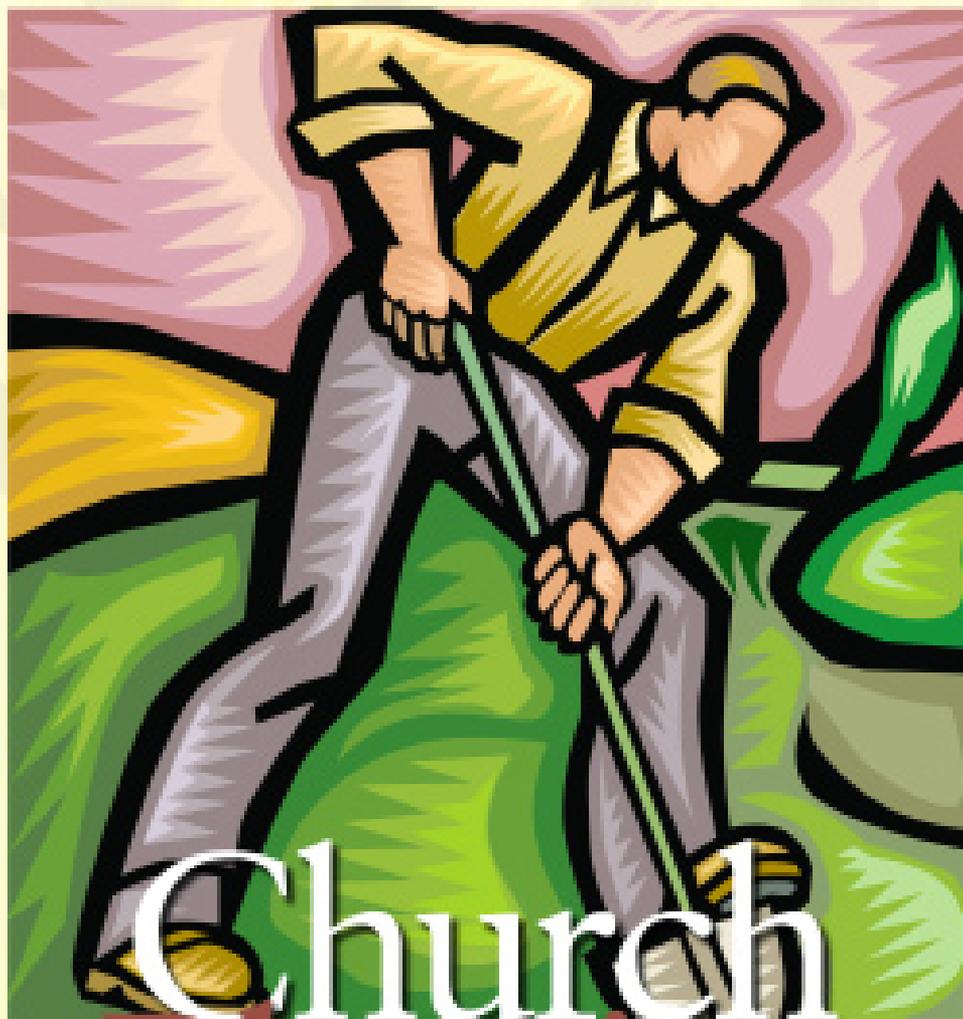


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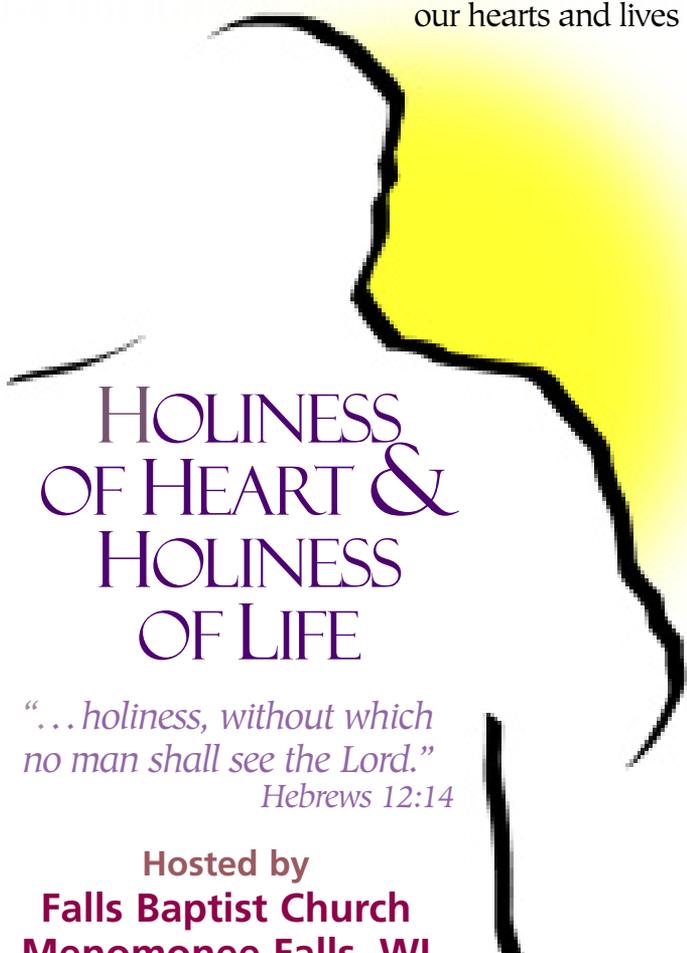
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Contents

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003

FRONTLINE MAGAZINE

VOLUME 13 • NUMBER 1

6 The Theology of Church Planting

J. Drew Conley

Just what is church planting, and why do it? The answer is basic. God's Word defines it, and God's Word demands it.

8 The Need to Reseed

Bruce McAllister

An evaluation of the American church situation reveals our urgent need to reseed the nation with many more Bible-believing churches.

10 Not Where Christ Is Named

Matt Olson

What kind of strategy are we following? Where are we sending the future generations?

14 Church Planting: East to West

Danny Sweatt, Bruce Hamilton and Gary Ledbetter

Testimonies from three church planters.

18 Kids of Church Planters: CPK's

Susannah Barba

We were about to adopt a new identity as members of a distinctive, courageous set of people: Church Planters' Kids.

19 A Letter from a Church Planter's Wife

Claudia Barba

Sometimes I feel terribly lonely, and I miss my sweet friends.

12 Helping Church Planters

Scott and Becky Swinton

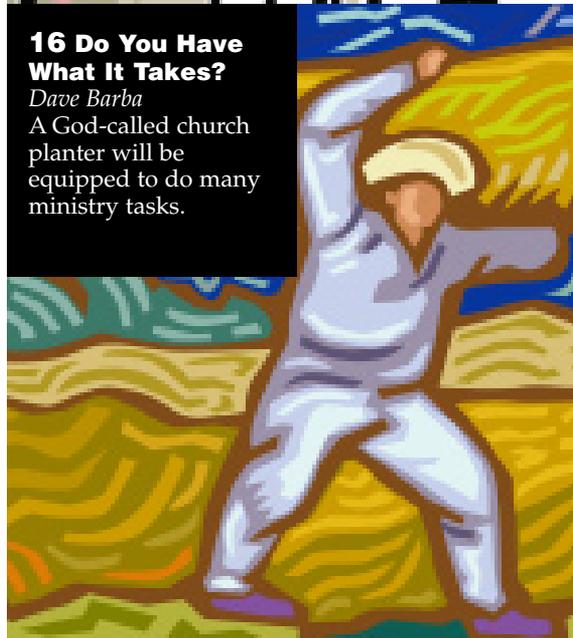
We left for California with only our earthly possessions, some leads for jobs, and prayer support.



16 Do You Have What It Takes?

Dave Barba

A God-called church planter will be equipped to do many ministry tasks.



Departments

4 Mail Bag

5 On the Front Line

Charting the Course: What We Must Emphasize
Rod Bell

20 On the Home Front

25 Wit & Wisdom

26 Ladies' Circle

Book Review: *The Wilderness Within*
Sherry Shiffler

29 The Evangelist's Corner

The Era of the Big Meeting
Phil Shuler

30 At a Glance

What Is the New Testament?
Layton Talbert

33 Newsworthy

38 Behind the Lines

Go Out There and Get Them!
John C. Vaughn

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

Thank you for publishing such fine articles. I have been challenged by the input from history and very Scriptural and thought-provoking studies geared especially to pastors. Dr. Minnick and others are right on target. . . . The resolution regarding the GARBC, printed in the most recent issue of *FrontLine* is an "alarm sounded" that is well taken.

*Pastor D. Cleve Clucas
Notus, Idaho*

I do praise God for the timely message "Ahaz: A Wicked King and Religious Pragmatism" written by Bruce Oyen. We are badly in need of

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this kind of message. . . . I pray that this article will open the eyes of some of our Christian leaders who call themselves Fundamentalists.

*David Mang
Myanmar*

I am a little late in sending you my comments on Dr. John Vaughn's article "The Fear of Man Bringeth a Snare." [He] has handled the textual controversy with good taste. I was surprised . . . to find fundamental Baptists almost totally embroiled in this belief. . . . Some make the textual issue a test of fellowship . . . this is colossal ignorance, to put it kindly. I am so glad Dr. Vaughn did not write words against the other side.

*Jim Thompson
Welland, Ontario*

Keep up the excellent work in the *FrontLine* magazine. On page 5 of the Pastor's Insert there is a wonderful article by

Sam Horn on the biography of Andrew Bonar. He says, "He ministered with Moody in the Northfield conferences near Chicago when he was well into his 70s." This statement is not factual. Bonar may have visited and preached in Chicago with Moody, but the Northfield conferences were held at Moody's beloved birthplace in Northfield, MA.

*Pastor Paul W.
Gustine
Florence, MA*

Here at Biblical School of Theology in Myanmar we need a committed Bible teacher. May I request that you announce there in your country that we would welcome pastors or Bible teachers interested in coming to Myanmar to teach the Word of God to our students. We have 84 students who we are training to go plant churches in Myanmar.

*Timothy Sui Lian Mang
Myanmar*

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The Journal of the
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Charting the Course: What We Must Emphasize

Confident, passionate preaching with unction that enunciates the great doctrines of the historic Christian faith and the Baptist distinctives is what we must emphasize in the FBFI. Separation, the pursuit of holiness, evangelistic fervor, soul winning, church planting, world missions, reaching souls for Christ for His glory: these are things that make up our focus. We need preaching that will stir the heart to love the Lord Jesus. Preaching is what built this Fellowship. What people come to hear is confident, soul-stirring preaching that will stir us to action.

This magazine will not help you if it just gives you knowledge. We need that, but knowledge alone will puff you up and rob you of your power. As you read these articles on church planting, your heart must be stirred and your will moved to act. That is the kind of preaching we need in our meetings: preaching that will promote revival. I'm not just talking about a series of meetings that talk about revival; I'm talking about a divine intervention. When we plan our regional and national meetings we need to help preachers to strive for revival in their churches. We need a movement of the Sovereign God. We don't need to hear men's opinions, we need to hear from heaven.

Then, there are some practical things we must do. We must always strengthen and encourage the pastor and his people, guarding and protecting the autonomy of the local church. Never hurt that pastor! What should you have experienced when you leave a Fellowship meeting? You ought to leave challenged, having a greater love for the Lord Jesus. You ought to have a greater desire to pray and to win souls and build churches.

You should have a heart hot for God in the pursuit of holiness.

Another thing we have got to do is to get this magazine on a solid financial footing. It must become self-supporting. We need this magazine. We need its message. There are many times more readers of *FrontLine* than there are members of the FBFI. The budget for *FrontLine* is nearly \$200,000 a year. Many months we run \$20,000 in the red. For years, my church carried the Fellowship. For years Dr. Bumpus's church carried this magazine. Now, Dr. Vaughn's church is carrying them both. I thank God for Dr. Vaughn and his committed people, but we all need to get under this burden. I have asked him to develop a plan to make *FrontLine* self-supporting. To make it work, we need more men like him to put soul, mind, and body 100% into their responsibilities to accomplish the task.

There are other practical things we can do to help churches. Dr. Vaughn and his team at Faith Baptist Church are developing a youth ministry called FrontLine Clubs. Our board has seen it demonstrated and some of us have seen it in action. It is better than anything else available. It won't be long before the curriculum is finished and the program tested in a few churches and it will be available to others. It is not just going to be an alternative to the clubs that have compromised, it is going to be a club that is completely in line with what the Fellowship stands for.

Music matters. Pastors shouldn't feel that they cannot host a meeting unless they have a full orchestra and multiple music staff, but the Fellowship must help to set a standard with music

that challenges and stirs the hearts of God's people—music that honors the Lord, not just music that entertains the lost. In every meeting, whether local, satellite, regional, or national, we must strive for the highest standards in music.

We must continue to expose the inroads of Rome and government encroachment on our ministries. Whether we like to mention it or not, Satan is building ecclesiastical Babylon through compromising ecumenical evangelism, the Charismatic movement, increasing worldliness in churches, and is using Rome and the governments of the world to do it. Rome may poor mouth to avoid paying the settlements being brought against her for harboring abusive priests, but Rome is well-funded. She's not going under until the Lord puts her under, and we dare not turn the spotlight of exposure off until He comes.

New Evangelicalism is not dead. Its pragmatism eats like a cancer. We might think we have separated ourselves beyond its reach, but the attitude it represents is within our own ranks. I'm not against education; I think every Fundamentalist should get as much as he possibly can, but we had better never forget Harold Okenga's stated objective, "to make the gospel more accessible and more acceptable and to win respect from the world of scholarship." You have to study if

you're "called to preach" or teach, but if you think you are just "called to study," you ought to be honest enough to make your own living while you're doing it.

Both in matters of principle and practice, we have a much-needed task to do. These are the things we must emphasize.



DR. ROD BELL

Just what is church planting, and why should Christians do it? God's Word defines it, and God's Word demands it.

The New Testament rises from a culture of aggressive church planting. Its history is full of the establishing of new churches, its epistles rich in apostolic instruction to keep those young churches securely within the faith. It would be hard to come away from any serious reading of the New Testament and think that a believer could mature into Christlikeness apart from a vital connection within a church body.

Ephesians 4:11–16 captures this discipleship process starting with Christ's giving apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers to the church (v. 11). These teaching members of Christ's body are to "equip the saints unto the work of the ministry unto the building up of the body of Christ" (v. 12). The goal is for the believers to "come into the unity of the faith, and the full knowledge of the Son

of God, unto a mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (v. 13). Mature believers are no longer "children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (v. 14). Instead, they are growing up into Christ, the Head (v. 15), and are supplying—and being supplied with—spiritual vitality through their interconnect- edness with the rest of the body (v. 16).

Conversions in the New Testament sometimes occurred outside the context of church planting, but the apostles saw to it that new believers were not left to their own devices to survive and grow. They fulfilled the Lord's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18–20) by preaching the gospel and gathering those that believed into local assemblies with pastors/elders/overseers to feed and lead them. Acts 14:21–23 records that as Paul and Barnabas finished their first missionary journey they returned to the places where they had seen converts, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith." What did the missionaries do to ensure this continuance? Acts 14:23 tells us: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Titus 1:5 reveals that this method was Paul's practice: "For this cause, left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed [charged] thee."

Starting churches was not the apostles' own novel idea. Jesus Christ had promised, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Acts 2:47 records how Christ built His church: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved [the ones being saved from day to day]." For anyone to imagine Peter or Paul utilizing today's church growth techniques to establish churches borders on the preposterous. They believed in the power (*dunamis*) of the gospel, not in the appeal of entertainment. The ancient world was hardly unfamiliar with drama, sports, and the arts. And while it is true that gospel truth can influence such

J. Drew Conley

The Theology of Church Planting



arenas with a positive effect, it is clear that Paul and the missionary churches did not rely on these means to establish churches.

The gospel does not require popularity to be effective. The pagan world was utterly at odds with the Christian worldview and lifestyle, and the dominant Jewish community bitterly opposed gospel truths. But the apostles did not flinch. They did not capitulate. They did not accommodate. They did not use a bait-and-switch technique to win a favorable response to the gospel, only to reveal later the radical demands of the Christian faith (1 Thess. 2:1–13). In fact, what God was doing in the church evoked such fear that people were afraid to join themselves to the church (Acts 5:11). The death of Ananias and Sapphira established that treating God and His people lightly was foolhardy. Not very consumer oriented. But that is the kind of authenticity that turns the world upside down with the power of God Himself.

