

AN OPEN DOOR • THE REAL AMERICAN DREAM • STARTING A HISPANIC MINISTRY

FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

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UNA PUERTA ABIERTA
(AN OPEN DOOR)



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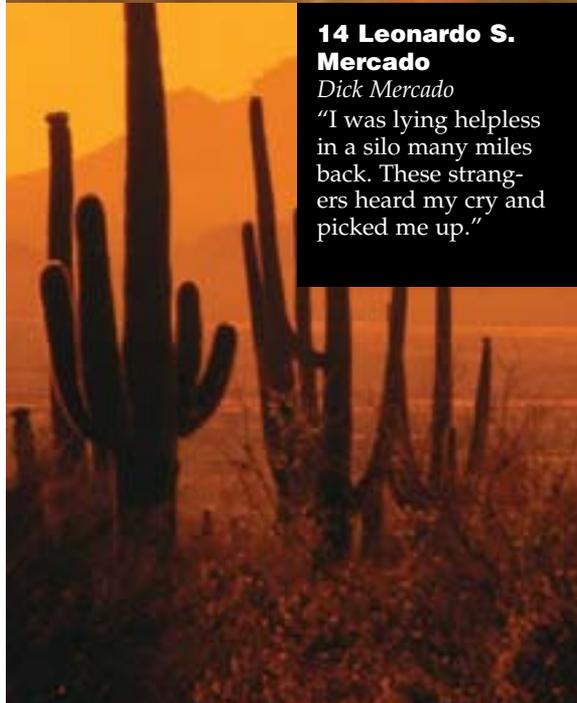
In 1999 I became a United States citizen. I love this country most of all because it is here that my Savior found me.



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

We want to hear from you!



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For some years now I have been receiving *FrontLine*. I am so often exhorted and encouraged by the articles that are in it. This last issue, "The Desire of All Nations," I found exceptional so that I must write and say "Thank you." Just the title gave me reason to rejoice, for my God and Savior Jesus Christ is my Desire.

I eagerly devoured each article by each author. "The Desire of All Nations" by Fred Moritz reminded me of a time many years ago when a young woman and I prayed together all night for revival in our church. At one point she pleadingly asked God to "shake the foundations of our church." (A good way to pray today.)

Jim Berg's article brought to mind many who could truly be helped by his program. I will make it known to others. I know how meaningful Matthew 11:28-30 has been to me when the pressures of life bear down.

The article "Worship According to Jesus" reminded me of a conversation I had in Jerusalem in 1993 with the young Israeli woman who was the tour

guide. When I asked her about her personal relationship with the Jesus she was telling us about, she responded much like the woman at the well. I still pray for her.

Sam Horn's article contained a quote by J. H. Jowett that made me weepy. I understand the desire to leave a service without speaking to anyone so I can reflect upon what has taken place with the music, the preaching, and the wonder of my God. After all, as David Whitcomb so aptly pointed out, God is the Object of our worship. If we would, like Moses in Exodus 33:12-23, pray to and then catch just a glimpse of God's glory, wouldn't we truly know the blessing of all that He is, His presence and His rest in this restless world in which we live?

I cannot leave out Layton Talbert's article on prayer ("At a Glance"). I look forward to reading "the next column."

This issue of the *FrontLine* has inspired me to order some for others as gifts.

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We Can Make Excuses, or We Can Make Disciples

John C. Vaughn

Many years ago I had the opportunity to go soul winning on board a merchant ship docked at Hampton Roads near Norfolk, Virginia. The man who invited me on board does this full time. Over thirty years ago he had already seen the wisdom of reaching foreign nationals who come to our shores even briefly. I learned that although the ships are registered in various countries, there may be merchant seamen from those or other countries making up the crew. My friend went prepared with Bibles and literature in many languages. Today his converts are pastoring churches in their native countries.

Pointing to a man who identified his language in words I could not understand, this unusual missionary handed me a Bible and told me just to find the verses and point to them. To this day, I do not know the language the man spoke, but I could count the books in the table of contents until I found Romans, then opened the Bible to the chapters and verses and pointed them out to the man. I will never forget the emotion of seeing the realization first of sin, then of hope, in that man's eyes during this unusual encounter. I learned a lesson that day that I have never forgotten: language is a barrier, but it is not an insurmountable barrier. Sure, we need to be able to communicate the truth, but let's not forget that God has already communicated the truth.

Missionaries struggle with the languages of the people to whom they

are called. Pastors struggle to communicate ideas to darkened minds in the language they share. But, too often, pleading ignorance of the language is an excuse for not loving a soul. I knew a missionary, with the Lord now, who went to a Pacific island without a written language. He couldn't speak the language of the people, and no one there spoke English. He pitched a tent (a literal tent) under the trees and set up housekeeping. When a local man came, he sat on his heels and stared. My friend sat on his heels and stared back. After a while the man said something, and my friend repeated it. The man said something else, and my friend repeated that.

Then, the missionary picked up the nearest object and pointed to it. The man said a word and the missionary repeated it. Eventually, he learned the language, reduced it to writing, taught the people the Bible, started a church, and trained a pastor. One hundred years ago, his story would have been

in all the newspapers and the man would have been hailed as a national hero. Now, hardly anyone knows his name—except the One who really matters.

