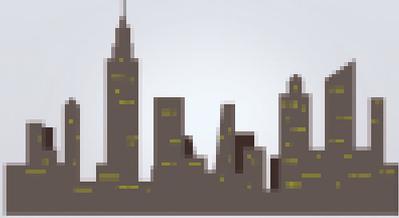


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Organized Soul Winning: A Perspective from the Pew

Darryl D. Fournier

The Lord has commanded us to spread the good news from our local area, to our nation, and even to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8). It is also evident that although most Christians *desire* to obey in this important area, we are not nearly as effective as we ought to be. Many churches have abandoned weekly soul-winning programs, perhaps believing that door-to-door evangelism is not effective today. After all, it is rightly observed that you can be faithful in soul winning without going door-to-door. Furthermore, a church can have a regular door-to-door soul-winning program and still not be passionate about winning the lost. It is also true that in our culture people are reluctant to open the door to a stranger and that cults have turned many people off to such evangelistic efforts. In spite of these realities, I would encourage a renewed evaluation of the importance of such a program.

I have been active in my local church for the last ten years. During that time I have been consistently exhorted to be faithful to my Biblical responsibility to be a soul winner. A consistent organized outreach program was established more than five years ago, and that program has been a tremendous benefit to helping me be obedient to the command to spread the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If it is so clear from Scripture that we must go and win the lost, then why abandon door-to-door evangelism? It appears that emphasis on “lifestyle” evangelism, special evangelistic services, and “needs-based” programs for outreach have been determined to be a more expedient means to spread the gospel. I have been involved in various programs specifically targeting children, teens, men, women, singles, college and career age groups, as well as Friend Days, weeks of evangelistic services, telephone campaigns, and many other good programs. I am thankful for these efforts, but I have found that a regular soul-winning program, where a specific time is set aside each week to go out and seek the lost, enhances all of those other means and provides other benefits as well.

Although most Christians intend to share the gospel with their neighbors, co-workers, and acquaintances, good intentions often succumb to the distractions of everyday life. For me, a specific time each week builds in the discipline to ensure that at least once per week I confront someone with the truth of his eternal destiny and his need for salvation by faith alone. Yes, we need to be ready for every divine opportunity, but like prayer and Bible study, without a specific time planned for these

vital disciplines, they can get lost in the busyness of our lives.

Many Christians are fearful about what to say or are afraid of facing questions they cannot answer, while many feel they are simply too shy. Teaching and training for personal evangelism can be a great help in overcoming these obstacles and should be a prerequisite to establishing a soul-winning program. However, I have found that soul-winning courses are a great starting place but fall far short of making soul winners. I would expect this could be analogous to the green recruit, fresh out of military boot camp. No one expects him to be as effective as a veteran soldier. The same is true in spiritual warfare. In a local church outreach program, seasoned soul winners can help train others, teaching them the skills and pitfalls that come with experience. This is simply discipleship. What better way for our children, teens, and new converts to learn to present the gospel than by participating in the trenches? Beyond overcoming the fear of how to present the gospel, the reality of the plight of the lost will become much more real seeing people face to face. The Lord had compassion on the lost as He *looked* on them (Matt. 9:36); do we expect to get a lasting burden for souls in the confines of our church and homes?

Certainly the merit of training in the trenches is important, but the question is, does door-to-door evangelism really work today? That will depend on how you measure results. If the only measure of a soul-winning program is the number of professions tallied on a given night, then you may get discouraged and abandon the program. Exactly how many eternal souls would have to be saved to justify the effort? Any program that does not encourage regular witnessing can allow more lost sinners to slip into eternity.

Furthermore, we must remember no matter what means we use for evangelism, it is the Holy Spirit who provides the harvest. But we must remember our calling. We are called to obey and to bring glory to God. If those who go out each week are moved to higher planes of faithfulness in prayer, in Bible study, and in devotion to the Lord, then certainly we have done a good work! Many of my brothers and sisters in the Lord have been moved to memorize Scripture, to study the Word to answer difficult questions, and to pray for lost sheep they have witnessed to.

In addition, there is confidence that comes with testing. I have found that I am much quicker to spot opportunities to share the gospel in my workplace and

neighborhood and even find it much more natural to do so now that I have experience behind me. Often I have been amazed at how the Spirit of the Living God helps my infirmities and gives me the right verse, principle, or illustration to share when I have been standing face to face with a stranger. What an encouragement that the Lord can use "even" me!

Although we are not pragmatists, there are other benefits as well. I realize that there are souls with whom I will come into contact through door-to-door evangelism that I might never otherwise reach. They don't work with me, live near me, and have no interest in visiting my church. Often I think of my own lost family members; the door I knock on could be *your* father, mother, aunt, uncle, or unsaved co-worker. On many occasions I have encountered people who told me that someone else has been sharing the gospel with them. I realized that another believer is praying for that soul, and I could be the one who by the grace of God reaps the harvest!

I continue to learn and be encouraged by my soul-winning partners. An honest critique after a call can help hone my approach and presentation. After all, the gospel is an offense to unbelievers, but we don't want to be offensive because of *how* we presented that gospel. As iron sharpens iron, a faithful soul-winning partner can encourage me to be more effective. We are driven to pray for each other, and the fellowship enjoyed while doing the Lord's work is priceless.

I cannot claim that vast multitudes have been saved through our organized soul-winning program, but what if God does pour out a revival? Historically, in revivals God has used long-buried truth to bring lost souls to repentance. Will we ever know the full impact of the seeds we plant this side of heaven? Will God not bless the church that is faithful in carrying the good news to the lost around them?

Darryl D. Fournier is a production manager in a manufacturing company and resides in Windsor, Connecticut. He serves in his local church as an adult Sunday school teacher and a deacon.

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The most dangerous of all falsehoods is a slightly distorted truth.
—G. C. Lichtenberg

To read between the lines was easier than to follow the text.
—Henry James

Never try to reason a prejudice out of a man. It was not reasoned into him and cannot be reasoned out.
—Sydney Smith

Don't talk about yourself; it will be done when you leave.
—Addison Mitzner

Unity without verity is no better than conspiracy.
—John Trapp

Take heed that an hour produce not that which may shame us for ever.
—George Hutcheson

As a general principle, you should not force young men to do their duty, but let them do it voluntarily and thereby develop their characters.
—Robert E. Lee

For a war to be just, three things are necessary—public authority, just cause, right motive.
—Thomas Aquinas

What reliance shall we put on the intercession of the saints, when Peter and James and John fell asleep?
—John Duncan

The Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot.
—Augustine

If from infancy you treat children as gods, they are liable to act as devils.
—P. D. James

People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity.
—John Adams

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.
—Thomas Paine

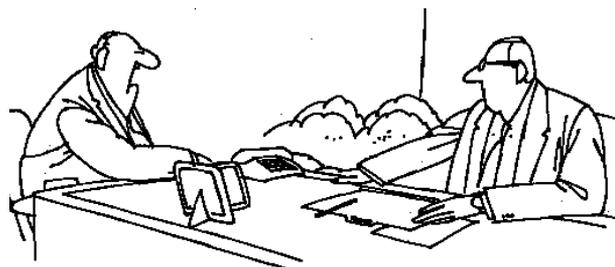
A bore is a man who, when you ask him how he is, tells you.
—Bert Leston Taylor

Stop Global Whining.
—Bumper sticker seen in Washington, D.C.

Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change; and when we are right, make us easy to live with.
—Peter Marshall

Truth often suffers more by the heat of its defenders than from the arguments of its opposers.—William Penn

I have learned that money is not the measure of a man, but it is often the means of finding out how small he is.
—Oswald J. Smith



“. . . Pastor, . . . I have a personal problem, . . . the stock market . . .”

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

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I Am Just One Person

Bonnie Oberg

More than six billion human beings populate this planet. Throngs of people congregate to athletic events; hordes flock to teeming cities. Multitudes scurry to the latest and the greatest celebrations. The discordant clamor rings in the ears of millions. They are shuffled about and knocked into with the press of the swarming crowd. Innumerable people—expressionless and ordinary faces are everywhere. Individuality and identity are lost in the assemblages of the world.

What difference does one person make? Out of the billions of humans and thousands of Christians, what real difference could one person make? I am just one person. I can't teach Sunday school—I don't have a college education. I am just one person. Care for the church's landscaping? That sounds like a lot of work! I am just one person. Nursery duty? Even though those little ones are darling, I'll let someone do that who is younger and stronger. Prepare crafts for missionaries? I'll let the committee do that. I am just one person. They won't miss me at the evening service. I have to work, and I am so tired. I am just one person. I have so many problems I know I can't contribute much to the church. I am just one person. I'll let Mr. Talent and Mrs. Gifted play that instrument for special music and sing in the choir.

I am just one person. Yes, one. I have a soul that has been washed in the cleansing blood of the Lamb. I have eyes that can perceive needs around me.

I am just one person. I have ears that hear of prayer requests of burdened people. I have lips to petition the Lord to answer in His time.

I am just one person. I have a face that can have a cheerful expression to encourage others. I have a voice that can be used to sing in the choir or even in the congregational songs to prepare hearts for the message.

I am just one person. I have fingers that can grasp a pen to write someone who needs to read what I have to say. I have hands that can reach out to others in practical ways—mixing a batch of cookies, sewing a special gift, helping clean their house. Hands that hold those little babies and toddlers so the distractions can be minimized and the mothers can be in the service. Hands that shake the hands of visitors in church. I am just one person. I can take the gospel to people and also bring them to hear the gospel. I have a body that can be clothed with God-honoring apparel. I can have a generous heart that genuinely cares.

Just one person of many, but God sent His only son for me—individually. The One who saved me personally is entitled to every ounce of strength I have, every thought that goes through my mind, every ability that He has given me, every possession entrusted to my stewardship. He alone is worthy of all of my time.

In the numberless mass of humanity, no one really knows how you stand before Him, except you and your Savior. And you really don't know how much God can use just one person unless you allow Him to make use of you.

Yes, only one. Distinctly, individually, you can serve.

Bonnie Oberg is a freelance writer and active member of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

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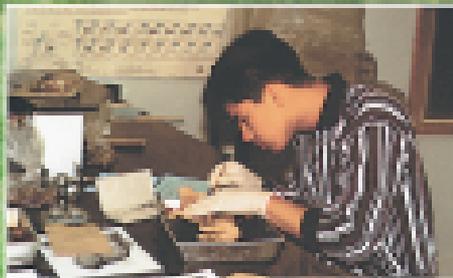
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Repentance: Lost, Strayed, or Stolen? (Part 2)

Phil Shuler

My father reared five boys and two girls while pastoring of one of the largest churches in Los Angeles. He owned a small farm in El Monte, about an hour drive from the church, where he would raise crops, milk cows, break horses, and keep us boys very, very busy hoeing weeds, plowing fields, and "doing the chores." To us boys, the farm was a vast area of crops where we could fight or throw dirt clods at each other, all hidden from the eye of our mother or the presence of our father. But I soon found out that Dad knew a lot more about us than I thought he did.

One time I left the hoe file outside of the tool shed. To Dad, that was almost a capital offense! He took a limb off a peach tree and "impressed" me that I had done wrong while I danced, bawled, and vowed I was sorry and would never do it again. In like manner many of the brethren beg off God's punishment with promises that they do not intend to keep. This is not repentance!

God, who withholds forgiveness and power from all who will not forego their sins, does not limit repentance to the individual. Christian movements—those organized forces used of God to advance the cause of His kingdom—are responsible for the maintenance of their purity. To the five unfaithful churches of the first century, Christ's message was "Repent!" He charged them, "Repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5).

Churches of every ilk over this land have proven themselves traitors in these last days and have much cause for repentance before God. It is to our everlasting peril that we have forsaken the message of our forefathers who stood without apology for the Word of God. It is doubly tragic that we have discarded the message of Christ! We see entire denominations fighting over what is God's Word and what isn't. In discounting the infallible Bible, we make it a book of lies! We scoff at the virgin birth of our Lord, ridicule His blood, mock his demand that man be born again, disown His empty tomb, and deny His personal return in power and glory.

I remember the Methodist church of my childhood.

I started my ministry in some strong Methodist pulpits that refused to bow the knee to compromise, but as the years went by I found fewer and fewer such pulpits. Dad encouraged me to stay with the denomination. He felt that he might be able to keep the California-Arizona conference from sliding further. In 1958 I had to tell my father that I could no longer win souls to Christ and tell them to join a church that would not stand by the Word of God.

Let us come to our senses and go to our knees! People perish who do not repent. Always and forever the wages of sin is death! How in the name of common sense can we charge sinners to repent and then send them to a congregation of stiff-necked people who absolutely refuse repentance?

We may say we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. But the truth of the matter is that we are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked! Our candlestick is in jeopardy. Let us buy of Christ gold tried in the fire that we may be rich, and white raiment that we might be clothed, and let us anoint our eyes with salve that we may see the glorious opportunity that is ours to point men to Christ in this darkened age!

Failure to repent has always ended in judgment. God will not use the unclean vessel or speak through the polluted channel. He discards such and leaves them to their own folly.

If we relinquish not our misgivings we shall serve as nothing better than a target for God's wrath, revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men!