Proclaiming the Word was central to the apostolic method. The book of Acts contains more references to God's Word than in any other book in the Bible. The first-century church planters had bold confidence in the sufficiency of the Scriptures to do the necessary work (Acts 20:20,21; 24–35). They strongly warned against putting philosophy or other forms of vain deceit in its place (Col. 2:8). They lived to rescue the world, not to emulate it. They also realized they would answer to God for how they presented the gospel, and therefore had no right to change it in any way. They preached Christ using the Scriptures in the synagogues, where those familiar with the Old Testament gathered. They preached the Word in the streets among the rabble of the marketplace. They addressed town councils. They instructed from house to house. Publicly and privately, their strategy was the Word. As one commentator notes, "If all our churches were pulverized tomorrow, and every formal creed of Christendom were torn in pieces, and all the institutions of the Church were annihilated—if there was a New Testament left, they would all be built up again" (Alexander Maclaren on Acts 20:32).

The churches they formed kept their focus simple. Acts

2:41, 42 says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and [in the] fellowship, and in [the] breaking of bread, and in [the] prayers."

They were not consumed with buildings, budgets, and marketing. Perhaps that is why they were so powerful, in contrast to the impotent norm of today, with all its gimmicks and watered-down accommodations to so-called modern thought.

The new churches established yet other churches. For instance, the church at Jerusalem sent Paul and Barnabas to help the new body of believers in Antioch of Syria (Acts 11). The church at Antioch, in turn, sent Paul and Barnabas out to preach the gospel and establish new churches throughout the empire (Acts 13). New churches had a sense of their indebtedness to the churches that had sponsored the missionaries that evangelized them. They sent relief funds to help Christian brothers and sisters suffering famine in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8–9). They recognized their obligation to maintain basic Christian standards of living (Acts 16:4, 5). They were not addicted to materialism, but had things in common and shared to meet others' needs (Acts 4:32–37). They understood that everything they possessed came from the Lord and that it was meant for the good of more than one's own self.

That church planting was such a prominent characteristic in the foundational era of Christianity is understandable. But nearly 2,000 years later it is still a great need. Why? Because the job of reaching the uttermost part of the earth still remains to be accomplished. Even in America there are vast populated areas without a strong church bringing believers to maturity through solid Biblical preaching. Time and cultural differences have not changed the basic needs of human beings nor the potency of the gospel. If we want apostolic results, we had better stick to apostolic strategies. Their message and their methods—the two go together.

Dr. Drew Conley is the senior pastor at Hampton Park Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. Formerly he planted and pastored Kennerly Road Baptist Church in Irmo, South Carolina.

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An alert homeowner who maintains a beautiful lawn knows the need to periodically overseed or reseed. Thinning grass or bare patches of dirt reveal the need for more seed. In a similar way, an evaluation of the American church situation reveals our urgent need to reseed the nation with many more Bible-believing churches. Broadly speaking, America currently has about 10,000 Fundamental churches. The vast majority of these are independent Baptist churches, but Bible churches also constitute a significant number of churches in Fundamentalism. Most of these 10,000 churches were planted during the twentieth century battles with liberalism and New Evangelicalism for the purity of the Christian faith. While there are sound, Biblical churches in many American cities and towns, especially in the eastern United States, there is still much to be done to fulfill the Great Commission, even here in our homeland.

Golden Day of Opportunity

We live in a day of phenomenal opportunity. Though facing considerable challenges on every front, we still live in a land of religious freedom. We live amidst people who claim a strong religious interest. Gallup polls report that 80% of people believe in a personal God and approximately 40% of Americans attend church each week. Who will reach these people? Our Fundamental colleges are teeming with young people desiring to serve God. God is

stirring the hearts of our leaders toward Himself and one another in seasons of prayer, and He is raising up a vibrant generation of missionaries, evangelists, church planters, pastors, and youth pastors. Churches are seeing people saved and called to serve. Summer camps are filled with young people who are dedicating their lives to Christ. We dare not fail to recognize God's many blessings or squander the opportunities and resources that He has given.

God's Instrument in the Great Commission

Church planting is God's method of spreading the gospel and establishing a community-based discipling agency. The book of Acts demonstrates repeatedly that as the apostles and others preached the gospel and people were converted, churches were formed throughout Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor, Achaia, and beyond. Church planting was God's plan then and it is still God's plan today. While various Christian ministries make their specialized contribution to the work of Christ's church today, the local assembly of believers is the normal focal point for worship, fellowship, prayer, evangelism, and service. Therefore, if all areas of our nation are to be adequately evangelized and disciplined, many more Fundamental churches must be planted.

Why Are More Fundamental Churches Needed?

Church planting is needed because there are still areas with no known Fundamental church.

My office helps to manage what is probably the largest and most up-to-date database of Fundamental churches in the United States. We recently identified over 1,000 smaller communities in our nation with no known fundamental church within a 30-mile radius. Sixty-two of these communities range in size from 5,000 to 28,000 people and are almost entirely west of the Mississippi River. In addition, we have identified 73 large suburban communities with very few Fundamental churches in comparison to the population. Very importantly, we have also identified another 37 major metropolitan areas with few, if any, known Fundamental churches in high population centers. Often these are inner-city areas that greatly need evangelism and sound Bible doctrine and practice. You may view information about our study at the website http://www.bju.edu/resources/church_planting/index.xml.

Bruce McAllister

The Need to Reseed



Church planting is needed because we are failing to keep up with population growth.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau the population grew by 32.7 million from 1990 to 2000, or 13.2%. The West grew by 19.7% while the South grew at 17.3%. Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho were the fastest growing states by percentage, though California grew the most numerically, 4.1 million. California has approximately 34 million people and very few Fundamental churches statewide. Las Vegas grew by 83% during the 1990s with only a handful of sound churches and a population of 2 million. The U.S. Hispanic population grew by 57.9% over the last ten years. This population surge gives burdened pastors, missionaries, church planters, evangelists, and laymen much reason to expand the church planting efforts of our churches. Since the 2000 census, the U.S. population has already grown from 281.4 million people to over 288 million. The souls of millions hang on the brink of eternal damnation without the gospel of Christ being preached by faithful churches. See the U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://www.census.gov> for vast information on population trends in America.

Church planting is needed as worldliness invades the church and is willingly accepted in many formerly sound churches.

Unfortunately, many churches which came from a Fundamental heritage are succumbing to the pressures of compromise with culture. Rock music, contemporary services, sinking standards, and an overall accommodation to worldliness are eroding the base of Biblical churches. Communities that once had several brightly beaming gospel lighthouses, now provide no distinctively different church ministry. Conservative believers have few, if any, alternatives for their families and friends. Worldly churches lack God's power in aggressive evangelism and clear Biblical teaching. Thus, the gospel light grows dim and souls are not reached with the truth. Christian leaders everywhere have observed these alarming trends in recent years, as the pace of compromise seems to accelerate. Where will the strong churches for the next generation come from if they are not planted today?

Church planting is needed to provide a solid base of support for foreign missions.

The demise of some formerly sound, vibrant churches is of special concern to missions, agencies and missionaries. Because of their broad work with many churches, mission board representatives are acutely aware of the impact of compromise upon the future of missions. Even today missionary deputees are "backed up on the loading dock" for years as they seek support. Stagnant churches rarely support additional missionaries and declining churches may be forced to cut missionary support. Churches that compromise or split over controversy leave their missionaries in the "no man's land" of indefinite future support. New, vibrant, evangelistic churches are needed to maintain and expand the base of foreign missions support. The relationship between home and foreign missions is not an

"either/or" proposition; it is "both/and." As overseas military operations are only as strong as the home base, so the strength of foreign missions relates directly to the strength of American churches. Our international church planting is vitally linked to national church planting and development at home.

What Can Pastors and Churches Do?

Churches should be planting churches! They should make church planting support a substantial part of their church's annual budget. They should challenge young adults and serving couples to team up with a church planter to reach a needy area. Home mission boards should be contacted for information on church planters and needy areas.

Pastors should challenge their young ministers with the exciting prospects of church planting and should lead their churches to pray specifically about areas where churches are needed. Pastors should encourage the colleges and seminaries where they send their students to provide classroom training in church planting.

Evangelists should invest their time and energy in helping church planters, especially in the early stages of reaching a community for Christ. In addition, creative thought should be given to reaching rural areas where there are no acceptable churches. Urban areas are in great need of church planting pioneers to penetrate the inner cities of our land. God's people should pray,

plan, and persist in the ongoing, never-ending task until Jesus comes.

And finally, consider planting a new church within your church. A church planter who goes to a new community, would love to have fifty people at the end of his first year. In fact, that would be wonderful. Practically speaking, that means he is reaching one person per week or one family a month for a year. Every church would profit greatly by such a quest. Reaching one new person a week for Christ would likely change your church. What church would not want to see fifty new people come in over a year's time? So while your heart yearns to see churches planted elsewhere, do it at home as well. Your own church growth may be the fuel that God uses to help start other churches.

The Lord is able to do more than we could ever imagine! He has done it over and over again through the centuries. We should long for Him to do great things in the century ahead if He tarries. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:20, 21).

Dr. Bruce McAllister has worked with the BJU Preachers Class since 1977 and has served as director since 1991. He oversees many practical ministry courses, student outreach ministries, and the church staff placement office. He teaches a variety of courses including Church Planting and Biblical Church Ministry. Dr. McAllister has been actively involved with churches as a church planter, pastor, and consultant. Dr. McAllister and his wife, Ellen, have four children.

... an evaluation of the American church situation reveals our urgent need to reseed the nation with many more Bible-believing churches.

Several weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit with a number of pastors and missionaries in the city of Jacksonville, Florida. I heard the statement made at least twice that there were over five hundred Baptist churches in that city. Of course, Jacksonville is a large city and probably covers more square miles than most of our country's metropolitan areas. It is true that in many places across the "Bible Belt" there is "a church on every corner." Certainly, not every one of these is preaching the gospel, and only a few would share our philosophy of ministry and practice of Biblical separation, but I don't think you would have to walk very far to hear the message of salvation.

I am glad for cities like Jacksonville. I could name many other cities here in America that enjoy that same benefit of gospel-preaching churches. Yes, I know there are still people to reach in places like this and no area has reached the saturation point. However, when we step back and consider the need of the world with so many places where Christ is not named, it makes me wonder. What kind of strategy are we following? Where are we sending the future generations? Is this the way it should be? When Robert Moffat challenged David Livingstone

with the smoke of a thousand villages that had yet to hear the gospel, and we know this picture could be multiplied to numbers incomprehensible, we need to start asking some serious questions.

As a young college student reading through the New Testament, I was impressed with Paul's passion to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. This seemed totally consistent with the Great Commission of Christ in Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Of course, Paul's supreme goal in life was the glory of God and the exaltation of Christ (Rom. 11:36), but his mandate for ministry was this Great Commission, and the method was clearly church planting. Paul was always pressing westward, preaching the gospel, discipling believers, and establishing churches. He summed it up in Romans 15:20: "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named lest I build upon another man's foundation."

Why then does church planting seem to be just another in a long list of opportunities for a young man to consider? Is not church planting core to our mandate? Should it not be what we give ourselves to more than anything else? Of course, the local church is the "pillar and ground of truth," and it is the institution that God has ordained to carry out His plan for this age.

I think many churches hesitate to plant other churches. It may not be best for all (depending on size and location), but often when a church in a growing community is getting full and people are traveling from other suburbs, there can be incredible opportunity. But then again, giving up members, tithes, and resources to another church is often unthinkable! I wish space would allow me to describe what happened in Denver, about how the Lord knit our hearts together for church planting and blessed "exceedingly and abundantly above all that we could ask or think." Today, churches are planting churches, and God is getting all the credit. My burden is to see this happening all over the world.

Our ministerial students today have grown up in a very plush, polluted society. They go to church every Sunday and have learned their doctrine, but their faith has never been through the fire of testing.

Matt Olson

Not Where Christ Is Named



A billion pagans in China is something they cannot comprehend. They see a very small world, their own world. Many students have bought in to a popular Christianity that stimulates the intellect but makes little mention of the Cross. So now we have a generation that is trying to apply the teaching of Romans 8 without understanding Romans 6.

As a result, often, when a young man finishes his education, he begins to explore his options. He considers his interests, explores opportunities, and sends out his résumé. Over the last several years I have seen stacks of résumés representing men standing in line, as it were, to be interviewed, each hoping he might get the best job possible. What troubles me so is when I see literally thousands of places where Christ is not named. Are we blind to the need, or are we covering our eyes in fear?

I have heard so many dismiss church planting with the words, "I couldn't do that." I have yet to meet someone who could! Jesus said in John 15:5, "For without me, you can do nothing." One of the greatest experiences is putting yourself completely at the mercy of God—for everything. The average man with a résumé will be looking for a nice-sized congregation, good people, a beautiful building, an adequate parsonage, a good salary, health insurance,

disability, retirement, etc. How do I know? Because I've been there. And then words like these pierced my heart: "Shall I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?" Then I considered the difference between the mansion that C. T. Studd grew up in and the tent where he lived his last years in Africa. A man who left all, saying, "Some wish to live within sound of church or chapel bell, give me a rescue shop within a yard of hell."¹ What can I say?

In many ways, church planting puts you in a place where all you have is God. And the greatest blessing you will ever have is seeing Him prove to you over and over that He is more than enough. My earnest and fervent prayer is that God would raise up thousands of young men, abandoned to Christ, who will go in the power of the Holy Spirit to the ends of the earth, preaching where Christ is not named. And that those of us whom God, in His perfect plan, will keep here, would always have a longing to go.

Dr. Matt Olson pastored Tri-City Baptist Church in Colorado, which he planted in 1981, and now serves as the President of Northland Baptist Bible College, where he received his doctorate.

¹ C.T. Studd, *Crickateer and Pioneer* by Norman Grubb.

What kind of strategy are we following? Where are we sending the future generations?



realizing true success is long-term faithfulness

"Whether overt or latent, there is a hovering pressure on every minister to succeed. Sadly, this success is often gauged by numeric growth and big building projects. GFA realizes that true success on the mission field demands long-term faithfulness in the midst of adversity and barrenness. Rather than looking for tokens of supposed success in the eyes of men, GFA has encouraged us to minister in God's way, in God's time, and for God's glory."



Rev. Eric Fisher
Marshall Islands

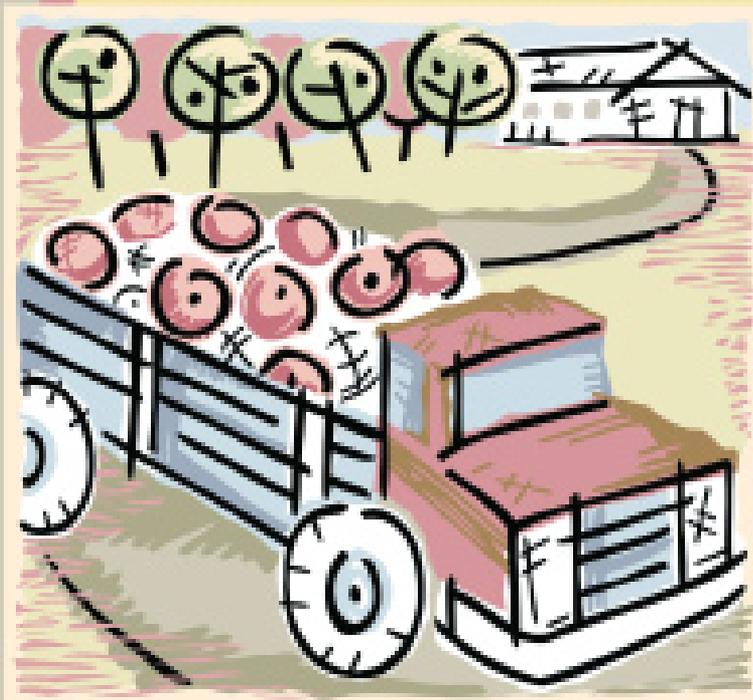


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We moved here to the San Francisco Bay Area at the end of 2001 because the Lord had given us a burden to help a small but dynamic church in Pleasant Hill, California.

Through a bizarre set of circumstances, which only an omnipotent God could have orchestrated, we were introduced to Cornerstone Baptist Church. Correspondence and an obligatory survey trip ensued, during which the Lord unmistakably knit our hearts with the pastor and the church and, in direct answer to our prayer, convinced us of our place here. Our Lord's amazing providence made it obvious that we were in the center of His will and gave us a peace that neither of us can explain, in spite of the pain of leaving family and familiarity behind.

We left for California with only our earthly possessions, some leads for jobs, and the prayer support of our friends and family. Two of our friends spent half of their honeymoon helping us move, and two more who were relocating to California at the same time shared our moving truck. Was moving across the country difficult? Of course it was.



The third night of our trip we found out that our new apartment was still occupied and that we would have nowhere to unload our belongings. It was also that night that we realized (in Arizona) that the honeymooners' luggage was still sitting in the hotel parking lot in Texas. We had one couple realizing that they were to be alone in southern California the next day, us realizing that when we arrived at our destination in northern California we would have no place to live, and the other couple with no deodorant. Was that evening difficult? Absolutely. But Philippians 4:19 began to become real to us, and the wonderful comfort of our Heavenly Father and the peace gained by corporately bringing our needs before Him was more than sufficient to meet our needs.