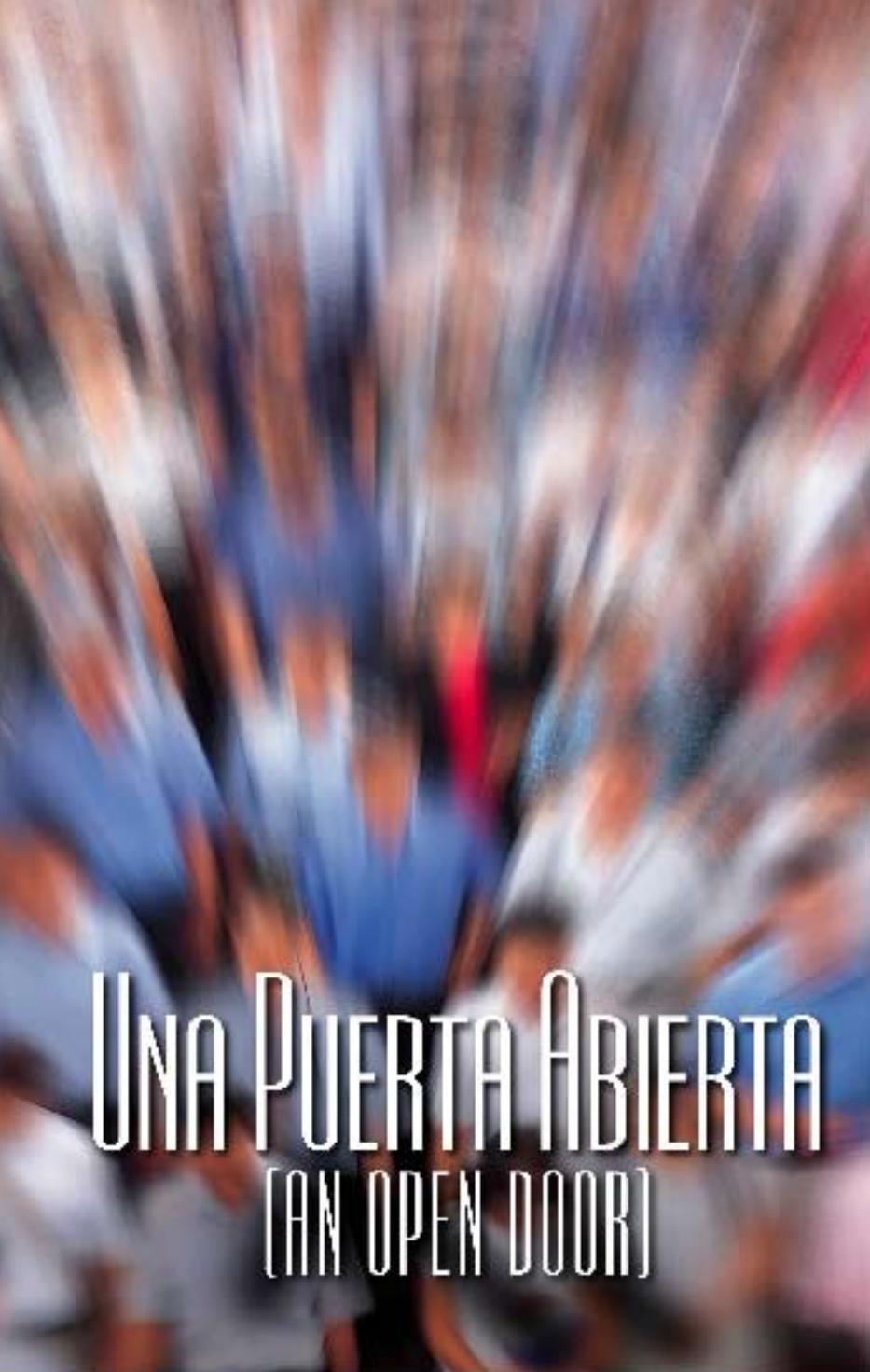
We are faced with a choice right now. Our response will affect the history of Christianity in America. We can join the crowd who complains, "If these people are going to come to America, why don't they learn to speak English?" or we can find a way to get the gospel of Jesus Christ to a culture that may some day send missionaries to our grandchildren. America doesn't have an

immigration problem so much as it has an evangelism problem. The Hispanic population in the United States is growing more rapidly than most Bible-believers realize. With that growth in population comes an incredible growth in opportunity, and therefore, in obligation.

We must rejoice at this opportunity and prepare ourselves to meet it. Most Hispanics believe in One God; most have a commendable loyalty to family and a disciplined work ethic. (Can you remember when this country used to believe that if a man would outwork another man for less money, he deserved the job?) Our experience has been that when a Hispanic man comes to Christ he is zealous about bringing his friends and family to Christ. There is a "first generation" Christian mentality in Hispanic church planting. I pastor in a city where it is easy for Christians to complain that no one wants to hear the gospel, or everyone claims to believe it. When we started a Spanish-speaking ministry twenty-five years ago, Hispanics weren't interested in learning the excuses—they just went to work. They have been busy winning souls, planting churches, sending Spanish-speaking evangelists back to the countries of their birth, and otherwise fulfilling the Great Commission.

The man who wants to get the gospel to another man will find a way. The missionary who wants to find and train a leader to leave in place will get over the barriers. The church that sees the opportunity that has been laid on our doorstep will seize it while there is time. We can make excuses, or we can make disciples.

***We must rejoice
at this opportunity
and prepare
ourselves
to meet it.***



UNA PUERTA ABIERTA (AN OPEN DOOR)



David Shumate

The Great Hispanic Ministry Opportunity in the United States

“Do you know of someone who could come and help us start a Spanish ministry? All of a sudden there are Hispanic people everywhere in our town, and we don’t know how to reach them.” Those connected with Hispanic ministries regularly receive such pleas from pastors and church members. No longer is the need for Spanish outreach limited to places like Los Angeles, El Paso, Miami, or New York. These traditional Latino population centers have been joined by such cities as Indianapolis, Wichita, and Charlotte and by smaller communities such as Dalton, Georgia; Dodge City, Kansas; and Siler City, North Carolina. All around us people who do not know Christ and yet who are open to the gospel are arriving by the score. God is bringing a vast mission field to our very doorstep, and we have a solemn obligation to reach it for Christ. This obligation is imposed upon us by four key realities: population changes, spiritual opportunity, our country’s future, and, most importantly, by the Great Commission.

Population Shifts

By most credible estimates the Hispanic population of the United States is now over forty million, rivaling that of Columbia, the second most populous country in Latin America.¹ It is now generally accepted that Hispanic-Americans are now the largest and in numerical terms the fastest growing minority group in the United States. Under current rates of growth and immigration, the Census Bureau estimates that by mid-century there will be more than one hundred million Hispanics in the United States, comprising almost one-fourth of the total population.

Although continued immigration, legal and illegal, makes up a significant part of the growth of this population group, the Hispanic population will continue to increase even in the very unlikely event that immigration stops completely. This reality is due to the fact that the Hispanic population is considerably younger than the population at large and has a birth rate twice as great.²

Besides its sheer size, the Hispanic population merits our serious attention because of its increasing geographic diversity. Especially in the last fifteen to twenty years Hispanics have been migrating from

regions that they have traditionally occupied to other areas of the country. The map on page 9 shows growth rate of the Hispanic population between 1990 and 2000 by county. The Hispanic population increase for the country was 54 percent. Counties colored in light purple experienced between 100 and 200% increases (resulting in county Hispanic populations in year 2000 that were from twice to three times as great as the corresponding populations in 1990). Counties in the darker shade of purple experienced an increase of at least 200%. Notice in particular the population increases in the Midwest and Southeast. In fact, ten of the twenty cities with the greatest percentage growth in their Hispanic populations between 1980 and 2000 are in the Southeast.³ Although the greatest effects have been felt in these regions, the phenomenon is virtually nationwide in scope.

The Spiritual Opportunity

It cannot be an accident that so many people are coming from the mission fields of Latin America to a nation where the gospel is still readily available. Neither can it be coincidental that many Hispanics are now moving to the "Bible Belt" and other regions in which there are many Bible-preaching churches. We should feel the opportunity and the urgency all the more when we stop to consider God's working in the Hispanic world. Other religious organizations, such as New Evangelical and mainline churches, Roman Catholicism, and the cults are all aggressively seeking to reach this demographic group. Regardless of the difficulties, the Fundamental, Bible-believing church must develop and implement the vision of bringing the gospel to our Hispanic neighbors.