Awake to righteousness and sin not! Let judgment begin in the house of the Lord! The golden day of conquest for our Lord is before us, if we will repent! Nothing good will He withhold from them that walk up rightly. The choice company of those who bear the standards of the Kingdom is ours, if we repent! The crowns and laurels of victory await us, if we repent! "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Dr. Phil Shuler is an evangelist based in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. He can be reached at philshuler@juno.com.

THE DEFINING EVENT

What would you say is the “theological epicenter” of either the Old or New Testament? Probably the first thing you would say is, “What on earth do you mean by ‘epicenter’?” That’s a good question and a good choice of words. Let’s start with, “What, on earth, is an epicenter?” By definition, an epicenter is the part of the earth’s surface directly above the focus of an earthquake. In other words, the earthquake is the *event* that creates an *effect*. I’d like to utilize the imagery of that analogy for the sake of this discussion. But in order to better answer the opening question, perhaps we should first pursue a different question: What is the central *event* of the Old and New Testaments, respectively.

The Central Event of the NT

Probably several related contenders for this category come to mind, all centering on Christ—the Incarnation, the Ministry, the Death, the Resurrection, the Ascension. One might include all of them together: the Life and Work of Jesus Christ. But I want to narrow it down to the hub of the wheel around which all the rest revolves. For instance, there is no question that the Incarnation split time, both theologically and literally. The calendar division between B.C. and A.D. is evidence of that. But the Incarnation was not an end; it was a *means* to an end. The whole goal of the Incarnation was expressed in the naming of that Child “Jesus”—because “He would save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). The Incarnation itself did not accomplish that. The ministry of Christ could not accomplish that, and the Resurrection and Ascension did not accomplish it; rather, they confirmed and validated what had taken place.

Only one event could realize, could *effect*, the end and goal of that mission. The single, central, seminal, defining event of the New Testament is *the Crucifixion*.

A brief glance at the way your New Testament opens verifies this. The bulk of the Gospel material with which the NT opens does not concern the birth of Christ (Matthew and Luke have only 2 chapters each) or even the teaching of Christ (all of them combined would amount to only 6 average length sermons). Instead, the focus of the bulk of the material in every Gospel is devoted to a single week:

- Matthew 21-28—8 chapters (30 percent of Matthew)
- Mark 11-16—6 chapters (37 percent of Mark)
- Luke 19-24—6 chapters (25 percent of Luke)
- John 12-20—9 chapters (43 percent of John)

One commentator defined a Gospel as “a passion narrative with an extended introduction.”

On average, a full one-third of the Gospels combined (29 of 89 chapters) focuses on *one week* in the entire 30-year life of Christ. The Gospels are the heart of the Bible. The passion week is the heart of the Gospels. And the Crucifixion itself—that event for which everything before it is a preparation and everything after a validation and explanation, is the heart of the Passion week. So the heart of the passion week is the heart of the Gospels is the heart of the Bible—the sacrificial redemptive work effected by Jesus Christ in the Crucifixion.

The Effects of the Central NT Event

The Crucifixion is the “earthquake” of the NT (an appropriate image, Mt. 27:51), the central *event* of the NT. That brings us back to the initial question. What is the theological *epicenter* of the NT? In other words, what consequences are effected by this event. This is perhaps most succinctly summed up in the mission statement of Christ expressed in His name back in Matthew 1:21—“*Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin.*”

■ Deliverance—“He shall save”

The most immediate *effect* of that defining event is *deliverance, salvation*. That might strike some as disappointingly obvious. “I was looking for something a little deeper and more profound than that.” There is *nothing* deeper than this unparalleled profundity, that a righteous and holy God would, under no necessity or compulsion, secure and effect the undeserved deliverance of hostile, arrogant, ungrateful rebels at such enormous cost to Himself. But there is more in that mission statement. Who is the *object* of this defining event?

■ Election—“He shall save His people”

Who is that? Perhaps, since Christ the Creator made *everyone*, one might argue that in a sense everyone is “His people.” So is He going to save everyone from their sin? No. Perhaps, given the OT background of Israel as God’s people, He is going to save *only Israel* from their sin? No. The Bible teaches that everyone who entrusts himself to the saving work of Christ becomes “His people” who are delivered from their sin.

But who initiated the entire process (1 Pet. 1:18-21)? Who draws and persuades (John 6:37, 44)? Who gives the grace (Eph. 2:8-9)? Who, indeed, did the choosing—according to both Jesus and Paul—long before we even

IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

existed (John 15:16)? After all, *none* of us were “His people” when He came. A consequence related to the Crucifixion, then, is election. The Crucifixion did not cause or originate election, but it effected it; that is, it was the means by which that mechanism could be put into effect. I am not suggesting, nor do I believe, that Christ died only for the elect. I am pointing out, however, that Jesus’ seminal mission statement is subtly pregnant with the concept of election. But there is still something more. What is the end in view in that saving work?

■ **Sanctification—“He shall save His people from their sin”**

We use the word “sanctification” to describe the effect of the removal of sin—both progressively and ultimately. If you read your NT carefully and attentively, you will discover that (1) God’s goal in saving us is our sanctification—both in this life and in eternity (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29-30), and (2) the practical realization of our sanctification is tied directly to the event of the Crucifixion, just as much as our salvation is (see, e.g., Rom. 6). Another consequence put into effect by the Crucifixion is our sanctification.

If the Bible is one book, consisting of two testaments, what exactly is the relationship between all of this and what went before? Is there any kind of parallel that might confirm or, better, even foreshadow what we believe to be the theological center of the NT?

The Central Event of the OT

Again, several related contenders for this category may come to mind. The “earthquake,” however—the single, central, defining element for the rest of the OT—is the *Exodus*. How do we know? The entire subsequent history of the OT—the existence of Israel as Israel—is dependent on and rooted in it. Everyone keeps talking about it—the psalmists, the historians, the prophets—they all keep referring back to it *as* the seminal, central event in their history. (For starters, just check “Egypt” in your *Strong’s Concordance*.) What consequences did this event effect? Space permits only a listing, but the parallels are remarkable.

The Effects of the Central Event

Deliverance—God delivered them out of bondage and slavery. That was, of course, the point of the exodus.

Election—Whom did he deliver? Not all slaves everywhere, but “His people.” God had chosen Abraham and his descendants and made certain promises to him and them. The exodus was pivotal to fulfilling those promises.

Sanctification—God fulfilled His promises by sanctifying them externally—setting them apart as His people and constituting them as a nation at Sinai. And despite their history of ongoing sin and failure, He continued to promise through the prophets that one day He would fully and finally and internally sanctify them (Jer. 31).