Naturally, we all had nothing to worry about because God took care of everything in His perfect time and way. In fact, He had begun preparing for our apartment "disaster" way back in July. During our survey trip we met a young Christian couple who graciously offered to house us if we were to need it when we moved. We never imagined that we would have to take them up on their offer, but we did, and we saw God's hand even in that. Since then, that couple and their small son have joined and become a vital part of our church.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced since our move is the change in culture. In Greenville, S.C., where we came from, everyone is a "Christian." In the Bay Area, the best time to drive the highways is on Sunday morning! The attitude toward Christ in our area is largely indifferent or even hostile, which makes church growth—both numerically and spiritually—a little more complicated. So we have plenty of opportunity to serve in our church and to keep our pastor and his family encouraged. Our ministries right now include teaching Sunday school for all the children, nursery work, leading our Discipleship Group, and music.

Innumerable obstacles in a church planter's path require divine patience and confidence in the sovereignty of God. One obstacle is not having a building of our own in which to meet. Our church is praying and looking forward to the day when we see God provide us with a building. For now,

Scott and Becky Swinton

Helping Church Planters

though, several people in the church will continue to transport, put up, and tear down everything we need for each service. Another obstacle in a church-planting situation is not having enough qualified or willing people to teach. Our children's Sunday school class consists of nearly every age from 3 to 9. Plus, the nursery for a toddler and a baby is in the same room. Making sure that everyone gets what he needs can be difficult. One other obstacle we face is very little solid musical training in our church. Our piano player is an unsaved teenage girl whom we hire to accompany the Sunday morning services. We pray constantly for her salvation, knowing that the Lord has intentionally placed her in our church. However, we cannot help but pray that God will send someone here soon whose playing is filled with the Holy Spirit and who can minister in music in all of our services.

Regardless of any obstacles we face, we cannot imagine giving this up and returning to the comforts of "home." The comfort that we had feared losing

before has been replaced with a new comfort of knowing God can and most certainly will provide for all of our needs. Our only desire is to move forward with what God has given us to do and continue to see what He can and will do here in California, in our church, and in our own lives.

We left for California with only our earthly possessions, some leads for jobs, and the prayer support of our friends and family.

Almost exactly a year since our move, we both look back and marvel at the unmistakably clear leading of the Holy Spirit, the peace we have been given to do His will, and the constant provision for our needs. In that time we have been privileged to see our church grow from about twenty to more than fifty in attendance on Sunday mornings. We have also started a couple of weekly Bible studies in church members' homes. It is rewarding to watch as the Lord answers our prayers and to see how the long-standing prayers of our pastor have begun to be answered.

Scott and Becky Swinton are new members of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Pleasant Hill, California. Scott grew up in Greenville, South Carolina, as a member of Faith Baptist Church.

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Atlanta

I received a phone call from Dr. Otis Holmes of the Gospel Fellowship Association asking me if I had ever considered planting a new church. My exact response was, "Never in my wildest dreams." Somehow, at 45 years of age, planting a new church did not seem like the thing to do.

In spite of my reservations, Dr. Holmes asked if Ellen and I would be willing to visit a group of people in a northeastern suburb of Atlanta. They had been meeting since January and were praying about the possibility of starting a new church. I readily agreed to encourage them in their noble endeavor. During our brief visit, we became convinced that God did indeed want a new work started in that area. It also became evident to me, much to my surprise, that He wanted me to lead it!

After several weeks of praying by the people, Ellen, and me, the group asked me to serve as their pastor in this church-planting ministry. Gospel Fellowship Association had agreed to help with support. In the first week of May 1990 I became the official pastor of Berean Baptist

Church. My family moved up on June 6, after my son, Brian, graduated from high school.

From the first days of Berean Baptist, the Lord's blessing has been apparent. As we outgrew our first auditorium, we saw the need to build a second auditorium. We now meet in our beautiful new church building, encompassing 58,000 square feet. We have added to our full-time staff four assistant pastors, three secretaries, and a custodian. We support 30 missionary families and three missionary organizations. Our missions giving for 2001 totaled over \$220,000. Our nursery has grown from a one-room mixed group to five graded rooms of children. Sunday school has grown to over 20 individual classes for children and adults. Called from our church we have in full-time ministry, Pastor Jeremy Sweatt, Pastor Jim Sizemore, missionaries Mike and Louann Snyder, and, more recently, missionaries Randy and Karen Wilkins. We have over a dozen young people in Christian colleges preparing for full-time ministry. Our choir has grown from a mixed ensemble to over 90. We started with four deacons and now have thirteen.

The Lord has blessed with so many wonderful families that conditions have become crowded. We just recently purchased 18 acres of choice property on which to build for the future. The land will accommodate an auditorium, a family life center, a music academy, plus educational and office space. Praise the Lord for His goodness to us!

Danny Sweatt pastors Berean Baptist Church in Lilburn, Georgia. Berean recently celebrated their tenth anniversary.

Alaska

Our Lord has commanded us to preach the gospel worldwide, baptize converts, and teach them the Word of God. Nowhere is obedience to this command better displayed than in the book of Acts. And what do we see in the written account of the early enactment of the Great Commission? We see the gospel preached to the lost, the lost saved, the saved baptized, and the baptized organized into local churches. We see men such as Paul and Barnabas traveling the known world for no other purpose than to estab-



Church Planting: East to West

South Carolina

lish, strengthen, and correct local churches. Most of the NT was originally written to the churches that Paul and his helpers established. Is there any more profitable way to spend one's life than to establish, strengthen, or serve the local church? I think not.

For the past five years I've been privileged to pastor the church that my father, Hugh Hamilton, shepherded from 1968 to 1998 (Hamilton Acres Baptist Church in Fairbanks, Alaska). When Dad "retired" (he is still a big help to me), I inherited, by unanimous vote of the church, a strong, dedicated, growing congregation. So much so, that our auditorium and fellowship hall were "maxed out," and we were faced with a choice of going to two services on Sundays or of planting a church.

It just so happened that we had ten Air Force families driving twenty-three miles each way to the services. Most of these families attended three times per week, plus special meetings. Twenty-three miles may not sound like much to those who live in the "lower 48" but to travel that distance in Alaska during the dark, cold winter months is precarious at best, and very dangerous in blizzards. In spite of such conditions, these folks simply refused to use weather as an excuse to stay home. They looked for reasons to be present, not absent. Christians like that are church-planting material! After meeting with each family and with the deacons, we presented the vision of planting a church near the air base to our members. The people gave it a 100% vote even though we all knew it would soon bring tearful goodbyes to some wonderful Christians.

The next step was to secure a place to meet near the air base. We then "tested the waters" by holding midweek prayer services. The attendance was strong and steady. During this time I contacted a man who had been stationed at the base from 1991-95 and was a faithful member of our church during that time. Brother Joe McCulley had just graduated from Calvary Baptist Seminary and was currently pastoring a small congregation in Pennsylvania. After about six months of communicating concerning the new church, he and his family moved to Fairbanks, joined our staff, and directed this new endeavor we called "Pioneer Baptist Fellowship."

As the attendance grew, we began holding Sunday services once a month. Before long, it was obvious that God's hand was blessing this effort. On Easter Sunday of 2001, the Pioneer Baptist Fellowship began meeting three times a week. About that time someone donated two acres of land on the major highway just two miles from the military base! Then, during our October missions conference, the Hamilton Acres Baptist Church organized the Pioneer Baptist Church. After calling Brother Joe McCulley to be their pastor, PBC then adopted our constitution as their own. What a thrill to witness the birth of a sister church of like faith and practice! Their weekly attendance is now in the 80s, and they will begin construction on a building this summer.

Truly there is no greater endeavor on this earth and certainly no greater thrill than the planting of local, indigenous, doctrinally sound churches. As a matter of fact, we're getting ready to repeat the process!

Bruce Hamilton pastors Hamilton Acres Baptist Church in Alaska.

Cheraw, South Carolina, is a small town located 40 miles north of Florence, South Carolina, and approximately 20 miles south of Rockingham, North Carolina. Its population is 5,500. A group of 14 people desired to start an independent, fundamental, Bible-believing church in this small town. They were meeting in a church building which had been bought out of bankruptcy by Gospel Fellowship Association. The people were paying GFA \$400 per month rent for this building which was in need of much inside and outside repair. I preached for these dear folks in April, 1990. After unanimously voting to call me to be their first pastor, I moved with my family into the nurseries of the church building where we lived for over two years. Our first service was held on July 1, 1990.

We had 1,000 attractive church brochures printed and began to distribute them door-to-door. We placed a church flyer under the Gideon Bible in each of 150 motel rooms in Cheraw. Local industries paid for their new employees to stay in these motel rooms while they were looking for housing. Many people who stayed in these motels saw the flyers and visited our church. Several became members of our church during the early days of the ministry. Ads about our new church were placed in the local newspaper, and the local Newcomers' Club asked us to participate. We were able to meet almost every new family that moved to town.

Our charter signing service was held on June 9, 1991. Several souls came to Christ during the first year. At the end of one year, the attendance was averaging 50 on Sunday mornings. After two years, the church was able to borrow enough money from the bank to purchase the church building and 7 1/2 acres of property from GFA.

In 1995, we remodeled the church auditorium and fellowship hall. In 1998, the church paid off its entire debt. In 2001, a new 6,000 square foot Sunday School building and paved parking lot were completed. After ministering at Calvary Baptist Church for 11 years, our family left Cheraw in April, 2001, as God led me to become the pastor of the Kennerly Road Baptist Church in Irmo, South Carolina. This church was planted in 1991 by Dr. Drew Conley. Dave Bradshaw, who had been my assistant pastor for two years at Calvary, became the new pastor of the church. Calvary Baptist Church is now averaging approximately 130 on Sunday mornings.

Planting the Calvary Baptist Church showed me the importance of trusting God for finances, before and after having adequate facilities. It's exciting to see God save souls and add to His church! God is indeed able to raise up men and women who are able to build up the old waste places for His honor and glory (Isaiah 58:11-12).

Gary J. Ledbetter is the pastor of the Kennerly Road Baptist Church in Irmo, South Carolina.

The phone rings. A fine Christian layman tells you that his church is compromising. His and three other families are eager to start a new church. Is this “Macedonian” phone call a divine call from God? Should you pack up and sail to Philippi?

Paul the apostle, the premier church starter in the New Testament, planted the churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and others. Educated under Gamaliel, Paul was a multi-gifted man. He was a pastor, a teacher, an apologist, an evangelist, a writer, a church planter, a counselor, a passionate soul winner, and a contender for the faith. He could even make tents.

Not all pastors are called to start a church from scratch. A church planter who is God-called will be equipped to do many ministry tasks. He cannot afford to wait until the church grows enough to add an assistant who complements his weaknesses. From the beginning, he must have what it takes to start, grow, and maintain a local church. With Paul as our model, let’s look at seven essential marks of a God-called church planter.



Genuinely Born Again

Paul served God through shipwreck, hunger, beatings, rejection, and stoning. One reason he endured was that he knew he was a child of God: “for I know whom I have believed” (2 Tim. 1:12).

I made a profession of faith as a child and lived a “Christian” life for years, but I actually received the Savior at age 20. Others have testified of being in ministry for years before being saved. Remember, it is possible to do ministry without knowing the Master.

Don’t begin the difficult adventure of starting a church unless you are positive that you are God’s child. The confidence that you are “in Christ” will sustain you through difficult days.

Absolutely Certain of a Call to the Ministry

Paul was converted and called to ministry in Acts 9, and he never seemed to doubt it. He said to Timothy, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1:12).

Was it God who called you into the ministry, or was it a godly grandmother or a well-meaning Sunday school teacher who noted that you would “make a wonderful minister someday”? If you can do anything other than full-time ministry for a living and be happy, do it! However, if God calls you, you will NOT be happy as a doctor or a teacher or anything else. Like Jeremiah, you will proclaim, “His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones” (Jer. 20:9). You will probably have the spirit of Deputy Barney Fife who said with unwavering conviction, “It’s a compulsion, Andy. It’s just a compulsion!”

The pressures of ministry in a new church can be more intense than those in an established church with buildings, trained workers, staff members, and guaranteed salary. Be absolutely certain that you are called to the ministry.

Dave Barba

Do You Have What It Takes?

Tenaciously Committed to the Great Commission

Paul was sold out to the gospel: “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). He spent his life fulfilling the Great Commission as a missionary church planter and considered all believers to be “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20).

This is not an easy time to proclaim the gospel. Twenty-first-century postmodern thought has erased the moral ties that our forefathers made to God’s Ten Commandments. Easy access to immorality through the Internet, Hollywood, and television has created a more difficult climate in which to build a church that exalts our holy God. Planting a New Testament church today is harder than it was twenty-five years ago.

Since the world and its influences are so powerful, the church planter must be constantly winning souls to replace those he may lose to high-entertainment, low-commitment churches. A man who has primarily pastoral gifts, but who finds it difficult to witness, will find church planting very discouraging.

If you are convinced that God will get the elect saved whether you witness or not, do not attempt to plant a church. Similarly, if you see yourself spending forty hours a week crafting magnificent expository sermons that folks will flock to hear, do not try to plant a church. Biblical preaching will edify those who choose to come to church, but it will not bring the lost man into the building. You must evangelize.

Evangelistic churches that do more than just talk about evangelism are pastored by men who actually give out tracts, regularly talk to people about their souls, and personally win the lost! If you are not compelled by a sense of personal responsibility to get the gospel to every creature, you will struggle as a church planter.

A church planter needs to have an “evangelistic attitude”—a compelling desire to witness to everyone! He will feel guilty if he is not often talking to people about their souls. All Christians should feel like that, but it is especially true of a church planter who is called to produce crops from a field that he has to plow himself.

Naturally Comfortable around People

Paul’s ministry focus was people. In Romans 16 he lists the names of many his life had touched. A new church does not have a lovely facility, active programs for all ages, and a calendar full of upcoming activities. But it

does have people. A church planter will be a personable guy who is sincerely interested in people.

He enjoys talking to people about their personal lives, their family, and their burdens. He has natural people skills and can make friends in a room full of strangers. Standing in the checkout line at Wal-Mart, he is thinking of a way he can witness to folks around him. He finds that way. He initiates that conversation. He goes after people because he really cares.

A church planter must be constantly reaching out to people in the marketplace—people he does not know by name. People who do not know (or care) what a good preacher he is or how many college degrees he holds. He must be a Spirit-filled lover of all people, just like Paul.

Musically Informed and Equipped

There is no Biblical evidence that the apostle Paul played a musical instrument. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas did bless the prisoners’ hearts with a vocal duet, resulting in a miraculous jail-break! Though he never said he was a musician, Paul did note that Spirit-filled believers speak “to one another in songs, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:18, 19).

The Bible does not require a church planter to be a musician, but in this age it surely helps. Being a musician can help you fill the role of the song leader, who sets the tone of the worship services by his demeanor and enthusiasm. Being able to identify bad music will help you keep it out of the church. Also, having a wife who plays the piano is a tremendous help! In the United States, where some churches spend thousands of dollars on their music programs, it is a necessity to have a properly played instrument accompanying the congregational singing. With only a few people singing, the melody produced by the piano may be a key to a Spirit-filled atmosphere. Of course, God may call

you to plant a church even if you “cannot carry a tune in a bucket,” but be aware of the dangers of being musically uninformed.

Established Convictions on Key Issues

Satan is skilled at knowing what current doctrinal controversy or what lie will be most effective. Paul addressed contemporary issues such as the Rapture question of 1 Thessalonians 2 and the church-discipline dilemma in 1 Corinthians 5.

If you know where you stand on potentially divisive issues, you will avoid many conflicts. Several key areas

A church planter who is God-called will be equipped to do many ministry tasks. . . . From the beginning, he must have what it takes to start, grow, and maintain a local church.

today include the Bible text concerns, church music styles, divorce and remarriage, and the gifts of the Spirit. The well-prepared church planter will have settled convictions in these areas before his first service. You do not need to write a book on these issues. Just know where you stand and be prepared to offer Biblical explanations.

Endowed with at Least Three Leadership Abilities

Paul, a gifted leader, envisioned the need to spread the gospel to his world. He organized and motivated fellow missionaries to complete three journeys that resulted in churches and converts. God gave him the leadership abilities necessary for a church planter.

1. Visionary

The need for vision is especially true in a new church that does not have a lovely building, a choir, a nursery, or a children's Bible club. Though it may not appear to have much else, it should have vision. The church-planting pastor is the "therapist" who provides the constant "vision massage" that folks need. He must envision the good things God has prepared, and talk about those things constantly.