There are several reasons that the Hispanic population of the United States is particularly open at this time. First is the great moving of the Holy Spirit these days in Latin America. In the history of modern missions, Bible-believing missionaries came to the fields of Latin America relatively late. Whether it was due to the intense opposition of the Roman Catholic Church, restrictive laws against mission work, or the fact that this region lacked the same appeal as missions to the Far East or Africa, Protestant missions did not begin in earnest in Latin America until almost the turn of the twentieth century. Despite this late start, however, we have been privileged to witness a veritable explosion of the gospel across many parts of Spanish-speaking America. Despite the continuing shortage of workers, the rise of Pentecostalism, and other difficulties, there can be no doubt that the Lord is working mightily among the Latin American people. These are people who are spiritually hungry. In many, if not most, places in Latin America, there is now the free opportunity to preach Christ as He is revealed in the Bible. At the same time, the religious traditions of the people, although not teaching them the Biblical way of salvation, have given many in Latin America an ingrained respect for the Word of God and for certain basic Christian

doctrines such as the deity of Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection. This combination of factors has prepared the Latin American people for a time of extraordinarily fruitful harvest.

The second reason for the receptivity of Hispanics in the United States is the effect of immigration. In many cases the spiritual receptivity of U.S. Hispanics is even more pronounced than that of their Latin American counterparts. It is widely acknowledged in mission and ministry circles that times of change in people's lives often provide an opportunity to reflect upon what is of ultimate importance. This is especially true when the social and cultural props that maintain a certain religious belief system are absent in the person's new environment. Missionaries commonly report that for many people, especially for the relatively young (the group most likely to immigrate), attachment to Roman Catholicism is not a matter of personal conviction nearly so much as social convention. Especially now when large numbers of Latin Americans are moving to areas where there are many Bible-preaching churches, there is a wonderful opportunity to reach the new arrivals with the gospel.

Future of Our Nation

For many, the problems involved with illegal immigration are a barrier to, or at least a distraction from, the task of reaching Hispanic Americans for Christ. Immigration policy is currently the subject of nationwide, often intense, debate. The issues are real and serious, and Christians as citizens of our Republic have a right and an obligation to participate in the discussion. As we do this, however, we must not miss the spiritual opportunity that we have as citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Believers must remember that even legitimate concerns over the social and economic impact of our current immigration policy should never blind us to the Lord's desire to bring multitudes of every kindred, tongue, and nation to saving faith in Christ.

One fear often voiced about the current wave of immigration is that the newcomers are not assimilating into American culture. Evidence shows that Hispanics do in fact assimilate to the larger culture, with each generation increasingly speaking English and adopting the attitudes of people in the dominant culture.⁴ For believers, however, the most important question is *to what* Hispanics will assimilate. Hispanics on a whole are more socially conservative (on issues like abortion and homosexuality) than the non-Hispanic white population. The most conservative Hispanics are those that are foreign born. Subsequent generations born in the United States more closely reflect the values of our culture as a whole.⁵ Not surprisingly, Hispanics that describe themselves as Evangelical or born-again Christians are more socially conservative than either Roman Catholic or non-religious Hispanics.⁶

The implications of this data are sobering. American culture is becoming increasingly indifferent and even overtly

God is bringing a vast mission field to our very doorstep, and we have a solemn obligation to reach it for Christ.

hostile to the truth of the Bible, discarding our nation's spiritual and moral birthright. If we do not disciple young Hispanics, the popular culture will. If we do not reach Latin American immigrant families with the gospel, their children will progressively adopt the values of moral relativism, hedonism, and materialism that are shredding the social fabric of our nation. If that happens, the day may come when churches all over Latin America will have to send missionaries to the United States the way in which we are now sending missionaries to Europe. If, on the other hand, a large number of Hispanic residents are converted to Christ and taught the Scriptures, they could prove to be a major revitalizing influence both upon the American church and the American culture.

The Great Commission

Regardless of the social and economic implications of reaching Hispanics for Christ, the central issue is one of obedience. The Lord commanded us to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey all of His commands, including the command to make other disciples (Matt. 28:18–20). The context and the content of this commission demand believers to cross ethnic as well as geographic frontiers to spread the gospel. This responsibility has never been easy, but difficulty is no excuse for disobedience. Bible-believing churches must pray, plan, and work in order to take advantage of the tremendous opportunity that the Lord so graciously has given to us.

Dr. David Shumate is the new General Director of Mission Gospel Ministries International. He has also served in the pastoral ministry and has taught in seminary. He currently resides in Greenville, South Carolina.

¹ Mexico is the first with over 105 million people. Brazil, with 186 million people, is not included because it is Portuguese rather than Spanish in background. Unless otherwise noted, population figures within the United States are drawn from the United States Census Bureau website (www.census.gov). Information on the population different countries can be obtained from *The World Fact Book* online at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook.

² "Latino immigrants, most of them young adults in their prime child-bearing years, have proved highly fertile, with birth rates twice as high as those of non-Hispanics. Consequently, Latino population growth in the next few decades will be driven primarily by increases in the second generation. These native-born, English-speaking, U.S.-educated Hispanics will have a very different impact on the country than their immigrant parents had" ("Hispanics: A People in Motion," Pew Hispanic Center [Washington, D.C., Jan. 2005], 2 [www.pewhispanic.org]).

³ A. R. Williams, "Latinos Rise Nationwide," *National Geographic Magazine*, vol. 204: no. 5 (November 3, 2003), n. p. (map of United States). The increases in cities such as Atlanta, Georgia, and Charlotte, Winston-Salem, and Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, were in the neighborhood of 1000%.

⁴ For example, 46% of second-generation Hispanics are English-dominant and 47% are bilingual, whereas only 7% report that they are Spanish Dominant. For third-generation Hispanics, these figures are 78% English-dominant, 22% bilingual, and 0% Spanish-dominant. Mollyann Brodie, Robert Suro, and others, "2002 National Survey of Latinos," Kaiser Family Center and Pew Hispanic Center (Menlo Park, CA, Washington, D.C., 2002) (www.pewhispanic.org), 6, 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

What Can We Do?

American churches often feel helpless to reach their Hispanic neighbors. "We don't speak Spanish, so we can't do anything" may be the prevailing sentiment. An English-speaking congregation can do much more than it thinks, however, and may even be the key to developing effective Hispanic outreach in its area.