The Overlap of the Central Events

If these parallels seem contrived to you, look at Luke 9:28-31. It is no theological accident or linguistic coincidence that the central event of the NT, Christ’s saving work on Calvary, is referred to—by Moses no less—as (literally) “His exodus which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.” The word “decease” is the Greek word *exodus*. Here the word obviously refers to His departure through death, but just as clearly—by the deliberately unusual choice of words inspired by the Holy Spirit—it alludes to the redemptive aspect of that work pictured in the OT exodus. In this verse the central events of the OT and NT meet and overlap with startling clarity.

The exodus is the most significant historical and theological event of the OT because it marks God’s mightiest act in behalf of his people which brought them from slavery to freedom . . . from a people of promise (the descendants of Abraham) to a nation of fulfillment (Israel). To it the Book of Genesis provides an introduction and justification, and from it flows all subsequent OT revelation, a record which serves it as inspired commentary and detailed exposition. In the final analysis, the exodus served to typify that exodus achieved by Jesus Christ for people of faith so that it is a meaningful event for the church as well as for Israel (Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 57-58).

Both events—the exodus in the OT by which God delivered His people from bondage and the “exodus” in the NT by which Christ delivered His people from bondage—both come early in their respective testaments, and each becomes the seminal, defining event for the rest of its respective testamental revelation. The rest of the OT is rooted in the Exodus event. The rest of the NT is rooted in, and sprouts out of, the soil of Calvary.

2001 Standing Resolutions

Following is the second half of the standing resolutions presented at the 81st Annual National Meeting June 12–14, 2001, at the First Baptist Church of Troy, Troy, Michigan:

01.6 Regarding the Southern Baptist Convention

The FBFI expresses gratitude to God for the changes in the Southern Baptist Convention nationally since 1979. We commend the reaffirmation of inerrancy, now a confessional requirement for its agencies—the seminaries, mission boards, and its publishing arm. Furthermore, we applaud the repudiation of homosexuality and the confessional commitment to a Biblical role for women. However, we exhort our brethren to continue reformation by opposing the ecumenism of Billy Graham and “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.” We also urge perseverance at the state and local levels, purging the theological and moral decay. Where purging is not possible, we urge Southern Baptists to withdraw and rebuild, showing fidelity to the Scripture. Until Southern Baptists fully recognize and repudiate the destruction of New Evangelicalism that has weakened their churches and seminaries, the Scriptural response of fundamental Baptists must continue to be separation.

01.7 Resolution Concerning Praise Choruses

The FBFI recognizes that the modern “Praise and Worship” movement (which includes related music publishers and recordings) is a by-product of the Charismatic movement, with a similarly dangerous emphasis of promoting emotion over reason. We therefore urge discernment and caution in using “praise choruses” in any ministry of our churches. While we understand that simplicity and repetition have legitimate use as teaching tools, we note that they form the foundation for hypnosis as well. Since Christians are clearly instructed in Scripture to worship God in Spirit and in truth, we must avoid what Jesus called “the vain repetition of the heathen” (Matthew 6:7). The modern “praise chorus” uses bald repetition as a mantra-like phrase repeated over and over again for emotional incitement, not for instruction. We do not condemn all choruses per se, but appeal that choruses accompanied by appropriate music be used which teach truth rather than emotionally inciting the audience.

01.8 Concerning the Lord’s Day

At this time in history when society is relentlessly pressuring believers to forgo

worship for work on the first day of the week as well as seductively alluring them away from its spiritual refreshment to every sort of carnal amusement, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship international resolves to keep this day uniquely separate from the other days of the week. This resolve is justified in that Scripture reveals the first day of the week to have been of the Lord’s making for our heightened spiritual joy over the fact that on it He raised His Son from the dead (Psalm 118:22-24). This resolve is also justified by the New Testament church’s example of assembling for its weekly corporate worship on this day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). And further, it is justified by the fact that this day is distinguished from the other days of the week by being designated “the Lord’s day,” that is, the day uniquely “the Lord’s possession” (Revelation 1:10). In light then of these considerations, we resolve to encourage the Lord’s people to keep the Lord’s Day for the Lord.

01.9 On the Supremacy Of God

Fundamentalism needs a fresh glimpse of the supremacy of the one true and living God. We have lost sight of His majesty, holiness, greatness, and incomprehensibility. Many people mistakenly envision God as soft, easy-going, and user-friendly. Unfortunately, some seek an undue familiarity with God, whereby He becomes servant instead of sovereign. In essence, the roles have been reversed: God has been temporalized and the creature eternalized.

We reaffirm, therefore, that God is absolutely sovereign. The living God has planned the universe (all that is not God) down to the last detail. There are no loose ends in God’s universe. He not only designed it, but He made it and upholds it with all its laws and properties. There is nothing outside the pervasive word and will of God.

Furthermore, we affirm the following essential truths about God: God is all knowing. He has not learned anything from all eternity, nor has He forgotten anything from all eternity. God is infinite in His knowledge. He knows everything, past, present, and future, in one simultaneous act of divine intuition. He confers with no one and no one adds or contributes to His knowledge. We are, therefore, opposed to the heretical idea that God’s knowledge is actually expanding based on human contingency. Since God has planned the future, nothing happens by sheer, blind, accidental chance. There is no degree of randomness in God’s universe.

God is also independent; that is, He is self-sustaining. Nothing external to Himself contributes to His being. There is no lack, void, or vacuum in God that He needed anyone to fill. He is both transcendent and immanent, the uncaused I AM whose very nature is to exist from Himself and for Himself. Therefore, everything God does is for His own glory. The excellencies and majesties of God are the highest standards which compose the absolute perfection of His being and activity. Consequently, when everything in this world has finally run its course, when human history has been laid into the tomb of time, when the Kingdom of God has supplanted the kingdoms of this world, when all the rebels against God’s justice and holiness are finally incarcerated in God’s eternal death house, and the last enemy has been put under the feet of our Lord, God will have vindicated Himself to be all in all, the supreme ruler of the universe.

We, therefore, repudiate the idolatry of supplanting the sovereign God with human autonomy. An idol is anything that supplants the lordship of the one living and true God in the person of Jesus Christ. Since mankind is incurably idolatrous, we concur that man will not bow to the most high God without an act of regenerating grace. He needs the efficacious power of Almighty God for the salvation of his soul. The supremacy of God, we assert, is an article of faith that demands unreserved fidelity (Isaiah 40; John 5:22-23; 1 John 5:20).

01.10 On Our Host

The FBFI expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Mike Harding and the people of First Baptist Church of Troy in Troy, Michigan, for hosting the 81st National Meeting of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International. We appreciate their making their facilities available to us, and we thank the Lord for the attitude of service manifested by the people and staff. We pray for God’s continued blessing on this ministry.