2. Organizer

When the church-planting pastor calls a staff meeting, he is the only one there! As God sends workers, he must be able to recognize their abilities and organize them into a team. Though he may be a wonderful preacher, a disorganized man will struggle in church planting.

3. Motivator

The church planter must be a Spirit-filled motivator. Nice laid-back guys are nice laid-back guys, but church planters appear to have caffeine (probably espresso) in their veins. They are consumed with a burden to get the church planted *today*. They work with an "impatient patience" and continuously discover ways to motivate others to get the job done. A God-called church planter knows that God will send success. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). Be sure you have what it takes!

Dave Barba is an evangelist and church planter. He is currently helping Derek Harm plant a church in Folsom, California.



Kids of Church Planters: CPKs

Susannah Barba

Dad's words at breakfast on the morning of June 30, 1994, changed my life forever. "Well, kiddos, we're going to do it," he said. Stephanie, Jeremiah, and I all waited to be enlightened. "Last night, the Lord made it clear to me: we're going to go off the road and start a new church."

Dad's announcement generated mixed reactions. As teenagers, Stephanie and I eagerly anticipated the prospect of a real house and our own youth group. But Jeremiah, who had lived eight of his nine years in our cozy, 40-foot fifth-wheel trailer, was not so sure about staying in one place all the time.

In fact, all three of us children had loved growing up as evangelist's kids, traveling from church to church, holding revival meetings in nearly every state. Now, we were about to adopt a new identity as members of a distinctive, courageous set of people: Church Planters' Kids.

CPKs are a unique blend of pastors' kids and missionaries' kids. Like PKs, they deal daily with the pressure of being an example to the other children in the church. Their presence is assumed at every church activity, and they are routinely the first kids to arrive at church and the last to leave.

But like missionaries' kids, CPKs may face culture shock. Even though they do not leave their native country, they move to a new region because it needs a Biblical church. Without an established youth group or Christian school, they are likely to struggle with loneliness. Also like MKs, they may depend on uncertain monthly missions support.

CPKs are in a class by themselves, though, as witnesses to God's ability to plant a new church right here in America. With their parents, CPKs learn to pray fervently for God to establish the new church. They learn how to pray while they stand with freshly

folded bulletins on a Sunday morning, just hoping that someone will show up for the service. My family's church-planting adventure in Franklin, Tennessee, began with no financial support, no house, no place to meet, and no congregation. We earnestly prayed as a family for those things and then saw God abundantly provide them.

As participants in the birth of a baby church, CPKs also experience the labor pains. They learn how to handle rejection after rejection as they make phone calls, visit door-to-door, and pass out countless brochures. They learn how to "get the no's out of the way" in order to get to the "yesses": those people who are searching for the truth and are interested in hearing about a new church.

CPKs are sometimes stretched to serve in ways other ministry kids are not. Since the new church is a small-time operation, CPKs may become "volunteer" custodians at the rented meeting place, experts at assembling bulk mailings, and activity organizers. Without a youth pastor or even teen Sunday school class teacher in the early days of our church, I—under Dad's direction—enthusiastically organized our little church's first youth activity, because I personally wanted to go to one.

One of the most valuable lessons CPKs learn is to be realistic about the ministry, staying faithful even when the numbers are small. Our church grew, but slowly. There was no instant church; it grew one person at a time. We painfully lost some, then joyfully gained others. Although I had spent much of my life in churches as an evangelist's kid, it wasn't until we planted Trinity Baptist Church when I was 14 that I began to learn the joys and sorrows of working with people on a long-term basis. My sister, Stephanie, found that being a CPK helped prepare her for her current role of pastor's wife. "Lessons about the reality of dealing with imperfect human beings in the context of a church are invaluable for future ministry," she said.

Church planting does not allow for "pulling up and driving away at the end of the week," I scribbled in my journal that first year in Franklin. I learned that we as church planters could care about people, pray for them, encourage them to come to church faithfully, and teach them the truth; but ultimately, they had to make their own decisions. Sometimes people chose to reject what was good and right, and I learned that I couldn't take their choices personally.

From finding a place to meet to helping choose the first nursery toys, from untold hours of spreading the word about a new church to the nervous excitement of the first service, CPKs work alongside their parents as pioneers claiming new territory for God. But in addition to sharing the workload, they also share the joy of seeing God build a new church to glorify Himself. Although my family's ministry has changed now, and Trinity has a new pastor, I will always love the church that I, a CPK, witnessed God establish.

Susannah Barba, daughter of Dave and Claudia Barba, is a graduate assistant in the English department of Bob Jones University.



A Letter from a Church Planter's Wife

Claudia Barba

Carol, a young church planter's wife, sits at her kitchen table in the calm of a fall Saturday evening, elbow in hand, writing to the ladies of her home church. She won't mind if we look over her shoulder and read between the lines.

Dear friends,

Thank you for the card that arrived this week. It encourages me to know that you prayed for us at last month's missionary meeting. *Actually, I cried when I read your notes. Sometimes I feel terribly lonely, and I miss my sweet friends.*

The Lord is taking wonderful care of us. All four children, at this moment, are well! *That's a bigger blessing than they know, since health insurance is beyond our budget right now.* They are such a help in our little church (greeters, special music, and the core of our children's ministry) that we don't know what we would do without them. They still talk about the gift boxes you sent for their birthdays. They've decided that there are some advantages, after all, to being missionary kids! Our whole family had a memorable week with your teens who came to help with Vacation Bible School in July. The teens were energetic and creative and left

Continued on page 23

Regional Reports

The Northern California Region held its meeting November 14–15 at Lake Lucerne Conference Center with an average of eighty in attendance. Keynote speakers included Dr. John Vaughn, Executive Vice President of the FBF, and Dr. Dave Jaspers, President of Maranatha Baptist Bible College. The conference host, Dr. John Mincy, reports that the spirit of the meeting was a great encouragement and because everything, including lodging, was under one roof it made for great fellowship. Next year's meeting will be November 13–14, 2003, at Lucerne Conference Center.

The Mid-America Region, moderated by Pastor Bradley Smith of Bethel Baptist in Schaumburg, Ill., was held at Pillsbury Baptist Bible College with Pastor Smith, Dr. John Vaughn, Pastor Bud Steadman, Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen, Dr. Matt Olson, and Dr. Dave Jaspers as keynote speakers. They report an average attendance of 250 pastors and their wives. This year's theme was "Rising on New Wings of Leadership." Next year's meeting will be at Bethel Baptist, October 6–7, 2003.

The Worthwhile Company

We are thankful for the many people who subscribe to and support *FrontLine* Magazine. Some purchase the magazine subscription by credit card and then receive a charge from the "Worthwhile Company." The Worthwhile Company is the service that *FrontLine* uses to process the credit card orders and maintain the FBF web site. Each time a charge is contested a \$10 charge is levied against the magazine. Please help us curtail these fees by noticing the name of our service provider. If you have any questions, please call the home office.

Change of Address

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Change of Date

Please notice the date for our national meeting in Concord, NH. The previous dates had to be changed due to another convention in the area. If you have any further questions, contact the home office.

Regional and State Representatives

Several of our men are leading the way by hosting regional and state meetings. We want you to have current information and subscription cards, promotional magazines, and other FBF materials. Please contact the home office for your orders.

FrontLine Sundays

Each year, beginning in November, we encourage our member pastors to host *FrontLine* Sunday. The home office will send promotional magazines and subscription forms that include an offer for a free music CD. If you would like to have a *FrontLine* Sunday at your church, contact the home office for further details.

Contact Information

FrontLine Magazine
500 W. Lee Road
Taylors, SC 29687
(864) 292-3010, info@fbf.org

Upcoming FBF Meetings

January 27–28, 2003

North Central Regional Meeting
Pastor Jim Efav
Beth Eden Baptist Church
2600 Wadsworth Blvd.
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033
(303) 238-7711

February 10–11, 2003

Winter Board Meeting
Embassy Suites in the
Atlanta Airport
Atlanta, GA

March 3–4, 2003

Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting
Grace Gospel Church
1111 Adams Ave.
Huntington, WV 25704
(304) 522-8635

April 14–16, 2003

Southeast Regional Meeting
Pastor Brent Armstrong
Oakwood Baptist Church
304 Pearman Dairy Road
Anderson, SC 29625
(864) 255-6262

June 17–19, 2003

National Meeting
Trinity Baptist Church
80 Clinton Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 225-3999

July 28–29, 2003

Alaska Regional Meeting
Pastor Earl Barnett
223 E. Redoubt Avenue
Soldotna, AK 99669
(908) 262-4618

SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

The One Right Theory of Preaching

I want to use this issue's column to discuss the right theory of preaching the Bible. There are not several "right" theories. Only one. This is the stated conviction (though in various ways) of nearly every enduring writer on homiletics since the Reformation. One example is Robert L. Dabney.

Robert Dabney (1820–1898), six feet tall and powerfully built, was a graduate of the University of Virginia and Union Seminary, Richmond. After pastoring six years he joined the faculty of the Seminary where he served as its professor of systematic theology, ecclesiastical history, and homiletics for thirty years. Declining health, attributed by his physician to Virginia's climate, prompted a move to Texas, where he taught Moral Philosophy at the University of Texas for the last eleven years of his ministry.

Dabney was a methodical, tireless worker. He was said to work with the speed and power of an engine, whether he applied his considerable skills to preaching, teaching, writing, farming the little tract of land next to his home, or designing and constructing his family's furniture.

But it was as a champion for truth that Dabney towered above his day. He had no patience whatsoever with any philosophy which contradicted or questioned the Scripture. For him it was enough that the Bible spoke. He revered whatever it said as the word of the Almighty God and loathed what was called the "saintly villainy" of dressing up in a preacher's garb and then like a wolf in sheep's clothing standing in a pulpit to question its teachings.

He stood in the front rank of nineteenth-century American preachers. Few viewed themselves as his pulpit peers. If truth were at stake, the torrent of his argument and passion was said to flow *fused like the iron and the white heat from the crucible of a furnace*.

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

When, toward the end of his life, he became stone blind, he continued to teach a full load. He did it so cheerfully that a friend remarked that his example vindicated the grace of God.

After twenty years of teaching preaching, Dabney published his lectures under the title *Sacred Rhetoric*. It remains one of the classics in the field of homiletics. Dabney wrote in its preface that there were two things that he especially desired to emphasize. The first was the necessity of "eminent Christian character" as the whole foundation of a preacher's power. *Eloquence may dazzle and please*, he wrote, but *holiness of life convinces*.

The second emphasis had to do with this matter of the theory of preaching. He wrote that he wished to assert his view *with all the force which I could command*. In a sentence, it was that only expository preaching *honours God's inspired word and limits the preacher most strictly to its exclusive use as the sword of the Spirit*.

I should clarify that Dabney's explanation of *expository* leaves room for topical or textual preaching. But it must be actually *Biblical*—that is, it must handle topics as the Scripture itself does, unfolding texts, be they long or short, within their contexts. He also acknowledged the legitimacy of various *styles* of sermon construction.

But what Dabney taught against was preaching that *reshaped* texts in order to give the preacher a thinly veiled pretext for saying something he had on his own mind. Or the approach, unfortunately still popular, of preaching isolated words out of their contexts and using them for what he called *mottos*. As an example he related, *I have heard more than one Presbyterian minister derive from the words of God to Moses (Ex. xiv. 14),*

Inside

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

“Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward,” the proposition, that it is the duty of the Church to make ecclesiastical and spiritual advancements. Dabney called this a species of sober punning. As the corrective, he insisted that the text must be accepted and discussed only in the very sense which it had in the mind of the Spirit as he uttered it. The preacher has no concern with, and no right to, any other.

I’m going to condense over 70 pages of really superb instruction into less than 2500 words. But I’m worried that what Dabney teaches may prove offensive to some of my brothers whom it is the furthest thing from my intention to wound. After prayerfully weighing the danger, I don’t know what else to do but plead, “Who among us is above correction?” Personally, I’ve learned more from my critics, even some who were obviously intent on hurting me, than from my supporters.

We’re all on the same side here. We’re all wanting to promote the glory of God through the transformation of His people by the faithful handing of His Word. We all decry the man-centered preaching of contemporary Christianity. We all warn our people about the Bible-mutating done by “seeker sensitive” and Charismatic preachers. Why not listen and yield if a reasonable man such as Dabney can prove that we’re sometimes guilty as well? Why bristle if we’re found defective, when we demand of our people every Lord’s Day that they be humble and teachable?

As we read and digest what Dabney wrote, we’re going to be sitting at the feet of a man whose life was above reproach, who was revered by his fellow preachers, and who is saying something that we desperately need to hear. If it happens to touch a nerve, well, *faithful are the wounds of a friend* (Prov. 27:6).

Let me plead for a patient hearing for this good brother. He’s talking to us from the distance of over one hundred and thirty years (1870), so his vocabulary and syntax are not as elementary as our own. But let’s give him a chance. Read slowly. Don’t pass on to the next paragraph until you understand what you’ve just read. You’ll find that nearly every paragraph contains something profound. Unless I’m mistaken, you’re going to find that many lines deserve highlighting. Some unquestionably ought to be scribbled off on cards and wedged up against something on top of our desks to catch our eye and conscience while we prepare to preach this week. Here are Robert Dabney’s convictions regarding our commission and our texts.

The Preacher’s Commission

The preacher’s task may be correctly explained as that of (instrumentally) forming the image of Christ upon the souls of men. The plastic substance is the human heart. The die which is provided for the workman is the revealed Word. The impression to be formed is the divine image of knowledge and true holiness. God, who made the soul, and therefore knows it, made the die. He obviously knew

best how to shape it in order to produce the imprint he desired.

Now the workman’s business is not to criticize, recarve, or erase anything in the die which was committed to him; but simply to press it down faithfully upon the substance to be impressed, observing the conditions of the work assigned him in his instructions. In this view, how plain is it, that preaching should be simply representative of Bible truths, and in Bible proportions!

The preacher’s business is to take what is given him in the Scriptures, as it is given to him, and to endeavour to imprint it on the souls of men. All else is God’s work. The die is just such, so large, so sharp, so hard, and has just such an “image and superscription” on it as God would have. Thus He judged in giving it to us. With this, “the man of God is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:17). This is enough for us. . . .

But there are many who shrink with fear from what they regard as so confined a walk of ministerial instruction. They think it necessary to take a more ample range in preaching than simply showing the people what the Bible means and imprinting that meaning on their souls. The secret feeling is, “This would not allow variety and interest enough. There would not be verge enough for the preacher to display his own powers.” . . .

Now what is this but the very spirit of unbelief and self-seeking. The selection of such forms of truth is evidently not guided by the lowly, self-devoted “servant” of the Church, but by a single eye to self-display. God puts the “sword of the Spirit” into this man’s hand and tells him that with this he shall conquer. He distrusts it; he will add something more trenchant. God tells him that the “Word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). “No,” says the unbelieving servant, “I can devise truths more piercing.”

Expository Preaching

I would urge that the expository method (understood as that which explains extended passages of Scripture in course) be restored to that equal place which it held in the primitive and Reformed Churches; for, first, this is obviously the only natural and efficient way to do that which is the sole legitimate end of preaching, convey the whole message of God to the people. I point to the fact that no one ever thinks of teaching the text-book of any other science in any other way. What would be thought of

the master who professed to teach a system of geometry or mechanics by commenting in a brilliant way on one and another apothegm selected from the author?

If you will recall the scriptural theory of preaching which was stated at the beginning, you will see that it gives us no other conception of the work than the expository. It is to unfold to the hearers the counsel of God for their salvation. To accomplish this it is not enough to dwell with disproportioned fullness on some fragments. A continuous exhibition must be made at least of those important books of the Scripture which present the system of redemption, with reference to the remainder for illustration.

Let us recur to the just simile of the die impressing its image and superscription on a plastic substance. To produce a fair transcript the artisan must press it down equably and place the whole outline upon the wax. This is accomplished by the exposition in the course of the chief parts of the Bible. But our fragmentary, modern method of preaching without context is as though the servant to whom the die is committed should divide it into small pieces, and then, selecting favourite letters of the legend or features of the carving, should force them into the wax at a high temperature and with extravagant pressure. But the remainder is scarcely brought into the faintest contact with the surface. What can one expect save a cluster of rude, shapeless indentations rather than the symmetrical imprint of the Redeemer's beauteous image on the soul?

You may ask, "Will not this unconnected series of theological lessons yet form in the end a complete outline of scriptural doctrine?" I answer, nothing short of the regular expository method will give assurance of this. The same impulses which have caused us to prefer the fragmentary method will be very certain to limit our range of subjects. . . . Our caprice, our fondness for some topics rather than others, our indolent reluctance to grapple with those heads of doctrine of which we are less informed beforehand, the exigencies of pastoral interruptions, always ensure a partial range of instruction. . . .