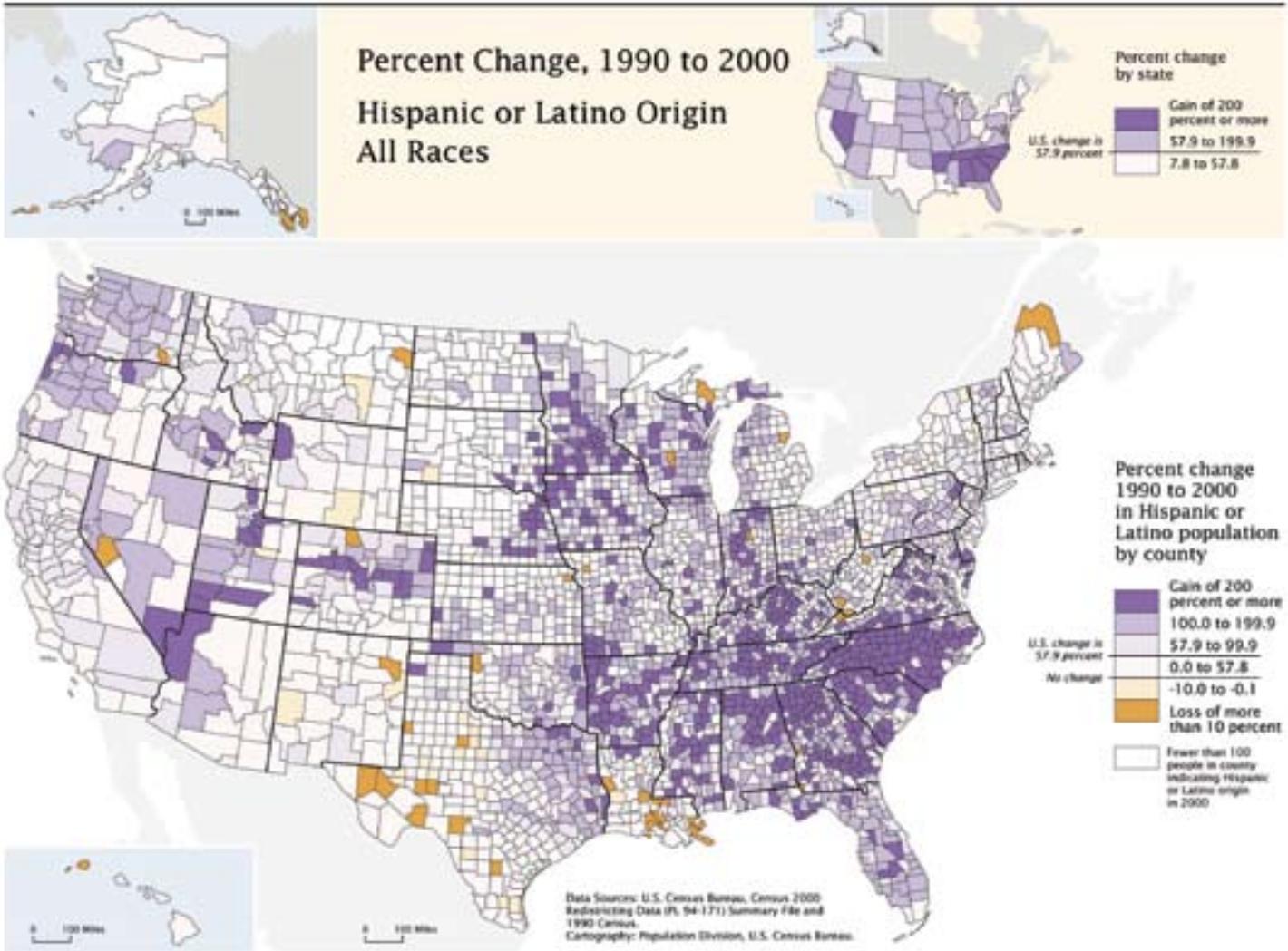
First, there is abundant gospel literature in Spanish, much of which is translated from English material that our churches already use for evangelism. Therefore, even non-Spanish speakers can have confidence the contents of the literature they are handing out. As a general rule, Hispanic people are open to receiving literature, especially if they know that it is based on the Scriptures.

Second, although it is difficult for an adult to become fluent in a new language, any church member can learn enough Spanish to initiate a conversation, open a heart, and hand out some gospel literature. A few words in Spanish, however halting, often melt the heart of someone who appreciates your attempt to communicate.

Third, many American churches already have bilingual individuals in their congregations. Although these individuals may lack ministerial training, it does not take much preparation to begin a Bible study with people who have very little knowledge of the Scriptures. Pastors can guide and equip their bilingual members to be effective in reaching out to Hispanics.

Fourth, one of the greatest sources for future Hispanic pastors is the large numbers of second-generation Hispanics. Often these children and young people, born in the U.S. of Latin American parents, are bilingual. Therefore a church youth group can reach them in English and prepare some of them to become Hispanic ministry leaders.

Finally, an American church can provide support, encouragement and a place to meet for a new Hispanic congregation. The American churches can play a crucial role in helping to reach the millions of Hispanics now living in the United States.



Cynthia A. Brewer and Trudy A. Suchan, U.S. Census Bureau; "Mapping Census 2000: The Geography of U.S. Diversity"; published June 2001; <<http://www.census.gov/population/cen2000/atlas/censr01-1.pdf>>.

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THE REAL AMERICAN DREAM

Johnny J. Franco

The believers in the United States find themselves with a unique opportunity to carry out the Great Commission. The United States has sent thousands of missionaries across the world, but now the missionary field has come to America. God, in His divine providence, has permitted many to migrate, especially from Latin America, to this country where the gospel is preached freely. For me, this truth is more than just an idea; I owe my salvation and ministry to the Lord's bringing me to this country.

I was born in the land of Ecuador. When I was four years old my father left our home. Two months later, due to economic necessity, my mother also left home and moved to the United States. She left me in the care of my grandparents. It was as though I had become an orphan. This situation created in me much bitterness and frustration. Twelve years later, in 1978, my mother brought me to the United States so that I could study in this country and thus fulfill her dreams. I did not appreciate her desire, and I wanted to stay in Ecuador with my grandparents. I began to drink to cover the bitterness and frustration that consumed me.

The year I arrived in the United States I met Lizet. She was born in the United States of Cuban parents. Lizet and I were married two years later. I did not have the faintest idea of what marriage really was, so we had many problems and separations. In 1984 we had yet another separation, and my wife came to Greenville, South Carolina, to live with her mother, far away from

me. I did not want to lose her, so I traveled to Greenville to attempt a reconciliation.

During that time a member of the Hispanic ministry of Faith Baptist Church, pastored by Dr. John C. Vaughn, invited my mother-in-law and her family to a service. My mother-in-law accepted the invitation and went with her three daughters. At that service, my wife, who had been saved as a little girl but had not grown spiritually, was reconciled to the Lord. My mother-in-law asked that the church member who had invited her to the service if he would visit me also. The following Saturday he came by my apartment and led me to Christ.

Some time later Pastor Vaughn asked Mark Batory to direct the Hispanic ministry, and under his leadership I was discipled. In order to know more about the Bible I started studying at the Instituto Bíblico de la Fe (Faith Bible Institute), which Dr. Batory had started. In 1989 Brother Batory was called to Gospel Fellowship Association Missions as director. The Spanish ministry was left without a pastor, and Pastor Vaughn asked us to pray for a new leader. We prayed for two years until he asked me to take this sacred responsibility. I did not want to; I did not feel qualified. It was too high a calling for me, and so I told him that I could not do it.

After several months, however, Pastor Vaughn asked me to be pastor "in training" for a year. That position sounded much better, and in 1991 I started working under the leadership of Pastor Vaughn. He made me part of his ministry. He showed me authentic

Fundamentalism, and he showed me how to be a servant. He showed me his church, and I attended his staff meetings. He made me part of his staff and never made me feel inadequate in comparison to others of his crew. During that time I learned much about the ministry with Hispanics, my people.