2001 Resolutions Committee

Dr. Rod Bell
Dr. Mike Harding
Dr. Mark Minnick
Dr. Kevin Schaal
Dr. Randy Shaylor
Rev. Bradley Smith
Dr. John C. Vaughn, Chairman
Rev. Bob Whitmore

NTA Resolution on Translations

The New Testament Association of Independent Baptist Churches passed six resolutions at its June 5-7 meeting. One dealt with modern translations of the Bible: "Whereas, the use of translations is a divisive issue in Bible-believing churches, be it resolved, that our Association continue to use only the King James Version as our only translation in all NTAIBC meetings, but not to allow the controversy surrounding Bible translations to divide us as brethren." (*Calvary Contender*, 8/1/2001)

SBC Evangelists Elect Falwell

The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists elected Jerry Falwell to the post of pastor adviser by acclamation during COSBE's June 12 annual business meeting in New Orleans. "Southern Baptist evangelists are the best group of evangelists in the world today, and I'm highly honored to be associated with them," Falwell said. In his role, Falwell will propagate evangelism and promote evangelists in the Southern Baptist Convention. (Baptist Press, 6/19/2001)

Our Heavenly Mother?

A new hymnal supplement being utilized in some United Methodist churches is attempting to

feminize religion. One hymn in *The Faith We Sing* hymnal refers to our heavenly Father as "Mother God." Another refers to the Holy Spirit as "She [who] Comes Sailing on the Wind." Other hymns sing praises to "Mother Earth," "Mothering Christ" and "Holy Partner." While some hymns in the book are traditional Christian songs, Mark Tooley, executive director of the United Methodist committee of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, believes the songs that embrace feminist theology signify a growing distance from Evangelicalism in the 8.4-million-member denomination. "The whole point of Christian hymnals is to worship the God of the Bible," Mr. Tooley told the *Washington Times*. "The problem with worshipping a 'Mother God' or feminine deity is that it is not the God of the Bible." Mr. Tooley says that some of the theology behind the hymns has been influenced by the "Re-Imagining Community," a Minneapolis group whose participants have introduced the worship of Sophia, the "goddess of wisdom." (*Liberty Alliance*, 7/26/2001)

"Mother God" Worshipped at Baptist Meeting

With songs and prayers to "Mother God," an auxiliary organization of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship opened its

annual meeting at the CBF General Assembly. The annual Baptist Women in Ministry breakfast was rife with stridently feminist God language. The CBF promotes Baptist Women in Ministry as a partner in missions and ministry and will give BWIM \$30,000 from the 2001-02 CBF operating budget. (Baptist Press, 6/29/2001)

Preachers Fired For Moonie Link

Up to 35 black ministers have been dismissed from their churches or threatened with dismissal unless they denounce their connections with a recent U.S. tour by Unification Church leader Sun Myung Moon. Alabama evangelist Timothy Chambers said the pastors, mostly from churches in the South, have been voted out of office by church boards that object to any affiliation with Moon "because he calls himself the Messiah," the *Washington Post* reported. Chambers blamed Moon's representatives for the dismissals, claiming that they promised the black preachers that they would create an independent group called the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) so the ministers could control their appearances during Moon's spring tour. But an ACLC spokesman said his fellow ministers weren't ignorant. "We are all grown people, and we are aware that there is some controversy

surrounding Reverend Moon and that there might be consequences," said T.L. Barrett, pastor of Chicago's Life Center Church. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 7/26/2001)

Denominations Doctrinally Adrift

Only 43 percent of Baptists believe that works don't earn salvation and 66 percent believe Satan isn't a real being, according to a new study released by the Barna Research Group which explored the religious beliefs of the nation's 12 largest denominations. Only 41 percent of all adults surveyed believed in the total accuracy of the Bible. Catholics had the lowest percentage (23 percent) who believed the Bible to be accurate, while 81 percent of those attending Pentecostal churches held to the same belief. Only 40 percent of those surveyed believed Christ was sinless, while 27 percent believed Satan to be real. (Baptist Press, 8/13/2001)

Politics and Church Attendance

Los Angeles Times columnist Ronald Brownstein, drawing on survey results from the University of Akron, wrote: "In 2000, church attendance was a better predictor of the vote than income." Loyal Catholics are more likely to vote Republican than nominal Evangelicals, he said. "The GOP has become the party of the

NOTABLE QUOTES

most religiously observant regardless of what faith they practice, while voters who are less devout or entirely secular have moved toward the Democrats. The exceptions are blacks and Jews, who remain staunch Democrats in or out of the pews," according to Brownstein. (*World*, 7/28/2001)

Boy Scout Education Amendment Passes

In a 52 to 48 vote, the Senate agreed to withhold federal funds from any school district that denies the Boy Scouts use of their facilities because of the group's exclusion of homosexuals. Sen. Jesse Helms offered the amendment to the education bill. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 6/15/2001)

Girl Scouts Support Homosexuality

Unlike the Boy Scouts, which bans homosexuals from membership, the Girl Scouts of America does not prohibit homosexuals from becoming Scout leaders. The national president of the Girl Scouts, Connie Matsui, attended a viewing of *That's a Family*, a pro-homosexual film at the White House during the final days of the Clinton administration. According to a press release issued by the producers of *That's a Family*, Matsui pledged to use their video as a resource in upcoming Girl Scout programs. (*TVC News*, 6/8/2001)

Tammy Faye Is Back

Tammy Faye Bakker-Messner is now crusading for

This received text contains undoubtedly all the essential facts and doctrines intended to be set down by the inspired writers; for if it were corrected with the severest hand, by the light of the most divergent various readings found in any ancient MS or version, not a single doctrine of Christianity, nor a single cardinal fact would be thereby expunged. . . . If all the debated readings were surrendered by us, no fact or doctrine of Christianity would thereby be invalidated, and least of all would the doctrine of Christ's proper divinity be deprived of adequate scriptural support. Hence the interests of orthodoxy are entirely secure from and above the reach of all movements of modern criticism of the text whether made in a correct or incorrect method, and all such discussions in future are to the church of subordinate importance.—Robert L. Dabney, (1820-1898), a leading conservative Southern Presbyterian theologian

God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are a gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever.—Thomas Jefferson

I have held many things in my hands, and have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.—Martin Luther

The Founders were not vague, ambivalent or silent on their conviction that freedom depends upon morality and morality upon religion. They understood that man's law is no match for evil.—Linda Bowles

There are many signals that the United States, founded by men who repeatedly expressed a firm belief in character and morality as the measure of leadership, is on a slippery slope to becoming a superpower Sodom.—Alan Caruba

Our nation's motto—"In God We Trust"—was not chosen lightly. It reflects a basic recognition that there is a divine authority in the universe to which this nation owes homage.—Ronald Reagan