This remark suggests a second, not less important. The connections of truths among themselves are as essential to the system as the separate propositions. No man understands the system until he comprehends these relations. Now however complete may be the circle of points presented by the faulty, modern mode, their scriptural relations are not taught to the people. Expository preaching

is necessary to show them how truth affects truth and how to connect the parts of their creed.

We have found no better description of the preacher's work than that given by Nehemiah of Ezra's: he "read in the book of the law of the Lord distinctly, he gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." A prime object of pastoral teaching is to teach the people how to read the Bible for themselves. A sealed book cannot be interesting. If it be read without the key of comprehension it cannot be instructive. Now it is the preacher's business in his public discourses to give his people teaching by example in the art of interpreting the Word. He should exhibit before them, in actual use, the methods by which the legitimate meaning is to be evolved. Fragmentary preaching, however brilliant, will never do this. The pastor must teach his flock how to expound for themselves by frequent practice in company with them.

We have found no better description of the preacher's work than that given by Nehemiah of Ezra's: he "read in the book of the law of the Lord distinctly, he gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

Do not these observations explain much that is imperfect in the Christian character of our day? There is a profusion of preaching and public exercises, yet there is far less scriptural intelligence among our church-goers than among our ruder forefathers. The religious opinions of the Church reflect the narrow, partial and exaggerated traits of the pulpit. The people are not grounded in the Scriptures. There is little symmetry or stability in their religious character. . . .

Two Obstacles

The real obstacles to the adoption of this mode of preaching are two: the fear that it will not interest the people and the preacher's indolence. To the first I would reply that the popular caprice is no safe rule to the gospel-minister in choosing his methods of pastoral instruction. . . . Good expository preaching is always permanently attractive, and always most attractive to those who it is most important to attract.

All popular readers of the Scriptures have a strong consciousness of their own blindness of mind to

much that they read there. They feel that in many places they have not the key of knowledge. Hence, he who proposes to open the meaning of the Scriptures meets the most serious desire of their religious nature. If this work is done successfully, without undo pedantry and prolixity, but with a plain and honest mastery of the task . . . if [the hearer's] judgment is convinced that the preacher has indeed given him the clue of correct understanding, nothing can be so attractive to him. He feels that this is precisely what he needed.

There is yet higher reason which guarantees the power of good expository preaching over the souls of the hearers. It presents divine truth in those aspects and relations in which it was placed by that God who knew what was in man. We, in our self-sufficiency, detach a cardinal truth from its context, we exactly define our proposition, we discard the argument by which the Holy Ghost has seen fit to sustain it, we construct another, recasting the elements of proof in forms dialectical or theological, according to the rules of our human science. The effects always disappoint us. . . .

But now let the preacher humbly take the same gospel proposition in its context. Let him make all his human learning ancillary to the simple work of ascertaining and explaining the argument of the Holy Spirit. Let him drink into the very meaning and temper of that inspired discussion. And let him do nothing else but place it, without change or addition, in contact with the souls of his hearers. He will find with delight that he has now opened a way to their hearts. God's sermons will tell upon them as men's sermons never do.

Your conceit and ambition may persuade you that your human arrangement is more regular, more logical, more complete than his. He knows better, for he is omniscient. Have faith and humility to trust his truth in his own biblical forms and you will find your sermons clothed with a true power and unction. If you thus honour his word, he will honour your ministry with success.

The Text

The text must be accepted and discussed only in the very sense which it had in the mind of the Spirit as he uttered it. The preacher has no concern with, and no right to, any other. It is nervously remarked by the Rev. Richard Cecil that "the meaning of the Scripture is the Scripture." The propriety of my law is



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plain from the fact that the preacher is a herald, and that it is God's word which is committed to him as his instrument for the redemption of men. If his task is to deliver and commend God's message, what right has he to change it or to represent it as other than it is? Besides the risk of giving a fatal and specific wrong guidance to some soul in the very perversion of that particular proposition of Scripture, such a custom confuses the minds of the hearers in their efforts to understand the word and cultivates irreverent feelings toward its authority. . . .

I would impress you with the solemn awe of taking any liberties in expounding the word. I would have you feel that every meaning of the text, other than that which God expressly intended it to bear, is forbidden fruit to you, however plausible and attractive—fruit which you dare not touch on peril of fearful sin.

One may ask, "Am I not justified, provided the meaning I give, although not actually placed in that text by the Holy Ghost, is still a scriptural truth taught elsewhere in the Word?"

I answer, "No, this is only a palliation [excuse]." This secures you from positively destroying the souls of your hearers by giving them, then and there, false directions as to the way of life. But the license still does mischief because it confuses and misleads them in reading the Scriptures and undermines their reverence and confidence toward you and them.

The exact mind of the Spirit in the text must then be ascertained before you presume to preach on it. The methods for doing this, by the grammatical study of the original with all accessible learned helps, and by meditation on the context and the connection of thought in which God has placed the passage, belong rather to the science of interpretation than to sacred rhetoric. I need only add that a proper apprehension of the preacher's mission will make him intensely honest and prayerful in his study. . . .

Conclusion

The quality of *textual fidelity* will be easily comprehended if you recall the preacher's position as the deliverer of a message. The people roughly but accurately express it by the phrase *sticking to one's text*. It is simply a strict fidelity throughout the discussion to the subject and teachings of the text. . . . Our business with it is to commend God's own meaning in it—nothing more, nothing less, to every man's own conscience in his sight. Our task is to impress God's own die, as he has engraved it, upon the plastic soul, that we may produce his image. 

Bring . . . the Books

J. Gresham Machen: *Standing Firm for the Faith*

Although many of us are passingly familiar with the name of J. Gresham Machen, we associate him mainly with the teaching of New Testament Greek and the founding of Westminster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. Thankfully, the story of his life and ministry has been preserved in a small volume written by one of his former students and co-laborers, Ned B. Stonehouse, entitled *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Banner of Truth).

John Gresham Machen was born on July 28, 1881. His parents were deeply committed to Christ and raised their three boys in an environment where the Bible was honored, family prayers were regular, and church services were considered a sacred obligation and a genuine privilege. His father was a prosperous Baltimore lawyer who insured that his boys were raised with a deep appreciation of learning and culture along with their personal commitment to Christ. John enrolled at Johns Hopkins University to pursue a degree in the classics, excelled academically, and graduated with honors in 1901. The following year, he enrolled at Princeton Seminary where he later spent most of his teaching ministry. At the end of his seminary training, Machen was awarded a fellowship to study theology in Germany with the invitation to return to Princeton to teach. During his year in Germany, Machen was exposed to both the allurements and the danger of liberal theology and Higher Criticism. One professor, Wilhelm Herrmann, was particularly captivating to Machen. His dynamic teaching style, magnetic personality, and his apparent religious fervency initially masked the danger of the liberal theology he was teaching. Machen was thrown into a spiritual confusion that would last for several years, as can be seen in this excerpt from one of his letters home:

I can't criticize [Herrmann], as my chief feeling with reference to him is already one of deepest reverence. Since I have been listening to him, my other studies have for a time lost interest to me; for Herrmann refuses to allow the student to look at religion from a distance as a thing to be studied merely. He speaks right to the heart; and I have been thrown all into confusion by what he says—so much deeper is his devotion to Christ than anything I have known in myself during the past few years. I don't know at all what to say as yet, for Herrmann's views are so revolutionary. But certain I am that he has found Christ; and I believe that he can show how others may find Him—though, perhaps afterwards, in details, he may not be a safe guide.

Machen was to later conclude that the Christ Herrmann taught was not the historical Christ of the Bible. Having thus personally experienced the power

and dangerous allurements of liberal theology, Machen devoted his energies to combating liberal theology when it surfaced in America within his denomination. His articles and letters reveal an appreciation for men who were passionate about evangelism and who were willing to fight for biblical orthodoxy. After hearing Billy Sunday preach, he wrote the following words in a letter:

The sermon was old-fashioned evangelism of the most powerful and elemental kind. . . . In the last five or ten minutes of the sermon, I got a new realization of the power of the gospel. . . . Every morning, on the page of the paper devoted to Billy Sunday, a Unitarian statement appears in opposition. I like Billy Sunday for the enemies he has.

Machen's first major book was his treatise defending the virgin birth of Christ. His second, and perhaps most influential work, was a defense of Biblical Christianity against Liberalism (*Christianity and Liberalism*). Still in print, this work contends for the doctrines that have been given up by liberals. Machen was willing to stake his entire academic career, reputation, and ordination in the Presbyterian Church on the fight against any intrusion of liberalism in his denomination and seminary. His statement lamenting the inclusivism being promoted by men in leadership is exemplary:

Dr. Erdman does not indeed reject the doctrinal system of our church, but he is perfectly willing to make common cause with those who reject it, and he is perfectly willing on many occasions to keep it in the background. I, on the other hand, can never consent to keep it in the background. Christian doctrine, I hold, is not merely connected with the gospel, but it is identical with the gospel, and if I did not preach it at all times, and especially in those places where it subjects me to personal abuse, I should regard myself as guilty of sheer unfaithfulness to Christ.

Machen's battle against liberalism culminated with his departure from Princeton to found Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929 and his excommunication in 1936 from the denomination to which he had devoted most of his ministerial life and energy. Ultimately, the battle he fought for Fundamentalism would claim his life on January 1, 1937.

May the Lord grant to Fundamentalism young men as committed to battling for truth, orthodoxy, and Biblical separation in our day as Machen was in his. ☞

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

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

The boaster's goal is to leave his listener with a favorable impression about himself. He recalls his achievements, drops names, and may even engage in belittling others. He may speak loudly in the hope that he will have as wide an audience as possible. We can all understand the Bible's condemnation of bragging. It is not just repugnant to the Christians, but even the world tires of it. However, there is a form of boasting that the Word of God not only commends, but commands us to participate in. There is indeed a legitimate bragging right for the believer.

The New Testament word translated "boasting" is *καυχομαι*. *Καυχομαι* is translated as "boasting" (Rom 2:27, 23; James 4:16), "glorying" (1 Cor 1:29, 31), and "rejoicing" (Phil 3:3; James 1:9). This word occurs 50 times in the New Testament. It is interesting to note that 39 of those occurrences are found in 1 & 2 Corinthians. Apparently the church was so "puffed up" with knowledge that it needed the greatest amount of instruction on the matters of boasting.

This word for "boast" must be kept distinct from another New Testament word, *αλαζων* (or *αλαζονεια*), which is translated "boaster" or "boastings." This word occurs only four times in the NT (Rom 1:30; 2 Tim 3:2; James 4:1; 1 John 2:16). While this word shares the idea of boasting with *καυχομαι*, *αλαζων* emphasizes the kind of bragging that always exaggerates the truth. The man doing this type of bragging knows that he is lying. *Καυχομαι*, in contrast, is much more factual. This type of boasting does not purposely present falsehoods. Rather this boaster, while he may be telling the truth, has a misplaced confidence in himself. He is not exaggerating the facts of his accomplishments, but rather he exaggerates the significance of them. He has overestimated the importance of his own achievements and he wants others to give him the praise for what he has done. It is a miscalculation of confidence. Both these words for boasting and confidence can appear alongside each other (Phil 3:3; James 4:16).

There are certain subjects of boasting which are forbidden. For example, a man is not to boast about keeping the law (Rom 2:23). This person has grossly miscalculated the value of his superficial obedience. This kind of boasting will blind a person to the fact that the law actually condemns him. This boasting is so dangerous it can keep someone from true salvation. Yet how often the unbelieving world rebuffs its need for salvation with the boast about keeping the law. We are warned against boasting about our tolerance of

evil. Allowing evil to remain in a church assembly (often labeled "love" or "not being legalistic") and the resulting inaction are condemned in the Word of God as a misguided boasting (1 Cor 5:12). The needless divisions that result in good men unnecessarily take sides receives the warning "let no one boast in men" (1 Cor 3:21, 22). There is also the overconfident boasting of the man who maps out his future and arrogantly assumes that he is in control (James 4:16). He is reminded that "all such *rejoicing* is evil."

It is important to note, however, that the activity of boasting is not unilaterally condemned. There is a boasting that is mandatory for the believer. "The one who glories, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17). So it is not necessary to stop the activity of boasting, but rather change the subject of it. An unbeliever will talk about his works, his religion, his experiences, but he really is unable to "glory in the Lord." The apostle Paul knew that kind of boasting which he retrospectively labels "confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3, 4). He had a list of items he formerly "gloried in" (circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, etc.). But after Paul's conversion he has a new subject in which he boasts: the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:3). Paul is "proud of" the Lord Jesus Christ and that is why he is constantly talking about Him. This is the characteristic that distinguishes us as Christians. Christians not only believe in Him, but we "brag" about Him. The wrong kind of boaster wants everybody to know what a great person he is, but the right kind of boasting wants other people to know how wonderful Jesus Christ is!

This truth of "glorying in the Lord" left its mark on John Bowring, a 19th-century Englishman who learned over 100 languages in his lifetime, served two terms in the House of Commons, and became the governor of Hong Kong. He was a prolific writer as well as a poet and hymn writer, and was knighted by Queen Victoria for service to his country. Yet with all these accomplishments he understood that there is really nothing to glory in but the Lord Jesus Christ. Bowring's tombstone was inscribed with the words "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"—the title to a hymn that Bowring wrote. Perhaps the grave is the best reminder to the living that we have nothing in which to glory. None of our achievements will matter then. Truly the Lord Jesus Christ is the only subject worthy of our boasting! 

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

The Great Wall of China is one of the most fascinating wonders of the world. Chinese slaves, most of whom were convicted criminals, built the wall some 214 years before the birth of Christ. Its purpose was to protect the northern border of China from the unmerciful raids by their fierce enemies, the Mongol hordes. More than one million slaves died building the wall. It still stands today, zigzagging its way through the desolate mountains of northern China. It rises to more than three stories high, with four-story towers sometimes a city block apart, for sixteen hundred miles (that's about the distance between Chicago and San Francisco). When completed, the wall appeared to be impregnable. However, the Mongol hordes not once, not twice, but many times, breached the Great Wall! Though much time, effort and sacrifice went into building this great wonder of the world, yet it failed its very purpose. How could that happen? Did the enemy break through it? No! Did the enemy go over it? No! Did the enemy dig under it? No!

They breached the wall by bribing the gatekeepers! It was the unchecked and undisciplined wickedness of the human heart that failed. The Great China Wall, with its massive height and towers, did not collapse, but the lack of the Chinamen's integrity did, causing the wall to fail at its designed purpose, which led to their repeated defeats.

Integrity has become a missing character trait in our society today. Its ethics are often twisted, shaded, colored and compromised (even in Christian circles). Consider the headlines that expose embezzlement, falsified expense accounts, misuse of credit cards, misappropriation of funds, cooking the books, and the exploitations of the innocent that we hear about on a near-daily basis. It runs like raging white water through government, corporations, and churches. Add to this the absurdity of redefining a word like, "is," and boldly going where no one else has, by stating, "I did not know that this was going to happen" or "I did not have sex with that woman." We live in a culture that has made character, especially integrity, an unnecessary evil in leadership. Psalm 78:72 condemns that very thought and uses the life of King David to illustrate the great necessity of integrity.

"So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands."

Notice that, to feed and guide, David developed two principles in his life that helped him achieve his purpose of leadership. Integrity is listed first, then skillfulness. Often integrity is compromised because someone's skills are impressive and overwhelming to us.

When we give ourselves to "the skillfulness of our hands" only, we prostitute these two Biblical principles in a way that will always produce a great miscarriage of character. This will, in time, result in the surprise of great defeat! Worshipping at the altar of our own "skillfulness," by bragging on our gifts, displaying our talents, flaunting our intellectualism, increasing our abilities and exalting our education will lead to pride and arrogance. By no means am I saying that we should not try to improve on what God has given us with which to serve Him. We may have all these skills and more, and yet become unqualified and unable to fulfill our calling and purpose. Paul feared the very thought of not being a diligent gatekeeper when he said, "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The Old Testament records the life and times of two priests that illustrate this principle of integrity and how it can make or break the leader or "gatekeeper." Phinehas the son of Eleazar and Phinehas the son of Eli are as far apart in their integrity as they were chronologically—several hundred years! Both were sons of priests—good priests (or "great gatekeepers") who loved God and wanted nothing better than for their sons to follow in their footsteps. Both sons had bright and promising futures. Both sons lived and died as direct results of the choices they made in their lives. Both sons went down in Holy Writ as our examples—one on how to develop integrity, become marked as a "great gatekeeper," and die honorably; the other, on how to live without integrity, become marked as a self-satisfying gatekeeper, and die dishonorably.

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, is found eighteen times in eight books of the Old Testament, all of which reveal a track record of a godly, fruitful, and useful life.