During those days of training, Pastor Vaughn made it clear to me that he wanted the Hispanic ministry to aim towards being an autonomous church. In 1993 we had a farewell service. With the blessing of Pastor Vaughn and the people of Faith Baptist Church, Iglesia Bautista de la Fe became independent in order to be more dependent upon the Lord. During that year we bought our own building, and the church was growing both in number and in spirit. Instituto Bíblico de la Fe continued to instruct future workers of the church. By God's grace pastors have gone forth from our church to serve in other ministries. We now support missionaries in various countries including the Philippines, Africa, Papua New Guinea, Austria, Spain, Micronesia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, and Panama. Some of these missionaries have been ordained and sent by our church.

Some years ago we became burdened about the great need for high quality sacred music in Spanish. God has raised up the ministry Música de la Fe (Faith Music Ministry) in our church and has enabled us to record two CDs of sacred music in Spanish to distribute throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

The Faith Bible Institute began producing lay graduates who felt a burden for more training. Therefore, this year we started the Colegio Bautista Universitario de la Fe (Faith Baptist College) with sixteen students. The purpose of the college is to multiply Hispanic leaders for the ministry.

In 1999 I became a United States citizen. I love this country most of all because it is here that my Savior found me. We give praise to God for what He has done in raising up a North American pastor to teach us the fundamentals of the faith and for the North American church that supported him. A thousand thanks for your vision. Your work has not been in vain. Great is your reward.

Our story could and needs to occur hundreds of times over. The growth of the United States Hispanic population is immense. In fact, the Hispanics are now the largest minority group in the country. It is estimated that more than forty million Hispanics live in this country, four times the number of people in the country of my birth. What a tremendous opportunity God has given to the fundamental Christians of the United States. Most Latin Americans that

have immigrated to this country come from idolatrous, pagan nations where the Bible is not known. Therefore we perish for lack of knowledge, and, although missionaries have taken the gospel to our lands, there is still much to do for the Lord. In Luke 10:2 the Lord Jesus Christ says, "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

What a great blessing it would be if the North American Christians would reach the many Hispanics with the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and would equip them for the ministry, later sending them to their countries to reach their own people. Those who are converted and trained in the United States are already knowledgeable of their own language and culture and, therefore, can

be more effective in winning their people to Christ. This approach also has the potential of saving much time and many resources that would normally be required to prepare an American to live and serve on a foreign field.

With all this, we must not forget the importance of establishing works in the United States. Some Spanish ministries have already been planted, and many American pastors want to help. They have a difficult time, however, because they lack knowledge of the language and the culture. Very often I receive phone calls from American pastors, from different parts of the country, asking for help because they have a group of Hispanics visiting their churches and are not able to help them due to the inability to communicate. It must be frustrating to have an unsaved person before you and not be able to share the gospel with him so

that he might be saved. In spite of these barriers God can greatly use an American pastor with vision and patience to raise up future Hispanic leaders. My own testimony is an example of what the Lord can do.

I greatly encourage American churches to begin looking for ways to reach the growing Hispanic populations in their areas. I also urge experienced American pastors to pray for, find, and train Hispanic men to become future spiritual leaders. I would be more than happy to speak with you about how to develop an effective strategy in your church.

Dr. Johnny J. Franco has been the pastor of the Iglesia Bautista de la Fe in Greenville, South Carolina, since 1991. He is also the moderator of the Confraternidad de los Bautistas Fundamentalistas del Sureste (Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of the Southeast). He and his wife have seven children and are expecting another. You can reach him by e-mail at pastorfranco@iglesiabautistasc.org or by telephone at 864.363.6071.

Most Latin Americans that have immigrated to this country come from idolatrous, pagan nations where the Bible is not known.



Dick Fellars and Steven Rubio

STARTING A HISPANIC MINISTRY

Phoenix, Arizona, is one of the fastest growing cities in the country. A large segment of that growth is in the Hispanic population. It is very likely that your area is also seeing the same tremendous growth in the number of Hispanic residents. Five years ago we partnered with a bilingual church to begin a Spanish work. We have learned a few things along the way that may be useful to you as you see the growing Hispanic population and have a desire to reach out to them.

The immigrant population may be the most open segment of our society to reach with the gospel. They are away from the comforts and securities of home, but that also means they are free from the family, social, and religious structures that may have prevented them from being open to the gospel in their homeland. The loneliness and isolation they feel by being in a foreign country provide an opportunity for them to be receptive to the love of Christ expressed through the local body and the gospel.

Basic Ministry Approaches

The first consideration in beginning a new Hispanic work is to determine the approach and ultimate goal for the new ministry. Is the goal a Spanish-speaking Sunday school class, a small Spanish-speaking group, a Spanish department within the church, a church within a church, or an independent church? All of these methods have been used across the country. Deciding on the goal at the

outset is very important and will determine a variety of decisions along the way.

The history of ethnic ministries in the United States is a very interesting study. With all of the various ethnic groups coming to this country, we need to think through the methods that might be employed to reach them with the gospel. With the size of the current Hispanic population, the high numbers of Hispanic immigrants, and the likelihood of that immigration pattern continuing or increasing, it would seem reasonable that starting independent Hispanic churches is the best method to reach this segment of our population.

A Question of Leadership

The second major consideration is who will start and lead the Hispanic ministry. In addition to all of the necessary spiritual and character qualities, the best choice would be a second-generation Hispanic man. He has the potential to be truly bicultural and bilingual. In our case we approached two students at a Bible college in Mexico who had grown up in Phoenix and asked them to come to Phoenix for the summer to begin the church plant. After that summer, the bilingual church we partnered with supplied preachers and visitation teams for an entire year to continue the ministry until one of those Bible college students could graduate and return to continue the work.

Another possibility is to suggest that some of our col-

lege students from our churches in the United States go to Mexico to receive their Bible college training. This would give them unique training for Hispanic ministry in the United States. These students could become bilingual and bicultural. Although this is a rather radical suggestion, it is a very efficient and practical way to train leaders for this exploding Hispanic population. The Bible college we work with is the Instituto Práctico Ebenezer, Hermosillo, Sonora, founded by Dr. Dick Mercado and the MGMI mission. For more information about this college contact Dr. Keith Huhta (kalhuhta@rtn.uson.mx), Apdo 610, Hermosillo, Sonora, MÉXICO, 83000. If you write Dr. Huhta, remember they are training workers for the 105 million Spanish speakers in Mexico and the millions in other Latin American countries. If we want leaders for the Spanish speakers in the United States, let us send them the workers to train and return to us to do the work in the United States.

If the ideal candidate, the second-generation Hispanic man, is not available, progress can be made when believers will take the time to extend themselves to the Hispanic population by whatever means they can. Ideas such as learning Spanish at the local college, giving out Spanish gospel tracts, or helping a Hispanic church in your area with outreach are all useful approaches. When you speak to a person in his own language, even if you mispronounce words, he appreciates your effort and will usually accept a tract.