Sometimes those who oppose capital punishment talk about "the sanctity of human life." . . . But the issue of capital punishment comes up only because the murderer has already violated the sanctity of human life. Are we to say that his life has more sanctity than the life or lives he has taken?—Thomas Sowell

gay rights. She was a keynote speaker at Tampa's annual PrideFest party and led the crowd in a chorus of "Jesus Loves Me." She compared her personal problems in the wake of the PTL scandal to the tribulations claimed by homosexuals. "Like you, I've suffered," she said. "We've all been misunderstood." (*World*, 7/21/2001)

There's No Gay Gene

The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality has just published an important article (see <http://www.narth.com/docs/innate.html>) debunking one of the cornerstones of homosexual activism: that homosexuals are "born gay." The article is written by three psychologists associated with NARTH. They quote homosexual researchers and philosophers who admit there is no proof that a "gay gene" or "gay brain" exists. (*TVC Newsletter*, 8/10/2001)

700 Club Becomes Part of Disney

The Christian Broadcasting Network's (CBN) 700 Club program has a new home with Walt Disney, whose welcoming of "Gay Days" celebrants at its Orlando, Florida, theme park has in the past been criticized by CBN founder Pat Robertson. The unlikely arrangement follows Disney's \$5.3 billion purchase of the Fox Family Channel, which it is turning into ABC Family, the *Washington Post* reported on July 25. Robertson had been a signatory to a full-page trade paper ad attacking the

Disney-produced sitcom *Ellen* for its homosexual character and once warned that Orlando would be visited by earthquakes and terrorist bombs because Disney World hosted a "Gay Days" event. According to the Associated Press, Eisner said that he spoke with Robertson, who said that he supported the transaction. "He believes that Disney and what we stand for is not inconsistent with what he stands for." (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 7/26/2001)

ABC Poll Shows Declining Support for Abortion

A recent ABC/BeliefNet poll indicates that support for abortion is declining in the United States. Fifty-two percent of those polled believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases, down from 59 percent in January. The poll shows that religious belief is a major factor in opposition to abortion. Half cite their opposition to abortion based on their religious views. Fewer than one in ten who support abortion cite religion as a factor in their decision. (*TVC News*, 7/6/2001)

A "Right Not To Be Born"?

France's highest court of appeals ruled that disabled children are entitled to compensation if their mothers were not

provided the chance to abort them. Three families with deformed children argued that if doctors had detected abnormalities in their children, they would have aborted them. The court upheld a decision involving a mentally retarded boy who was awarded damages last year because he had not been aborted. Yves Richard, a lawyer representing the medical profession, said, "The ruling means that the handicapped have no place in our society." (*TVC News*, 7/20/2001)

Bill Would Bar Aid to Palestinians

A move in Congress is seeking to cut off U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority until it halts destructive excavations of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Temple Mount Preservation Act, H.R. 2566, introduced by Rep. Eric Cantor, R.-Va., with 16 cosponsors, would bar all aid to the Palestinian Authority, which is chaired by Yasser Arafat, as long as it continues unauthorized excavations that have destroyed artifacts on the Temple Mount. The United States is to provide \$125 million in direct aid this year to the P.A. through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). That amount is part of a three-year package of \$400 million appropriated last year by Congress. The

United States also gives \$75 million yearly in indirect aid to the P.A. through USAID. (*Baptist Press*, 7/27/2001)

Bible References Too Offensive for DMV

Attorneys for a Vermont couple have appealed to the Washington County Superior Court to reverse the decision of the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles (VDMV) denying permission for specialty license plates bearing a religious message on the grounds that the plates' message might be offensive or confusing. (*Maranatha Newswatch*, 6/22/2001)

Chinese Christians Sentenced to Hard Labor

Chinese police raided the home church of Wang Yulan. It is now reported that a dozen of those Christians, including Mrs. Wang, have been sentenced to "reeducation through labor" in work camps. Wang's husband is already serving a three-year sentence for previous house church activities. The two have a 12-year-old son, who must now face the prospect of living without both parents. Chinese

police also took 35 people into custody in Dongsheng City in inner Mongolia, but later released 20 of them after they paid fines of about \$25—a week's salary. More than half of China's 40 million Protestants worship in unsanctioned house churches because the communist Chinese government dictates to the official churches what they can and cannot preach. (*K-House eNews*, 6/21/2001)

This news is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International.

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God Prepares the Way for Evangelism

The nature of *Frontline* does not permit us to address current events like a news magazine. This issue was almost ready when the terrorist attack came on September 11. Since then, we have been somewhat delayed, and our office has received many requests for information on Islam. Readers are seeking guidance about the Koran and the disturbing harmony between some Christians and Muslims. In a future issue we hope to address these questions. In keeping with our theme of evangelism, there are clearly some things we can and must be doing right now.

As Dr. Bell has reported elsewhere in this issue, within hours of the attack a group of men were working with Pastor Matt Recker and others in New York City. In His providence, God had long ago led Bro. Recker, FBFI Cooperating Board member, to schedule Evangelist Ron Comfort for a weeklong campaign set to begin on September 30. Plans came together in very little time for Evangelists Tom Farrell and Steve Pettit and a large group of counselors and musicians from fundamental colleges and churches across America to go to New York City for a pre-campaign rally on Friday night, September 28.

An outstanding gospel tract with many comforting verses of Scripture was prepared by Bob Roberts.¹ Reports indicate that 300,000 were distributed in conjunction with the rally. A soul-stirring CD was prepared as a gift for the emergency services personnel with outstanding music and a testimony by the mother of Cassie Bernall, the martyr of Columbine. How this rally came together, how the funds were provided, the location secured, the literature printed, and how many other details were taken care of is a testimony of

God's providence and grace.

The men of the FBFI, especially in the Northeast, came to the aid of their brethren in New York City with prayer, finances, and personal help. But this was not just an effort of the FBFI. Many Bible-believing Christians were involved. Many gave and prayed who could not attend. It was an immediate and spontaneous response of God's people to help the pastors God had put in place years ago. When another attack comes, may God grant that we will be ready.

Of the life-changing experiences of those who were able to go to New York City, the one that seems to have impacted everyone involved was the almost shocking openness of the people there. Teeming with millions of souls dazed by the horror that still holds them in its grip, New York City is listening for God. Many of us found that a grocery bag of gospel tracts would be gone in 15 minutes. We felt like frontline soldiers calling for "ammo." This was a wonderful example of how God prepares the way for evangelism.