Phinehas, son of Eli, is mentioned only six times (in I Samuel), all of which reveal the track record of his vile, wicked, and sinful life that took him to an early grave!

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, was a Biblical separatist who thrived on completing God's will in his life.

Phinehas, son of Eli, was tremendously self-centered and thrived on the wicked sins of his own dark heart.

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, determined to do right when no one else would, even in the midst of danger.

Phinehas, son of Eli, never developed a desire to do

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

Charles Spurgeon

right, thriving on satisfying his own concupiscence.

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, was a man of Bible principle who developed convictions and character, which led to the establishment of specific moral standards by which he lived and died, without fail.

Phinehas, son of Eli, wrote himself an exemption to Bible commandments, never developing character or convictions. Having made himself such an exception, he lived and died by his own standards and his own selfishness.

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, was taught the disciplined life by his father and grandfather.

Phinehas, son of Eli, was “restrained . . . not” by his father.

Phinehas, son of Eleazar, with a javelin in hand, executed Cozbi and Zimri for the sake of purity and to stay the hand of God’s death-plague judgment on the people of Israel.

Phinehas, son of Eli, with a flesh hook in hand exploited the priesthood and sought to satisfy his own lustful desires.

God cries out for a band of believers who will, like Phinehas, take the necessary action, step up to the plate, and without hesitation follow His commands in order to stay the hand of God’s judgment (Num. 25:1–15). When that happens, the believer can develop some of the following principles of integrity that we observe in the life of Phinehas the son of Eleazar (a third generation “great gatekeeper”):

1. Integrity has its roots embedded deep into the principles of Scripture! These principles become convictions that translate into standards of holiness in our very lives.
2. Integrity will never shade, color or twist the principles of Bible truth!
3. Integrity will never embellish a need nor will it exploit someone’s innocence or generosity.
4. Integrity holds to the fact that Bible truth is immutable; therefore wrong is never right for any reason!
5. Integrity carries the power to indirectly or intangibly influence others; however, it can never be transferred to others. It cannot be purchased nor sold.
6. Integrity is nurtured by the power of Bible principles lived out in a gatekeeper’s life—precepts that create a spiritual hunger for others to follow that example.
7. Integrity is never intimidated by man’s “skillfulness” (i.e., his education, his intellectualism, his power and influence, his money, his opinions, his social standing, etc.)!

8. Integrity never allows popular poll ratings, majorities or minorities to turn its head or heart.

9. Integrity never seeks the line of least resistance, nor will it ever ask, “What is the easiest decision?” or “What will be the most profitable decision?” or “What decision would be the most popular?”

10. Integrity is never compromised in the name of compassion, or for the purpose of coexistence, or for the sake of keeping peace.

11. Integrity is not passive when truth is in jeopardy. Its will is to “contend,” as it swings on the hinges of confrontation and often finds itself in the arena of conflict.

12. Integrity has the keen ability to magnify our motive and expose our personal agenda as it puts on display the very fiber of our character.

13. Integrity is authoritatively aggressive! It will not wait for others when right should be upheld, nor will it wait and/or watch to see what others will do.

14. Its mission is to first sift through the facts alone if necessary, search for the solution alone if necessary, and seek to carry out the will of the Father without man’s permission and always without procrastination.

15. When pushed to the limits, integrity prays with its eyes open, as it fearlessly moves in obedience to Bible truth and faithfully executes the commands of that truth!

16. Integrity will always be obvious to others because of its loyalty to the Scriptures and its sacrificial willingness to obey the precepts of the Word. It is measured by God’s desire to use us as His “gatekeeper” for His purpose and glory!

Gatekeepers who maintain Biblical integrity will be guided by the above principles, as Phinehas the son of Eleazar was. David was so impressed with this “gatekeeper” that he lauded him as a national hero in Psalm 106:30–31. Men who will stand in the face of sin and apostasy are marked with certain character traits:

- Unblameable character
- Unrelenting convictions
- Unflinching fidelity
- Unwavering obedience
- Unusual power
- Unique usefulness

Integrity is surely the mighty mark that God puts upon His bondslaves as He places us at our gate in ministry and entrusts us to be diligent “gatekeepers”! 

This column was taken from a message Pastor Arrowood preached November 1, 2001 at the Caribbean Congress on Fundamentalism held at the Calvary Baptist Tabernacle in Carolina, Puerto Rico.



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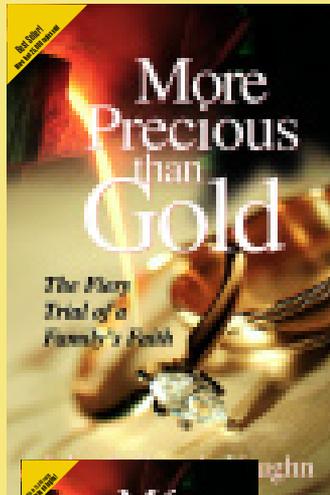
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A Letter from a Church Planter's Wife (Continued from page 19)

a good impression in our community. Short-term help is a boost. *But how we need long-term helpers! A young couple who would move here and commit a year or two to working with us, sharing the load, could make a big difference.*

Our church attendance is stable and has even grown a little, in spite of two families' moving away during the summer. *Our song leader and junior church teacher were among the ones who moved.* But we know the Lord will soon fill those gaps. Another family has decided to join a different church. Since they were saved and disciplined here, we miss them very much. We'll try to stay in touch with them. *The church they attend now is a high-entertainment, low-commitment ministry—an "easy" church, attractive to new believers who aren't yet grounded in the faith. When people leave our church, for whatever reason, we bleed. Losing one family in a new church is like losing ten families in a larger, established one. But the same is true for gaining folks!* We baptized five new believers last Sunday afternoon. Praise the Lord for doing what only He can do—bring souls to salvation! *But we work and witness as if it's all up to us.* Since the school where we meet has no baptistry (or even a swimming pool!), we held the baptismal service at a nearby church. *That church's pastor has been kind—the only local pastor to openly welcome us and acknowledge that we're on the same team. His wife often calls to encourage me. Her friendship is a spring of joy in my heart!*

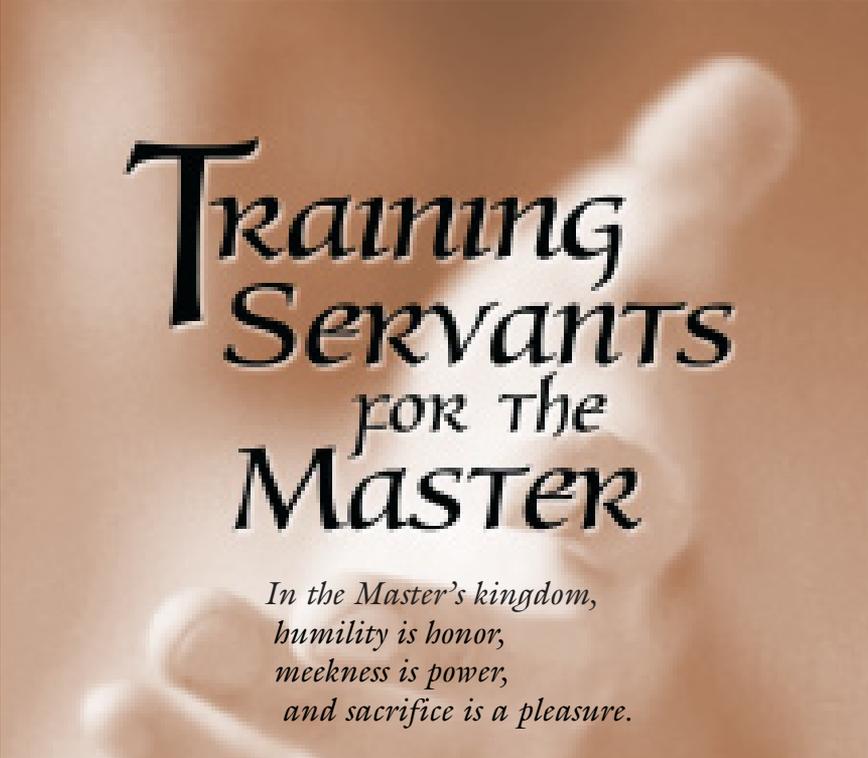
Bible club will resume in our backyard next Saturday afternoon. Our new neighbor, a single mom, has promised to let her children come—a direct answer to our prayers! *Never before has our family prayed together so specifically. I suppose we've never needed to! But, sadly, two sisters who earned Bibles by coming faithfully last spring can't return. Their father learned that we call ourselves "Fundamentalists" and decided that we must be some type of terrorists!*

My husband has set a goal of knocking on every door in our community. He often takes one of the church men with him. *He hopes they'll come to share his boldness and burden. Soul-winning is new and a little frightening to them.* He offers to pray for the families he meets, gives them the gospel, and works to establish friendships. Maybe someday when they have a crisis, they'll remember his smiling face and offer of help. *Knocking on doors is hard on the feet and doesn't bear much immediate fruit. But the more consistent we are in outreach, the*

more likely it is that visitors we've never met will appear on Sunday morning. I know the Lord sees and rewards our faithfulness.

We have begun another year of homeschooling. Our children miss their activities and friends in your Christian school. There is no school like that here. *Of course, if there were already a great church and school here, we would be somewhere else!* I need your prayers to teach them well. I am not adequate in myself. Homeschooling is one task I never planned on or prepared for, and I'm often scared to death. But the children are actually learning (to my great relief), and I'm finding out that "faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." He is even giving me joy during these school days!

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pantry is lined with jars of green beans and strawberry jam and other good food for the winter. We see the Lord's hand providing by His leading us to bargains or by sending us special gifts from His people at just the right moment. *It was hard to raise the support we have, and it's not enough. Maybe it would have been easier if we had been headed for an exotic foreign land. But my husband supplements our income by driving a school bus early in the morning, and lesson fees from my piano students buy the groceries. These jobs give us contacts in our community, opportunities to sow gospel seeds, and help us pay the bills.*



so I'll need to make sure the roast is in the oven and the timer set before I leave. It's always exciting to meet the visitors the Lord sends on Sunday morning. We've prayed and invited and visited (planted and watered); God gives the increase!

Thank you again for all you have invested in this new church. We are blessed to represent the Lord in this growing suburb, full of young families who have everything but the Lord. When you pray, God answers. When you give, God provides. And so when souls are saved, you can share in the joy. Someday, when this church is well established and prospering, you'll know you were part of the

"good old days." That "well established and prospering" goal sometimes seems very far away, but when we look back, we can see that actually we have already made great progress. There are great days ahead, and we can't wait to get there! *But right now, it's just time for me to get some sleep.*

In His Love,
Carol

Claudia Barba is the wife of Dave Barba of Press On! Ministries. She graduated from Bob Jones University ('72) and the Citadel ('73)(M.A.), is a frequent speaker at ladies' retreats, and authored "Away, Sweet Away," a devotional booklet based on her experiences on the road as an evangelist's wife.

I need to head to bed soon. Morning comes early on Sunday. I'll have to be up in time to cut and arrange chrysanthemums for the pulpit table. We'll all need to arrive at the school where we meet in time to set up the chairs and pulpit, piano, sound system, and Sunday school classrooms. Hymnbooks have to be distributed and the nursery equipped with toys and portable cribs. Usually there's some bathroom cleaning and sweeping to do, and I should practice my piano offertory once more. I hope the caretaker opens the building on time this week! We have invited a family who have just moved to town for dinner,

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Grace is given not because we have done good works, but in order that we may be able to do them. —Augustine

Conceit is a strange disease: it makes everyone sick except the person who has it. —Unknown

A man seldom makes the same mistake twice. Generally it's three or more. —Perry Griswold

There is a potential hero in every man—and a potential skunk. —Oswald Chambers

Materialism is organized emptiness of the spirit. —Franz Werfel

A perfectionist is a person who cannot enjoy Tchaikovsky's music without knowing how to spell his name. —Jim Reed

All unbelief is the belief of a lie. —Horatius Bonar

A man's most valuable trait is a judicious sense of what not to believe. —Euripides

It requires as much caution to tell the truth as to conceal it. —Baltasar Gracian

Nothing can deceive unless it bears a plausible resemblance to reality. —C. S. Lewis

Campaigns have ruined more men than they ever made. —Will Rogers

This is the authority of America—the will of her united people exercised through individual liberties. —Paul M. Rodriguez

Democrats raise taxes. It's their way of paying for programs that buy votes from people who don't pay high taxes. —Pete Waldmeir

It occurs to me that Bill Clinton should have been known as "The Wizard of Is." —Lyn Nofziger

If there is one civil right more precious than all the rest, it is the right to vote. —James Kilpatrick

When politicians rush to fix things, it's a sure sign that either the intended patient is dead or fully healed. —Tony Snow

Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving in words evidence of the fact. —George Eliot

Liberty means responsibility. That's why most men dread it. —George Bernard Shaw

When you choose the lesser of two evils, always remember that it is still an evil. —Max Lerner

A vote is like a rifle: its usefulness depends upon the character of the user. —Theodore Roosevelt

It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived. —Gen. George S. Patton

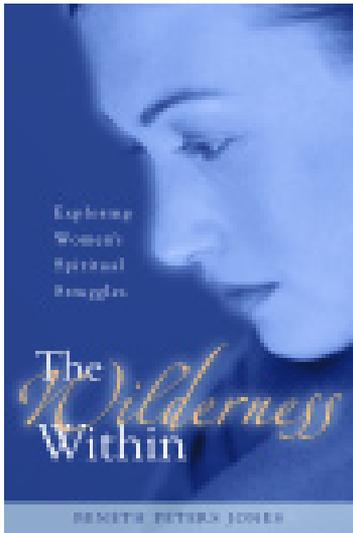
Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants. —William Penn



Wit and Wisdom is taken from *The Federalist* with contributions from Pastor David Atkinson.

The Wilderness Within: Exploring Women's Spiritual Struggles

Book Review by Sherry Shiffler



The Wilderness Within: Exploring Women's Spiritual Struggles

By Beneth Peters Jones

Bob Jones University Press (185 pp.)

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You weren't necessarily looking for her, but there she was, within the pages of God's Holy Word. Her story was written thousands of years ago, yet it is no different from your own. The more you read, the more the Lord pricked your heart to consider her ways: her victories, shortcomings, and failures. Suddenly, you made the connection. Then came the "woe is me" experience as the Lord illuminated His Word, and you were turned inside out, broken before a loving God. After pouring your heart out to Him, you were restored. You most likely were filled with a sense of the peace that surpasses human understanding as you yielded in submission and obedience to His desires for you.

Is there any other book that can pierce the soul and spirit with such accuracy? Not only does it pierce, but God's Word changes your heart, mending the broken spirit and healing the unseen wounds. Yet even after having this experience we are seemingly bent on trying all that the world offers first, before seeking the answers that God has already provided. Whether bending the ear of a friend in lengthy telephone expositions about our personal struggles, or appealing to a pastor to fix what is wrong with our marriages and

children, we always come up empty. Time and again we reach for people alone rather than our Savior.

Perhaps after years of struggle, this frustration, mingled with unacknowledged bitterness, pushes us to look for physical and psychological reasons for our emotional distress. Overwhelmed by feelings of isolation and depression, fear, panic, and loss of control, we are prompted to call on the family physician. "Doctor," we plead, "you've got to give me something. I just can't take this anymore."

Finding a doctor willing to scratch out the latest prescribed remedy to soothe stress is hardly a challenge today. Current statistics show that 1 out of 5 Americans has some form of depressive disorder annually.² Pharmaceutical companies have raked in billions of dollars and while making names like Paxil, Prozac, and Zoloft household words. Known as SSRI antidepressants (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors), these types of drugs have been prescribed in record numbers since the 1980s.³

"I would never take a drug to solve my problems," you say. But would you reach for a book written by a best-selling author and psychologist? They, too, are flying off the shelves in record numbers these days. Cleverly disguised under the cloak of positive thinking, humanism is a best-seller, even among Christians.

Too busy to browse the bookstores? Daytime television and talk radio will gladly fill the gap. It takes little more than a Ph.D. and the popular vote to boost the average pop psychologist to the top of the charts. Given the soapbox they need, they dole out advice and opinions to educate the masses with worldly ideology and destructive guidance.

For all of our striving and reaching, be it for people, pills, or self-reliance, our failure to look to God's Word for truth and the only real answers to our struggles sets in motion a dangerous pattern. Furthermore, it allows Satan to gain a stronghold in our lives. For women in particular, this pattern can lead into a wilderness of discontent and frustration. In the isolation of our homes, that wilderness of discontent allows depression and anxiety to thrive.