Cultural Factors

The third major consideration for Hispanic ministry is the wide range of cultural differences between the Anglo American way of doing things and the Hispanic way. It takes a lifetime to really appreciate the subtleties of any culture, but here are a few broad categories to consider.

The Family. The entire Hispanic culture is underpinned by the concept of the family. The connection to the family plays a large role in all aspects of life. This must be considered when planning and executing ministry. The sense of family (which can mean the church family to immigrants) is an important component to be developed and worked with rather than fought against. The American mindset is used to looking at a church in organizational and structural ways. The Hispanic will view it more in a familial and relational ways. This concept of family will affect leadership, calendar, outreach, and congregational decisions much more in a Hispanic church than in a typical Anglo church.

Respect. A key component to building a Hispanic ministry is to honor and respect the Hispanic people and their culture. It is common for the Anglo American to assume that the Anglo way is the best and preferred way to do things. The Hispanic culture is rich and deep. In order to partner in ministry there must be respect for the people and respect for the culture. This might be shown by the room they are given to use to hold their services. Does

it communicate that we think this ministry is important? Does it look as sharp as your sanctuary, or is it a room with mismatched chairs and miscellaneous equipment and supplies everywhere?

In addition, the attitudes of the people in the English-speaking congregation are very important. They must be open, welcoming, and honoring of their Hispanic counterparts. There is a thought that can be predominant in the minds of any minority, and that is that “the majority is making this decision or doing this to me because I am part of the minority” (whether that be brown, black, Mexican, etc.). Misunderstandings—such as, “We didn’t get that date on the church calendar for our event because we are Mexican”—can arise quickly. It is important to create an environment of true respect and appreciation for the Hispanic ministry so that offenses can be resolved in an environment of Christ’s love.

Respect for older men is especially important in the Hispanic culture. Frequent, open, and attentive communication between the pastor and the leader of the Hispanic ministry is absolutely necessary to guard against offenses and resolve issues. This is true when Anglos are working together. It is all the more true when the cross-cultural dimension is thrown into the mix. The Church of Antioch in Acts 11 was a very culturally diverse body. We can minister together.

Time. The Hispanic culture views time differently from the Anglo. Relationships are more important than the schedule. This can be quite a frustration to the schedule-conscious, task-oriented Anglo. Rather than forcing an Anglo model on the Hispanic ministry, it is wise to work with the Hispanic leadership to develop their own ministry patterns. Building a Hispanic ministry will take time. It may take more time than building a similar Anglo ministry. There must be a long-term commitment to the ministry and reasonable expectations for the growth of the ministry.

There are many other considerations. For further study the following resources may be helpful. For census information in your area see <http://factfinder.census.gov>. For cultural information see *Hispanic Ministry in North America* by Alex Montoya, *Sourcebook of Hispanic Culture in the United States* by David Foster, *The Hispanic-American Almanac* by Nicolas Kanellos, *Diverse Worship: African-American, Caribbean and Hispanic Perspectives* by Pedrito U Maynard-Reid, *Leadership Training Text for Second-Generation Hispanic Church Planting* by Manuel Ortiz, and *Missions Have Come Home to America* by Jerry Appleby.

This century will be the century of ethnic ministry in the United States. The immigrants are pouring in by the thousands. By God’s grace let us reach out together to reach these groups, especially the exploding Hispanic population.

Dick Fellars pastors Immanuel Bible Church in Scottsdale, Arizona. Steven Rubio pastors Misión del Norte, also in Scottsdale.

The Church of Antioch in Acts 11 was a very culturally diverse body. We can minister together.

LEONARDO S. MERCADO

*The Story of a Hispanic
Ministry Pioneer*

Dick Mercado

Leonardo S. Mercado's family emigrated from Mexico City to Arizona during the days of the Mexican Revolution. Leonardo's father, Gumecindo Mercado, chose to relocate his family away from the dangers of the Revolution and to the peace and quiet of Northern Arizona. The family's travel by railway pushcart from Mexico through the El Paso, Texas, area and ultimately to the little town of Williams—Arizona's gateway to the Grand Canyon—is an epic story in itself.

At one stop for lunch, they stumbled on a little one-armed man who had been left for dead in an abandoned silo. Grandpa Mercado insisted they do what they could to help the wounded man, and, despite some objections that adding him to the pushcart would jeopardize their journey, they lifted him onto the cart and renewed their travel to the United States.

Some time later they were suddenly halted by soldiers of the Mexican army who had mistaken the Mercado clan for revolutionaries. Just as those soldiers were discussing killing all the Mercado men, including young Leonardo, the wounded stranger spoke up, "*¡No! ¡No les hagan daño!* No! Don't harm these good people! I was lying helpless in a silo many miles back. These strangers heard my cry and picked me up. They saved my life. Now you must spare them!" As it turned out, the army commander and the man the Mercados had rescued were first cousins! So, for the sake of their familial bond, the commander reversed his assassination plans and ordered instead that Gumecindo with all his emigrating family be fed royally and extended all possible courtesies of the Mexican army. Thus all the Mercados were able to resume their migration northward.

Arriving finally at Williams, Arizona, the Mercado family settled into their new environment with young Leonardo helping in the Roman Catholic Church as an altar boy.

In time, a young Anglo neighbor boy who befriended Leonardo began inviting him to visit their Sunday school, which was meeting in a nearby Methodist Church. Despite Leonardo's objections and insistence that he couldn't go there, the boy kept on, week by week, persisting in inviting him. Finally, one Saturday (perhaps to get his chum off

his back), Leonardo told his young Methodist playmate, "Okay, tomorrow morning I'll go with you to Sunday school." Well, he did go; he heard the gospel of salvation; and he received Christ as his personal Savior. His salvation was the beginning of the spiritual pilgrimage that would eventually lead him to the Spanish-American Theological Seminary of Los Angeles, where, around 1923 or 1924, he and Alberto Morales became the school's first two graduates.

One day during his seminary days, Leonardo and his father were walking down one of the main streets of San Pedro, the harbor city of Los Angeles, when they began to hear what seemed to be the strains of a gospel song. "Let's go see what that might be," Leonardo urged. Following the sound of the music, they found themselves witnessing an old-fashioned gospel street meeting. A little Spanish-speaking San Pedro church was giving out the gospel downtown, and, interestingly enough (especially interesting to Leonardo), there was an earnest and attractive young lady playing the little portable organ for the singing group. They had placed the organ just off the sidewalk in what is commonly called the gutter.

Well, tradition has it that on observing that dedicated young missionary lady, Leonardo leaned over and whispered to his father, "Dad, I'm going to marry that young lady." Most of you are ahead of us at this point. The day came when, indeed, Leonardo *did* marry that young lady!

And just who was that young lady? Her name was Hazel Hawley, the firstborn daughter of Herbert A. and Gertrude Hawley. The Hawleys were staunch Yankees from St. Johnsbury, Vermont, with a pedigree dating back to the voyage of the *Mayflower*. In fact, as the Mercados were migrating north from Mexico City to Arizona, the Hawleys were migrating south and west from New England to Southern California! The Hawleys eventually settled in Anaheim, California.