Near midnight, Dr. Bell and I took the subway from the station on 18th St. near the site of the rally to 42nd St. We were going to Times Square to pass out the few tracts we had found at the rally. On the subway we watched in silence as literally every person on our end of the car sat quietly reading the tract. As we headed for the hotel empty-handed, we longed for more literature to leave with two policemen in the subway station. Under the tile walls and pillars where grieving family and friends had posted their appeals for information about thousands of missing loved ones, among the

candles and flowers, we found two of the little tracts. The policemen received them gladly.

When the group from my own church returned home, 15 people gave testimonies on Sunday night. Every one of them spoke of the openness of the people and how God had prepared the way for their witness. The message that followed was just a simple report of what happened as we passed out thousands of tracts in New York City. When the invitation was given hundreds came forward, filling the altar and the aisles. Christians were stirred to action as they dedicated themselves to evangelism during this strategic time. Ushers stood by the doors to make the tracts available to those who had promised prayerfully to give them out.

Of the many reports that are coming in, one was particularly poignant. The man that led our team to New York City had to get gasoline for his car immediately after the service. He called me to report that he had seen the same response of openness right there at the gas station. His words were the truth that all of us need to remember, "Pastor, it was a great blessing to go to New York and help, but we don't have to leave home to tell others about Christ. God has prepared the way right here."

¹ The tract is on heavy card stock in booklet format. It features before and after pictures of the World Trade Center. Sponsored by www.kids4truth.com, this timely piece is available in quantity online or by calling 1-877-455-2665. Another excellent tract in use in NYC is available from Preach the Word Ministries, 1-800-656-7896.



DR. JOHN C. VAUGHN

“Ground Zero”

Reported by Dr. Rod Bell

Try to imagine an anthill after it has been stepped on by a 2,000-pound elephant. This is the image we saw as our plane turned to land at LaGuardia Airport in New York City. Looking down as we flew over “Ground Zero,” it looked like a giant elephant had smashed flat the 110-story Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.

As soon as we got into the New Yorker Hotel, we grabbed bags of tracts and jumped on the subway. The train pulled into City Hall Station. Pastor Jim Barker and I made our way up the steps out of the subway. As soon as we reached the top of the steps, an unfamiliar smell was in the air. Burned ashes were falling, and a greenish, gray dust floated down like soft spits of snow. Anxious people were walking around with faces covered with masks or handkerchiefs. Inhaling the air can quickly irritate your throat and eyes. As the grit collected between my teeth, I could smell the smell of death. This was my first close-up glimpse of “Ground Zero.”

As we made our way down Broadway Avenue, we could see the shell of burned out, black, sharp twisted fragments of buildings standing like sentries on watch. The debris was in piles of mass confusion. In the distance on a building was a sign, “We will not forget.” The steam and vapor was lazily floating out of the scrambled chaos. It had the appearance of a ghost town or a war zone. On another building with broken windows showing scars of battle, an American flag was bravely and proudly waving.

Policemen, firemen, and rescue workers were digging feverishly in the mangled mass of ruin. They were weary, but their spirits were unbroken. As the police and Army personnel moved the thousands of mourners along, the streets were filled with reverence—not a word being spoken, the stare of unbelief and grief upon

their faces. Some were weeping, some were holding hands, some were speaking words of condolences, while others were whispering a silent prayer.

My own emotions went from grief and sorrow, to disbelief, to anger, and finally, to a gripping compassion. The grim reality hit me that I was at a “wake” for more than 6,000 souls who had gone out into eternity. I was viewing the corpse at “Ground Zero.”

Young preachers who had come from Bible colleges began to sing, and people stopped to listen with questions of “Why?” upon their faces. In a few minutes, we were able to hand out thousands of gospel tracts, and very few, if any, were refused.

I saw a couple standing and weeping. As I approached them, I handed them a tract and asked, “Did you know anyone who worked there?” The gentleman answered, “I worked on the 104th floor, but I had an appointment at 9:00 two blocks down the street!” They were very receptive as we shared the gospel of God’s grace.

After spending two days of handing out thousands of tracts and praying for God to speak to New York City and our nation, I looked up at the street sign and realized the location of the World Trade Center Twin Towers had historical significance. One of the main streets that runs into the Towers is Fulton Street. In 1857, Jeremiah Lemphier, a Dutch Reformed missionary, was sent to New York to win the city to Christ. It was through this burden that the Fulton Street prayer meeting was started and God spoke to America, sending the Second Great Awakening. As a result, thousands of prayer meetings were started all over America and hundreds of thousands were saved. Revival swept across our nation. Could a sovereign God be trying to remind us of these events and speaking to our nation again?

On Friday night, Matt Recker and other Bible-believing pastors of New York secured the Metropolitan Pavilion. Their purpose in doing so was to show our appreciation to the firefighters and policemen who had

lost their lives during their valiant rescue efforts. Public officials were present, including the governor of New York, George Pataki. Tom Farrell and Steve Pettit, along with their evangelistic teams, carried out the major part of the program. The music was exceptional as we heard such songs and anthems as “God Bless America,” “The Star-Spangled Banner,” “A Patriotic Medley,” “I Pledge My Life,” “Bring Back the Glory,” “The Statue of Liberty,” and “My Hope is Still Alive.” The Lord was exalted, and the gospel message was clearly preached. Additionally, the hands of the local pastors and people were strengthened.

This city with its 13 million people, the financial capital of the world, the city that never sleeps, heard the truth. Matt Recker put out a Macedonia call to pastors: “Come over and help us!” That is just what happened as pastors and people responded to this heeded call from all across America. The Truth came to “Ground Zero.”

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Dr. Rod Bell*

Amazing Grace

John Newton (1725–1807)

Vickie Johnson

John Newton keenly understood the doctrine of God's redeeming grace, and this amazing grace—from the day he first received it until his final breath—remained the core of his steadfast faith.

Newton held weekly Bible studies in his Olney parish to encourage the people and promote their spiritual growth. While mid-week services weren't standard practice in Anglican circles, Newton's devotional meetings attracted unusually large crowds. Newton led his congregation in hymns instead of Psalms—another unorthodox custom for that time. When he found no suitable hymn for a particular meeting, he would write a simple verse to reinforce his sermon text. He sometimes would enlist the aide of his dear friend, William Cowper, a national poet who authored the hymn "There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood."

A gem in the world of hymnody emerged from their collaboration and friendship, *Olney Hymns*. First published in 1779, Newton dedicated the work "to my dear friends in the parish and neighbourhood of Olney, for whose use the hymns were originally composed."

The hymn now known as "Amazing Grace" has its humble genesis in the Olney hymnbook. Newton wrote this song, originally titled "Faith's Review and Expectation," to accompany a study based on 1 Chronicles 17:16, 17. This is Newton's best-known hymn and is largely an autobiographical account of his own experience. It is a familiar song to Christians, and even many non-believers know the tune and first verse of this beloved favorite. The fourth stanza found in modern hymnbooks was added by John P. Rees some years after Newton's death.