In a style unique to Beneth Peters Jones, that important link between the example God has given us through the Israelites of Exodus and the modern woman is made clear. "Wherever we are in our spiritual life or in spiritual leadership, Israel at Sinai should serve as a warning: we are vulnerable."⁴

Ladies' Circle (continued)

The Wilderness Within is abundant with Scripture as well as practical examples and applications for everyday life. The author addresses the importance of acknowledging the sources of our spiritual struggles: the crippling hold of bitterness, comparison, fear (False Evidence Appearing Real), long-restrained anger, disappointment, self-pity, and ingratitude.⁵ All of these elements lead to spiritual wandering and keep us from the promised land of peace and contentment.

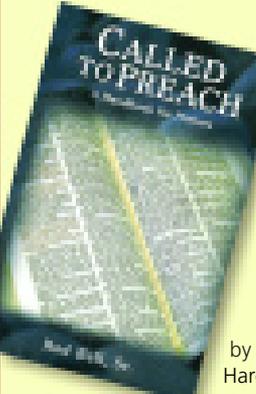
After carefully explaining the struggles, the author follows up with sound counsel, pointing the way to God and teaching the reader how to use the Bible as a compass: the guide for new direction, apart from the world and the ways that seem right.⁶ Through the three keys of dedication, diligence, and discipline, we can find our way out of the wilderness and into the light.⁷ Multiple examples of the author's personal spiritual struggles, backed by years of rich experience and wisdom, provide valuable insight from which every woman of God can benefit.

Sherry Shiffler is a homemaker and freelance writer living in Greenville, South Carolina

Endnotes

- ¹ Isaiah 6:5.
- ² The Other Side Resource, www.othersideresource.com.
- ³ Health and Healing: Tomorrow's Medicine Today, Dr. Julian Whitaker, M.C., www.karinya.com.
- ⁴ Jones, Beneth Peters. *The Wilderness Within: Exploring Women's Spiritual Struggles* (Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 2002), p. 103.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 48, 83, 85, 87.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 175.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

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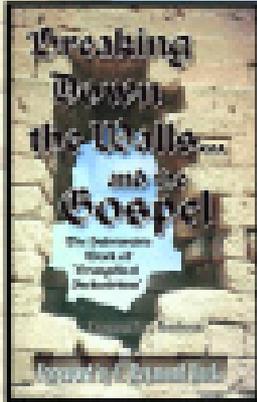
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The Era of the Big Meeting

Phil Shuler

The other day I was reminiscing about my beginnings in evangelism. I graduated in February of 1950 and immediately entered revival work under the ministry of my older brother, Evangelist Jack Shuler. Jack offered to train me and help me to fill part of a year's itinerary. He gave me the titles "Field Director" and "Advance Man," in those days better known as "Flunky"! I had spent much of my last two years at Bob Jones University glean- ing information from those in the field: Dr. Monroe Parker, Hyman Appleman, Merv Rossell, and others. Marie and I joined Jack for our first revival in Louisville, Kentucky, during the Kentucky Derby. We rented the coliseum, which seated nearly 10,000, and I witnessed my brother preach as no man I had ever seen preach before! I was put in charge of the personal workers, and Jack told me that no one would leave the prayer room after the altar call unless he was saved! Sometimes we would be the last folks out, but I never saw anyone in the two years who went out lost!

The most remarkable meeting I shared with Jack was Dallas, in the winter of 1951. Dr. Luther C. Peak, a pastor in the World Baptist Church, with six other churches he helped to found, invited Jack to come to Dallas during the weeks of the Billy Graham meeting in Ft. Worth. Billy had embraced the NCCA, and Dr. Peak wanted Jack to preach in Dallas. Jack sent me to see if there was interest among the many good churches in that city. Dr. Peak arranged for me to preach in all seven of his churches and raise funds for advertising in case Jack decided to come. Each congregation I addressed showed great excitement, and my recommendation to my brother was "Let's go!" I secured the Fair Park Science Hall, and then under Dr. Peak's direction, visited over 140 pastors. Out of that group, 97 formed the committees of the crusade, and Jack came in for one of the most unusual, dynamic meetings ever held in that great city. It lasted 12 weeks!

The Devil fought that meeting tooth and toenail! Week two saw the worst ice storm in over 34 years. The men would lock arms and form a human chain so that women might pull themselves up the hill. Science Hall was built for displays and had huge pillars throughout the building, so only about two thirds of those attending could see. But they came! By the end of week three, we could not accommodate more than 3000, so we rented the Fair Park Auditorium, seating 4500. This was a delightful building with a good public address system, etc., and Jack was content to stay—except that by weekend six, they were standing in the outside aisles, and the fire department would

not allow that. So Jack came to me and said, "Phil, find me a building that will hold a crowd!"

I had heard of Ed McLemore's wrestling ring, and I knew that it would be available every night except Thursdays, the one night each week that it was used for wrestling. I talked Ed into renting us the building for \$100 a night, including Thursday, for the wrestling matches took place from 8:00 P.M. until 11:00 P.M. We titled Thursday "Business Men's Night" and held the meeting at 6:00 P.M.

That building turned out to be ideal! The arena would seat 10,000, with the wrestling ring in the center, and the public address system overhead. Jack had to preach "in the round," but the training he received at Bob Jones College enabled him to master this quickly. The wrestlers' dressing rooms became our prayer rooms, and from the very first service the place was filled to capacity week after week. Now, what makes this interesting is that Merv Rossell was holding a meeting for three weeks for Dr. Criswell at First Baptist in Denver, and Billy Graham was at the Cow Palace in Ft. Worth with 4500 a night, and Jack had 10,000 a night in Dallas, and all had full houses and great results! In this day and age that would not be believed! But remember, TV was still in diapers, and theaters didn't change movies until the entire week was up, so unless a circus came to town there just was no other place to go!

I traveled with Jack, set up his meetings, handled the personal workers during the meetings, etc., and of the two years of meetings I witnessed, none topped the Dallas meeting. A year later, Billy Graham released a report that of the converts from the Ft. Worth revival, 29% had joined local churches. Jack went back to the files of the cooperating churches and discovered that 89% of those converted in the 1951 revival were now on the rolls of one of the cooperating churches! Jack instructed me to hand the decision card to the pastor of the convert's choice. All were cooperating churches. I would check with the converts the next night of the meeting, and if the pastor had not called on them that day, a carbon copy was given to another church in that area. Jack would not allow a church to cooperate if it would not sign the Apostles' Creed and pledge to abide by it. Billy Graham's compromise put an end to such evangelism.

Evangelist Phil Shuler is moving his headquarters to Denver, Colorado. As of December 24, his new address will be "Eden Manor, #505, 3405 W. 32nd Ave., Denver, CO 80211. His email remains philshuler@juno.com.

The above title may appear to be a question with a painfully obvious answer. But why, exactly, is the latter portion of your Bible called the *New Testament*? And why is it called the *New Testament*? What is a *testament*? Many assume that “testament” is equivalent to the word “book”—so the OT is the earlier (or old) part of this Book, the Bible, and the NT is the later (or new) part of the Bible.

“It is, in fact, unfortunate,” notes NT scholar F. F. Bruce, “that the word ‘testament’ was ever applied to the two parts into which the Bible is divided, especially as there is a much more suitable English word which might be used, and a perfectly familiar word at that—the word ‘covenant’” (*The Books and the Parchments*, 74).

“Testament” comes from the Latin word *testamentum*, the term used in the old Latin versions to differentiate the *Vetus Testamentum* and the *Novum Testamentum*. This practice followed earlier Greek versions that used the word *diatheke* (dee-ah-THAY-kay) to divide the canon into the *palaia* (old) *diatheke* and the *kaine* (new) *diatheke*. The proper translation of *diatheke* is “covenant.” So a more historically precise and Biblically correct title for the latter division of your Bible is the “New Covenant.” But why is it called that?

Three issues are central to the question of what the New Testament is: (1) the meaning of this Greek word *diatheke* that is used throughout both the OT and the NT; (2) how the Bible itself, and especially the NT, uses this term; and (3) what are the theological and practical ramifications of the choice of this word to designate the two divisions of God’s revelation.

The NT’s First Mention of the New Covenant

The New Testament records the inauguration of a New Covenant. In fact, it is called the New Testament [or Covenant] precisely because it is a New Covenant. That inauguration is announced on an occasion that is recorded four times, three of which appear in the first major segment of the NT—the Gospels.

Matthew (26:28), Mark (14:24), and Luke (22:20) all record Jesus’ words to His disciples at the Last Supper the night before His crucifixion. Referring to the cup of wine

of which they partook, Jesus symbolized it saying, “This is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” In recounting that event for the Corinthians, Paul also recorded those words (1 Cor. 11:25).

Significantly, Jesus did not say “a new covenant” but “the new covenant.” So according to Jesus, the New Covenant was inaugurated at the crucifixion, when His blood was shed for the remission of many. But *what* new covenant? His announcement that He was establishing the *new* covenant would seem to imply that this would be in contrast to an old covenant—indeed, as the rest of the NT describes it, the old covenant. Which old covenant? Jesus assumes that the disciples would understand exactly what He meant, and they appear to. But first, a few background details on the use of “covenant” in the NT will be helpful.

The NT Use of “Covenant”

The significance of *diatheke* in the Greek NT far exceeds its NT frequency (33 times). It occurs about 340 times in the Greek OT, however, to denote the covenants God made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, David, and others.

Diatheke occurs 33x in NT; of those, 17 are in Hebrews. Besides two generic references to the basic concept of a covenant (Heb. 9:16, 17), to what covenant (or covenants) does the NT refer?

Various OT covenants—2x (Rom. 9:4; Eph. 2:12)

Abrahamic Covenant—4x (Lk. 1:72; Acts 3:25; 7:8; Gal. 3:15)

Mosaic Covenant at Mount Sinai—9x (2 Cor. 3:14; Gal. 3:17; 4:24b; Heb. 8:9 [2x], 9:4 [2x], 9:15, 20)

New Covenant—17x (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; Rom. 11:27; **1 Cor. 11:25**; 2 Cor. 3:6; Gal. 4:24a; Heb. 7:22; 8:6, 8, 10; 9:15; **10:16, 29**; **12:24**; **13:20**; Rev. 11:19). [Note: Bold indicates references to the *blood* of the new covenant.]

Out with the Old, in with the New

To return to a question raised above, if Jesus was instituting “the new covenant,” then what is this “old” covenant that is being replaced? And why? The fullest answer to that question is found in the book that contains the lion’s share of the word “covenant”—the Book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 8:6–13 addresses these question directly. Jesus

THE NEW TESTAMENT?

is the mediator of a “better” covenant (8:6) than “the first covenant” (8:7). What is this “first” covenant that Christ has replaced? A lengthy quotation of Jeremiah 31 introduces “the new covenant” (8:8), and clarifies that this “better covenant” is “not like the one I made with your fathers . . . when I took them . . . out of Egypt” (8:9). So the old covenant that has been replaced is the Sinaitic (Mosaic) Covenant. The writer identifies this “better covenant” as the New Covenant described in Jeremiah 31, since he quotes that very passage at some length to verify his point (8:10). Incidentally, this reference to the “new covenant” is the same terminology Jesus used at the Last Supper; and the disciples’ minds would also naturally have turned to Jeremiah 31 at His use of that phraseology.

No Doubt the Problem Is with You

Before we turn our attention to Jeremiah 31 (and other passages), however, we ought first to address another question that this contrast in covenants raises. How could a covenant that originated with God—as the Sinaitic covenant did—be flawed and in need of replacement? Isn’t every covenant God institutes perfect?

Again, Hebrews 8 answers that question. The writer implies that the first covenant was “faulty” and in need of a replacement (8:7). He clarifies, however, that it was not the *covenant itself* that was flawed (8:8). Note the wording carefully. God found fault with “*them*” (those with whom that covenant was made), not with “*it*” (the covenant itself). The *people* were the problem, not the Law itself. But why? The writer explains (8:9) that “they continued not in my covenant.” Why not? Why was the first covenant not adequate?

(1) *Because man, with his fallen sin nature, cannot keep the Law.* Romans 8:3 describes “what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.” That is, the problem was not with God’s laws given in that covenant. Paul affirms that “the law is holy and just and good” and “spiritual” (Romans 7:12, 14). The problem is with man’s inability to keep his side of the covenant (Romans 7:14).

(2) *Because the Law made no provision for fixing man’s fallen sin nature.* Hebrews 7:11 and 19, 9:9, and 10:1 all explain that the old covenant was impotent to make its participants faultless (“complete” or “perfect”).

In other words, man couldn’t keep the Law because *he* was internally flawed. And the Law itself could neither fix man internally nor permanently atone for his guilt and

appease God’s displeasure for man’s breaking of His holy Law. Man needed someone who could keep the Law perfectly, atone for his guilt permanently, and change him internally so that he could and would keep God’s Law. Enter Christ, the mediator of a better, new covenant.

The writer of Hebrews (8:10–12) highlights God’s promise that this new covenant is a “better covenant” established on “better promises” because it will internalize and enable obedience, remove sin permanently, and “perfect” its participants (10:14). That is why the old covenant is now obsolete and replaced with a better “new covenant” (8:13).

A New Covenant Promised

Hebrews 8 quotes Jeremiah 31, the premier OT prophecy promising a new covenant. There are, however, at least three OT prophets who *expressly* describe this coming New Covenant. While Jeremiah alone uses the term “new covenant,” the other prophecies use synonymous terminology in describing what they call “an everlasting covenant (of peace).”

Isaiah
61:8-11—everlasting covenant

Ezekiel
16:60-63—everlasting covenant
34:20-31—covenant of peace
(36:21-38—no explicit reference to “covenant” but uses identical descriptions of the effects of the new covenant
37:15-28—(everlasting) covenant (of peace)

Jeremiah
31:31-40—new covenant
32:36-44—everlasting covenant
33:14-26—“that good thing that I have promised to the house of Israel and . . . Judah”

Conclusion

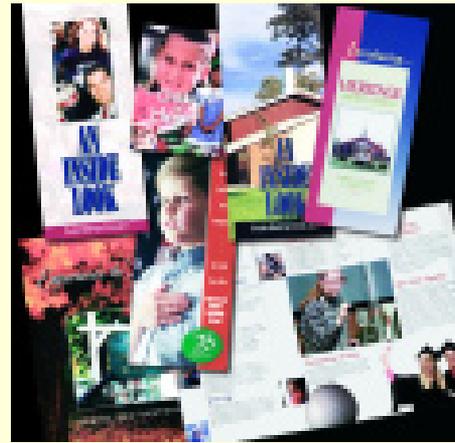
In the next column, we will look in detail at the terms and effects of this “new covenant” prophesied in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. In the meantime, I hope you will look them up and ponder at least this question: How could a “new covenant” that God expressly promised to Israel be instituted in this present age for the Church, including (predominantly) Gentiles? Or is it?

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Is It a Baby or Not?