In due course of time, young Hazel graduated from high school and, being interested in spiritual things, found her way into the student body of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (later Biola University). It was while she was a student there that, under the chapel preaching of President Dr. R. A. Torrey, she came under spiritual conviction of her need of personal salvation. Right there in the Biola chapel, she trusted Christ and passed from death to life. Hazel graduated in the same senior class as Charles E. Fuller of *The Old Fashioned Revival Hour* fame.

The Lord of the Harvest led her to study Spanish and to give herself to missionary service among the Mexican people of San Pedro, California. It was while "on duty" as a single missionary lady that God arranged for Leonardo, the young seminarian, to find her, as he would sometimes tease her, "in the gutter"!

God led the newlywed couple to serve the Lord in soul winning, discipling, and church leadership with what was then called the Northern Baptist Convention. The Mercados were assigned to the Phoenix, Arizona, Hispanic field, where Leonardo was to serve as pastor of the First Mexican Baptist Church of Phoenix and director of El Centro Cristiano (The Christian Center)—a kind of

spiritual/social hub for reaching and teaching souls and meeting people's social as well as spiritual needs. The Mercados served for several years in that capacity, but both Leonardo and Hazel became increasingly concerned about the inordinate amount of time and effort that some of the denominational leadership were insisting they give to the so-called social implications of the gospel, as opposed to what they felt was their primary calling: evangelism, discipling, and church planting. Even as early as the late 1920s, Leonardo and his companion were very concerned about the inroads that Modernism seemed to be making in the convention.

The day came when Hazel told her pastor husband that she was prepared, if necessary, to cook tamales and help peddle them down the streets of the city, all the searing summer heat of Phoenix notwithstanding, if they could only be free to serve the Lord with the soul-winning burden and emphasis they both shared as the primary passion of their ministry.

Pastor Mercado announced to the church that he and his family were leaving, and he gave them some of the Biblical and doctrinal reasons for their departure. A few of those dear people approached Pastor Mercado following the service and exclaimed, "Why, that's what *we* believe! Why don't you come back from your trip to California, and, although we may be but a handful in number, we can begin in the home of Deacon Ramon Carrillo. Please, *please*, come back and pastor us. God will bless us as we stand together for the Lord and for His Truth."

Soon enough, the Spirit of the Lord burdened the hearts of Leonardo and Hazel to leave California, move back to Phoenix, gather together the *puñado* (handful) of committed brethren, and begin meeting in the front room of Deacon Carrillo's humble home on Jefferson Street near the edge of downtown Phoenix.

Since then this church and the Mexican Gospel Mission, which sprang from those humble beginnings in the midst of the traumas, trials, and tribulations of the Great Depression, have both celebrated their anniversary on Thanksgiving Day, since it was on the evening of Thanksgiving Day 1930 that the little flock organized as a fledgling church and mission.

Now, after seventy-five years of ministry of both church and mission, we are humbled and thankful for the great working of God—for His providential care of the Mercado family as they traveled north, thankful for the little boy who witnessed to his Hispanic playmate, thankful for the investment people made in Leonardo's leadership training, and thankful that God put it in his heart to make the hard decision to separate from apostasy. As we think about the many Hispanic children that we now see in all parts of our country, one cannot help wondering whether among them is another Leonardo.

Dr. Dick Mercado, Leonardo Mercado's son, is the former director of Mexican Gospel Mission (now Mission Gospel Ministries International) and pastor of the Iglesia Evangélica in Phoenix, Arizona. In addition to these responsibilities, Dr. Mercado and his wife, Margene, have served in a wide range of activities, including preaching and teaching in English and Spanish, radio ministries, and gospel films. He is currently the Pastor at Large of the Phoenix Church and International Representative of MGM International.

WHAT? ME LEARN SPANISH?

Juan (not his real name) came to the U.S. when he was eighteen years old, seeking a better life for his family in Guatemala. Juan worked hard, faithfully sending his earnings to his family until his fatal accident in 2005. During his six years in the United States, a remarkable change took place in Juan's life. A Christian couple invited him to a Spanish ministry, and Juan came to know Christ as his personal Savior. As he grew in his faith, the Lord laid a heavy burden on his heart for his family's salvation. Juan planned to study for the ministry and return to his people with the good news of salvation. Although Juan's plans were never realized, the Lord used his death so that many of Juan's unsaved friends and family members heard the gospel for the first time.

Each day many Hispanics, like Juan, enter the United States, seeking a better life economically. As they come in contact with believers, they begin to understand that their spiritual need is even greater than their financial need. The testimony of many Hispanics can be summed up in the words of one Colombian believer: "We came to the United States looking for money, but God had something much better for us." As Hispanics come to know Christ, many return to their countries with great zeal to reach their families and friends with the good news of salvation. God's children have the incredible opportunity of furthering missionary work in this world by learning Spanish to reach the Hispanics around them.

Key Characteristics of Spanish for the English Speaker

Spanish is considered to be a very familiar language to people in the United States. One reason for its familiarity is exposure. Whether it is a television program, a Mexican *tienda* (store), a passerby on the sidewalk, or even a fellow employee, Americans come in contact with Spanish on an almost daily basis. Exposure to Spanish results in the use of borrowed Spanish words, like *fiesta*, *siesta*, *taco*, *amigo*, and *sombrero*. Another factor lending to its familiarity is the etymological relationship of many English and Spanish words. English and Spanish share affixes and roots of both Greek and Latin origin. A few examples of shared Greek affixes are the prefixes *deca-* (ten), *etno-* (race), *zoo-* (animal), and the suffixes *-aritm* (number), *-emia* (blood), and *-polis* (city). A few Latin examples are the prefixes *ambi-* (two), *equi-* (equal), *omni-* (all), and the suffixes *-cidio* (to kill), *-vor* (to eat), and *-cultura* (to cultivate). Nouns such as *arte*, *animal*, *planta*; adjectives such as *difícil*, *frustrado*, *tranquilo*; and verbs such as *recibir* (to receive), *reservar* (to reserve), *perdonar* (to forgive) are a few examples of the many easily recognizable English cognates found in Spanish. Although this relationship enables the person learning Spanish to develop an extensive vocabulary in his second language, he should realize that false cognates exist as well. Words like *embarazada* ("pregnant"), *molestar* ("to annoy"), and *grosería* ("rudeness") are only a few examples of Spanish words that

English speakers often misuse or misunderstand because of their apparent relationship with English words.

English speakers learning Spanish must be aware of several key differences in pronunciation. One common pronunciation problem is that of using the English *r* in place of the Spanish trill *r* or the tap *r*. The trill *r* is the sound that occurs every time there is an *r* at the beginning of a word, as in the word *rico*, or when a double *r* occurs within a word, as in *carro*. The tap *r* is the sound that occurs where the single *r* appears in any other position than that of a word's initial position, as in the words *hombre*, *Señor*, *martes*, and *cara*. This sound is equivalent to that which is found in the pronunciation of the double *d* in the word *ladder*.