As a child, Newton's mother made him memorize Scripture and catechisms along with songs from Isaac Watt's *Divine Songs for Children*. She hoped and prayed her only child would eventually enter the ministry and worked hard during the tender years of his childhood preparing him for that work. Newton wrote in a letter, "I was as willing to learn as she was to teach." Her godly influence ended July 11, 1732, when, 13 days prior to Newton's seventh birthday, his mother died. He later wrote, "Her death was one of the great turning points of my life."

Newton's father, a captain in the Mediterranean sea trade, was out to sea when Mrs. Newton died. His father remarried soon and sent John away to boarding school. At 11 years of age, Newton abandoned school forever and joined his father for a life at sea.

As with many sailors, Newton wasn't known for his refined manners. His debauchery often shocked the sailors in his company, and over the years he earned a reputation as "The Great Blasphemer." He seemed to go out of his way to lead other sailors into unbelief, and later in his life he regretted that his endeavor had been too successful. The

tempestuous young Newton eventually found himself so deep in the quagmire of sin that he became an indentured servant to slave owners in Africa and, at times, a servant to the slaves.

Newton's father arranged for his son to leave Africa and return to England with Mr. Manesty, the captain of the ship *Greyhound*, on a trading voyage. A violent storm during the voyage changed Newton's life forever.

On March 21, 1748, the 11th day of the storm, Newton was tied to the helm of the ship. He worked for hours holding the vessel to its course, but the situation was bleak. In despair, he pondered the stormy condition and hopeless course of his own life. Could there be forgiveness for him? The seed of the gospel, planted in childhood by his mother, blossomed as he recalled Scripture embedded deep in his memory. He found assurance and comfort in Luke 11:13: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Many years later Newton, recalling that day, wrote, "About this time, I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer. How many times He had delivered me!" Every year after, on March 21, Newton paused to remember "that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of deep waters."

Newton continued working in the slave trade after his conversion and tried to be a Christian example to the sailors on his ship. He held Bible studies and prayer meetings for his crew. God convicted him of the cruelty of the slave trade, and he left the business in 1754. He later worked diligently to expose the cruelties of the slave trade and became instrumental in its abolishment in England.

Newton eventually felt a call to the ministry, and at age 39 his mother's prayers were answered. He began preaching and continued until his failing health prohibited him from doing so. Newton died in 1807 at age 82. That same year, William Wilberforce, a man in whose conversion Newton played a prominent role, pushed a bill through Parliament abolishing slavery in England.

Only God's amazing grace could transform a profane slave-trading sailor into a monument of His infinite mercy.

AMAZING GRACE

(as found in Olney Hymns)

Amazing grace! (How sweet the sound)
That sav'd a wretch like me!

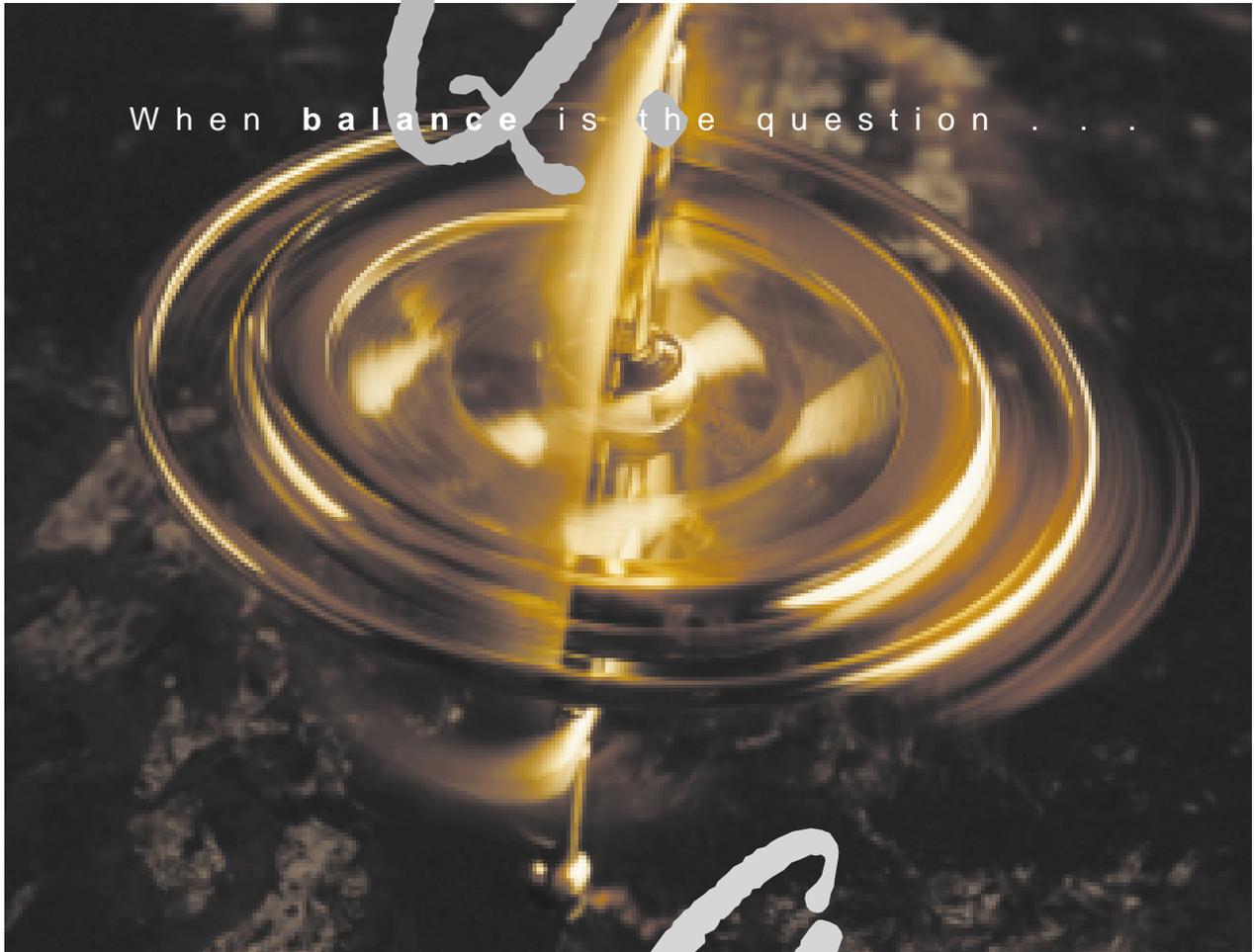
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;

'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

Vickie Johnson is a freelance writer living in Madison, Alabama.



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