In Lansing, Michigan, a woman, pregnant with quadruplets, was charged with voluntary manslaughter when she stabbed her boyfriend to death after he punched her in the stomach. The appeals court reversed her conviction stating that the judge should have allowed her to argue that she was defending "her unborn children." The case raises important questions concerning the viability of the unborn fetus as a living being, since it is arguing the mother was protecting a life. (Baptist Press, 10/17/02)

State Lottery Losses

On November 5 Tennessee voters decided to remove the state's prohibition against the lottery. The truth about state lotteries is likely to plunge the state, already struggling to meet its budget, into deeper financial woes, which will force the raising of taxes. In fact, property taxes in states with the lottery have risen three times faster than in states without it. The reason is that, in order for a state to net \$200 million in lottery revenues, \$600 million must be taken out of circulation, which in turn causes a \$20 to \$66 million loss in taxes from optional spending. This loss does not include the ripple effect as money is diverted away from businesses into the lottery. The state keeps only one-third of the ticket sales; the rest

goes toward winnings and the lottery bureaucracy that governs the program. The fate of the lottery now rests in the hands of state legislators. (Baptist Press, 11/8/02)

Nobel Winner Jimmy Carter

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to former president, peanut farmer, and peacenik, Jimmy Carter, who was praised for having "undertaken very extensive and persevering conflict resolutions on several continents. He has shown outstanding commitment to human rights." The Nobel Committee praised Carter, advocating that "conflicts must be, as far as possible, resolved by mediation and international cooperation, based on international law." Gunnar Berge, chairman of the committee, sarcastically noted, "With the position Carter has taken on this [Iraq], it can and must also be seen as criticism of the line the current U.S. administration has taken on Iraq." (*The Federalist*, 10/2002)

Terrorist Alliance

New threats from al-Qaeda caused U.S. authorities to issue warnings to sites ranging from rail-ways to hospitals. Greater concern comes from reports that al-Qaeda is holding meetings with Hezbollah, the Palestinian faction group that continues to terrorize Israel. Hezbollah has long had a

presence in the U.S. that it uses to raise money for operations in Lebanon. U.S. authorities fear this inroad might be used as a base of terrorist activity. (K-House e-News, 11/20/02)

Homosexuality: Orlando Votes

Citizens of Orlando County have one last opportunity to voice their concerns before the County Council votes whether to add the phrase "sexual orientation" to an anti-discriminatory ordinance. Two votes are necessary for the ordinance change with the first vote 4-3 in favor of the change. The addition will make it illegal to discriminate against homosexuals by refusal to hire, rent to, or give access to public accommodations. The final vote was scheduled for late December. (Baptist Press, 12/02/02)

International Ban on Cloning

The change in political climate in the U.S. has proponents of a total ban on cloning hopeful. The conservative coalition is having an effect on the United Nations General Assembly, which is also considering a treaty against cloning. Thirty-six countries, led by the U.S., reacted to a limited ban that the UN sub-committee proposed, causing the body to postpone work on the treaty until October of 2003. The French and German pro-

posal limited cloning for the purpose of child reproduction but opened the door for research purposes. The Bush administration continues to promote a comprehensive national and international ban on all cloning. (Baptist Press, 11/21/2002)

Public Porn

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments as early as next year as to the constitutionality of the Child Internet Protection Act, passed in 2000, which required public libraries to install Internet filtering software to keep pornography out of the hands of minors. Three Third Circuit Court of Appeals justices voted unanimously that the law violated the patrons' Freedom of Speech. The Supreme Court invalidated two prior laws, the Communications Decency Act of 1996 and the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996, on the basis of a violation of free speech. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals is following a pattern of decisions set by the highest court in the land. (Baptist Press, 11/21/02)

Going after Porn

Concerned Women for America reports that AT&T and MCI earn an estimated \$1 billion a year from dial-a-porn; and that hotel chains earn \$250 million a year by providing in-room pornography. The White House is on the warpath against pornography,

moving congress to pass the Child Internet Protection Act and encouraging the FBI to add extra agents to target child pornographers. With nearly 30 million children online each year, their availability plus the creativity of villainous pornographers puts children in great risk. (*World*, 11/09/02)

Catholic Leadership Revises Abuse Guidelines

A subdued, chastened group of U.S. Catholic bishops met in June for their annual meeting, held this year in Dallas. Together they drafted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, promising to reach out to victims of abuse, to report all cases of alleged abuse to civil authorities, to maintain a zero-tolerance policy for all ordained abusers, and lifting the church's statute of limitations for hearing cases of abuse to the victims' twenty-eighth birthday. This year alone the priesthood witnessed the expulsion or resignation of 325 of its members on allegations of sexual abuse. Since the crisis surrounding Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston broke in January, hundreds of lawsuits arose due to the recovery of repressed memories by alleged victims, and in some districts the church has experienced a 30 percent drop in membership and a 25 percent loss in collections. The Vatican, which reserves the final say in all cases of abuse, negotiated the reinstating of the statute of limitations and urged bishops to obey local laws, some

NOTABLE QUOTES

In the supposed state of nature, all men are equally bound by the laws of nature, or to speak more properly, the laws of the Creator. —Samuel Adams

Ido not believe in a fate that falls on men however they act; but I do believe in a fate that falls on them unless they act. —G. K. Chesterton

Duty is not collective, it is personal. Let every individual make known his determination to support law and order. That duty is supreme. —Calvin Coolidge

Those who have given themselves the most concern about the happiness of peoples have made their neighbors very miserable. —Anatole France

Most of the energy of political work is devoted to correcting the effects of mismanagement of government. —Milton Friedman

[Weapons] Inspection is impossible without the eager help of the dictatorships, a ridiculous fancy. . . . During a war, self-delusion is a form of suicide. —A. M. Rosenthal

Istrongly suspect that if we saw all the difference even the tiniest of our prayers make, and all the people those little prayers were destined to affect, and all the consequences of those prayers down through the centuries, we would be so paralyzed with awe at the power of prayer that we would be unable to get up off our knees for the rest of our lives.—Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy, Boston College

When politicians promise to give you something, just remember that the only money they have is what they take from the people. If you want someone to pick your pockets and then give you a handout, there are plenty of politicians around who will do that for you. In fact, a lot of politicians have been around a long time just by using such tactics. Above all, never assume that political phrases actually mean what they say or imply. Rent control does not control rents, gun control does not control guns, and the Indian Child Welfare Act disregards the welfare of Indian children with unbelievable callousness. —Thomas Sowell

Half the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. [They] justify it because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves. —T. S. Elliot

of which do not require them to report accusations. Some advocate groups are calling this "a return to secrecy." (*World*, 11/23/02)

PCUSA Constitutional Crisis?

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is facing a constitutional crisis, according to denominational conservatives whose evidence focuses on the refusal of some ministers to abstain from marrying same-sex couples and clerical opposition to maintaining fidelity in marriage or chastity during singleness. The General Assembly's moderator (the highest governing body and the denomination's top executive) Clifton Kirkpatrick refuses to involve the body in disputes that should be handled in the church's lower presbytery and synodal courts. He agreed that if the General Assembly intervened to reign in these rebels it would plunge the denomination into a constitutional crisis. (*World*, 11/23/02)

Anglican Archbishop Urges Faithfulness

As Archbishop of Wales Rowan Williams prepares to be enthroned as Archbishop of the 70-million-member Anglican Church, former leading cleric George Carey urges the denomination to remain faithful to the Biblical position on homosexuality as a crucial step in maintaining the worldwide unity of the church. Williams, successor to the seat, pictured joining an order of druids, has admitted to ordaining a practicing homosexual but promises not

to violate church order. Conservatives are fearful that liberals will use the change in leadership to lift the ban on homosexual ordinations. (*World*, 11/23/02)

Nothing but Some Tissue

Sheldon Turkish, M.D., admitted on the stand that he regularly tells women that the abortion he is about to perform removes "nothing but some tissue." That is the issue behind a lawsuit alleging that Dr. Turkish did not inform his patient, Rosa Acuna, that the first-trimester abortion would end a life. Acuna contends that her 1996 abortion was performed without her consent since her doctor did not inform her that the tissue was a human life after she asked whether a baby was already there. It is possible that if Acuna wins in the New Jersey Appellate Court that the case will be heard in the Supreme Court within two years. A jury trial is scheduled for May 5, 2003. Acuna's lawyer, Harold Cassidy, believes the ruling is a great victory for the pro-life movement. (Baptist Press, 11/26/02)

Monumental Battle

Last July Judge Roy Moore, friend of Dr. D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, installed a 5,300-pound granite monument of the Ten Commandments just outside the Alabama

state judicial building. The monument exalts an image of an open Bible with the Commandments elucidated while surrounded by quotes from national documents such as the Declaration of Independence. In federal court Judge Moore testified that the Commandments are "the moral foundation of American law." U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson says Judge Moore has 30 days to remove the granite monument, which he ruled is a violation of the Constitution's ban on the government's promotion of religion. Moore's attorneys say they will appeal the ruling. (Baptist Press, 11/19/03)

What Would Jesus Drive?

The National Council of Churches (NCC) and the Coalition on the Environment have joined forces to confront the popularity of SUVs with an advertising campaign entitled, "What would Jesus drive?" The group claims that these gas-hogs are contrary to Christian teaching of concern for others and for the creation. Representatives of this coalition plan to meet with executives of the top three automakers to discuss the launching of their television campaign, slated to begin before year's end in North Carolina, Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri. According to an open letter from the coalition,

"Automobile manufacturing now requires thinking about values, not just vehicles." Campaign leader Jim Ball says, "We hope that when Christians go to purchase their next vehicle, they will ask, 'What would Jesus have me drive?' We think the answer should be . . . the most fuel-efficient vehicle that truly meets your needs." (Baptist Press, 11/21/02)

A Burnt Bible

President Bush recently signed the Sudan Peace Act and continued the custom of presenting the pens as gifts to the delegates. After the signing Brad Phillips of the Persecution Project presented Mr. Bush with a burnt Bible and relayed the following story: "This Bible belonged to a Christian family that were among the victims of genocide in southern Sudan's Upper Nile oil region. They were killed and their home was burned to the ground and this burnt Bible is all that remained. Please accept this Bible and remember to pray for our persecuted brethren in Sudan." Mr. Bush replied, "Thank you, I will pray." (*World*, 11/02/02)

Religious Persecution in Belarus

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko was given fourteen days to sign the new law that oppresses all religions except the dominant Russian Orthodox Church.

The new law, which will take effect 10 days after signing, "outlaws unregistered religious activity; requires compulsory prior censorship for all religious literature; bans foreign citizens from leading religious organizations; restricts publishing and education to faiths that have ten registered communities; and bans all but occasional, small religious meetings in private homes." Head of the religious affairs department Aleksandr Kalinov assured the press that no one would be arrested or imprisoned; rather they would simply face fines. Religious leaders in Belarus believe that many churches will simply go underground or will migrate to neighboring countries for religious freedom. (Baptist Press, 11/1/02)

ABC Develops a Homosexual Detective Series

A new detective series is slated to air in the fall of 2003 under the name *Mr. and Mrs. Nash*. The show, being developed by Steve Martin's production company, stars actor-director-screenwriter Alan Cumming as owner of an interior design store. He and his homosexual lover will attempt to overcome the national stereotypes of gays in this crime-solving comedy. (Baptist Press, 11/15/02)

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—Dr. Stewart Custer



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Calvary Baptist Church of Marina Marina, CA	First Baptist Church of Troy Troy, MI	McEver Road Baptist Church Oakwood, GA	Van Dyke Freedom Baptist Church Warren, MI
Calvary Baptist Church of Normal Normal, IL	First Baptist Church of Yuba City Yuba City, CA	Metropolitan Baptist Church Atlanta, GA	

*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).*

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Go Out There and Get Them!

We've been looking forward to this issue of *FrontLine*. As I read through the drafts of the articles, I read with the enthusiasm some of our readers report: "I read the whole magazine at one sitting!" If these articles don't motivate you to pray, support or even to go and get involved in church planting, you need revival. As I read, my mind was flooded with memories of the first church I attended as a new Christian and the early days of the church I still pastor.

I remember my first experiences on visitation and the thrill of seeing visitors come to church; their halting attempts to follow the songs and their joy when they came to Christ; the late night work sessions to remodel the storefront buildings, with the lifelong friendships that would grow out of those years of struggle. Shortly after I came to pastor a handful of families in a textile mill village on the west side of Greenville, I knew the thrill of seeing not only new converts, but new babies born into the congregation. The very first one was a little fellow named Scott.

Only a pastor knows the experience of watching someone like Scott come to church as a nursery baby, holding him in your arms when Mom and Dad bring him down the aisle for dedication, seeing him grow through grade school, high school, and college, then watching him cringe as he sits with his fiancée while his pastor slips and calls him "Scottie," from the pulpit. Then there is the joy of per-

forming his wedding, and listening as he unfolds his plan to pack up and move away to serve the Lord in the soul-starved regions of the West. No one but his parents know those feelings more.

A few weeks ago I was on my way to the Northern California Regional meeting of the FBFI at Lucerne. Scott and his wife Becky, whose article on helping church planter Brent Snow appears in this issue, met me at the airport and took me to meet church planter Derek Harm for his Wednesday evening service at the local school building where they meet in Folsom. What an experience it was to spend a few short but precious hours with Scott and Becky and to see their enthusiasm for the work they moved across the country to do for the Lord, then to travel back twenty-five years in the service that evening and remember what church planting does not only for the new converts, but for the church planters.

It is a bittersweet sendoff that is given when a family leaves home and church to launch out in the great missionary enterprise of church planting. There is a part of us that wants to "keep the kids near home." But whether you say your temporary "goodbye" to a newlywed couple that have grown up in your ministry or a newly retired couple that have been among the pillars of the church, there is an unspeakable joy unique to this effort.

In one week in the fall, while traveling to FBFI meetings in Minnesota and Puerto Rico, I fellowshipped with five couples from the same family who were in our church for years but now serve in different locations. Four of the men are brothers and the fifth couple are the parents of those young men. They built the ministry into their children, then left for the field themselves when the children were grown and serving the Lord. That is praying the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers. And it's putting legs on your prayers.

I would be dishonest if I didn't admit that there is something in a pastor's heart that protests a bit when a solid family gets this burden and comes to tell him about it. He thinks of a thousand reasons that he should try to talk them out of it. He needs his best people there to keep his own church strong so it can support missions and church planting. He needs those who are mature to help him with those who are weak. He needs their encouragement and visible loyalty to keep the fire burning in his own heart. But he knows he not only has to let them go, he has to help them go.

It would more than fill this column just to list the names of those coming to mind. They are doing what their pastor has prayed that everyone would do—what he did himself when he said "yes" to his own call long ago. A new ministry is healthy because it still has the hunger to "go out there and get them," and a mature ministry will stay healthy the same way. Pastors, like parents, have to prepare them, and let them go out there and get them.

[The pastor] knows he not only has to let them go, he has to help them go.



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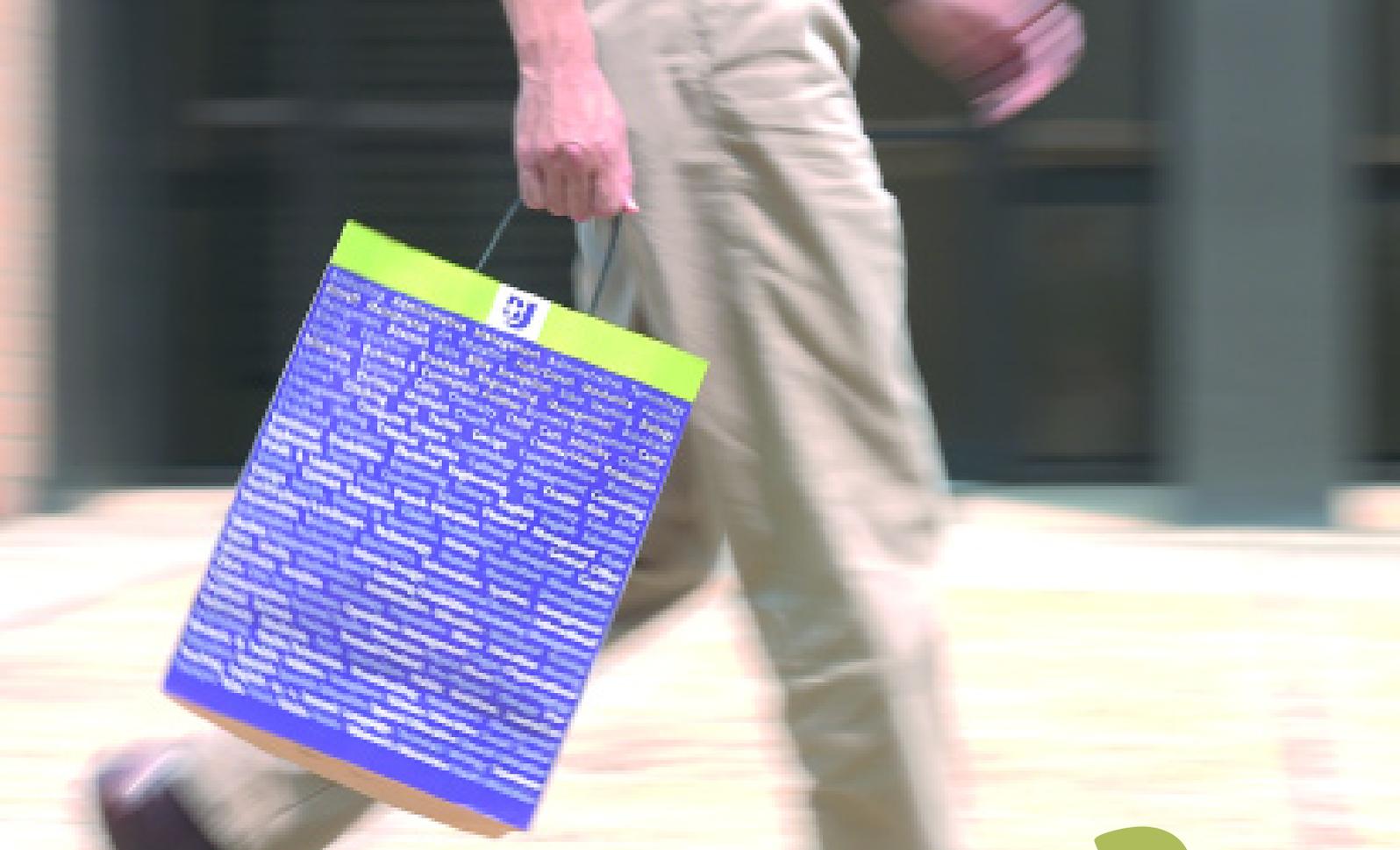
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500 West Lee Road
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A publication of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship

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