Another common pronunciation problem relates to vowel sounds. English vowels tend to be drawn out longer than Spanish vowels. The vowel sounds heard in Spanish words such as *de*, *mí*, *padre*, *no*, and *luz* are short and crisp, unlike the sounds in the English words *daze*, *me*, *size*, *throw*, *rude*. English speakers often mistakenly hold out single Spanish vowels, forming diphthongs as they are accustomed to doing in English, rather than pronouncing them as pure vowels. The schwa, the vowel sound occurring in the word *but*, is very common in unstressed syllables in English, but does not exist in Spanish. English speakers learning Spanish must guard against carrying over their pronunciation into Spanish even though the same letter may be used. Poor pronunciation may result in lack of respect for the speaker or, worse, in a misunderstanding of the speaker's message.

A learner of Spanish may acquire accurate pronunciation but still sound foreign. In language learning, one must closely imitate not only the pronunciation of sounds but also the rhythm, intonation, and stress of the second language. English rhythm, for example, is characterized by its galloping flow because primary-stressed syllables are held out longer, and unstressed syllables are shortened by becoming the schwa sound. In contrast, Spanish rhythm is characterized by its smooth flow, each syllable being held out for basically the same amount of time. The unstressed syllables in Spanish never become shortened vowels, or schwas, as they do in English; they maintain the same length as the stressed syllables. When an English speaker carries over his rhythm into Spanish, the flow of the language is distorted, and he sounds foreign. Mastering these suprasegmentals is difficult but essential for a person seeking to acquire a truly native Spanish sound.

Common Objections to Learning Spanish

"I'm not in the position right now to pursue a second language" may be an objection to foreign language study. Perhaps because of lack of time or financial resources, a person may feel there is no possibility of studying a foreign language at this stage of his life. However, there are many options for one interested in studying Spanish, ranging from community college classes to computer programs, online

courses, library audio materials, videos, TV programs, and conversational Spanish books. By taking advantage of the many available resources, anyone can learn Spanish. Resources are listed at the end of this article.

"I'm too old to master a foreign language" or "I don't consider languages to be my strong point" are two common objections. In reality, learning key phrases and expressions is often enough to open the door for a relationship with a Hispanic. My father, Pastor Stan McCune of New Jersey, is an example of a person who uses key expressions in Spanish to open the doors of witness. Distributing Bibles and Christian literature in the hospital puts him in contact with Hispanics on a daily basis. He greets them by saying, "*Hola. ¿Cómo está? Soy pastor.*" As Hispanics hear him speak in their own language and see his personal interest in them, their faces light up and hands readily receive God's Word. A person does not need to become fluent in Spanish in order for God to use him to reach Hispanics.

"Foreigners coming to the United States should have to learn English" is the oft-heard irritation expressed concerning the influx of Hispanics. The truth is that most Hispanics living in the United States do have a real desire to learn English and make the effort to do so. However, the Christian must not refuse to learn Spanish, and thereby neglect his great opportunity to reach Hispanics, merely because of personal prejudice.

"I would love to help reach Hispanics, but I don't know where to begin." One way for a Christian to begin is by expressing his

genuine concern for those Hispanics with whom he comes in contact. By recognizing that these men and women often feel insecure living in a foreign culture, the Christian will go out of his way to help them in areas such as understanding English and adjusting to American culture. Passing out Spanish tracts is another means of reaching Hispanics. One American businessman never traveled without taking along with him tracts and a Bible in Spanish. Although he did not speak much Spanish, he used every opportunity that he had to share the gospel with Hispanics. Traveling by train or plane, he would often open his Spanish Bible and lead a Hispanic passenger through salvation verses, asking the passenger to read them out loud. Opportunities abound for the Christian to reach Hispanics.

By learning Spanish the believer can make an eternal difference in the lives of many men and women. *Now* is the time for the Church to reach the first generation Hispanics of the United States. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest," and that harvest is multinational.

Mrs. Kristine McCune Espinel began studying Spanish while a high school student in Parsippany, New Jersey. She now teaches Spanish at Bob Jones University, where her husband, Matías, is pursuing seminary training. Matías and Kristine serve together at Iglesia Bautista Fundamental Tabernáculo in Taylors, South Carolina, where Matías is Assistant Pastor. They plan to return to serve in Matías's home country of Uruguay.

A person does not need to become fluent in Spanish in order for God to use him to reach Hispanics.

KEYS TO MUSICAL REAWAKENING

A Revival of Biblical Worship

“Hallelujah! Thine the glory; Revive us again.” Oh, how we desire genuine God-sent revival. How does one achieve a musical reawakening that rekindles our souls? Over the years, I have heard several music directors mention things that they do to generate energy in their musical situations: (1) upbeat music (often implying a quick tempo in a major key with a driving rhythm or beat); (2) big choral/instrumental ensembles (the more the better, with the thinking that size reflects success); and (3) spirited performances (often more entertaining than worshipful). Upon hearing these comments, I wondered whether these “generators” were driven by the skills of a music leader or by the power of Christ. It is certainly possible for us to be self-deceived if we rely on our own human abilities and woefully miss our true goal of humble adoration. As servant-leaders we must cry out to the Most High God for genuine revival that cannot be explained as the result of human adeptness.

The aim of this essay is to focus our attention on several Biblical principles that might guide us to revival in music. First, we will consider the concept of being Word-filled and how we can exhort others to focus on our Redeemer as we offer praise to Him. Second, our discussion will focus on ways that we can point others to Christ by reflecting His glory. Special care will be taken with how we can mistakenly draw attention to ourselves. Third, we will contemplate the importance of like-mindedness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we consider Colossians 3:16, it is clear that “the word of Christ [must] dwell [in us] richly.” As music leaders, are we meditating on His precepts daily, causing us to break forth in joyful praise? If we are not getting something from the Word of God each day, how can teach others to

do the same? Scriptural memorization is a key element as we consider ways that music directors can encourage others to sing to the Lord with their whole hearts filled with the Word of God. The psalmist has given us wonderful reminders about proper attitudes and reasons for praise to the Almighty God. For example, the following passages can turn our attention to God as we commence singing hymns near the beginning of a worship service:

Psalm 9:1—“I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart.”

Psalm 13:6—“I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

Psalm 92:1—“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.”

Psalm 95:1—“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.”

Psalm 96:3, 4—“Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.”

Psalm 98:1—“O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things.”

Psalm 111:1—“Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.”

Psalm 115:1—“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.”

It is not my intent to suggest and promote long intro-

ductions by song leaders prior to hymn singing. Rather, it is to encourage worshippers through Scripture to sing unto the Lord with proper attitudes and motivation (see Ps. 115:1 above). The choir can also benefit from Scriptural reminders about offering a sacrifice of praise to God. Monthly memory passages can cause us to reflect on the privilege and responsibility we have to serve the Lord and enter His courts with praise. These could be repeated as a part of regular rehearsals especially before prayer time. In addition to the ones mentioned above, the following might serve as a primer for choral memory verses:

2 Chronicles 5:13—"It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD."

Psalm 22:22—"I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee."

Psalm 145:4—"One generation shall praise thy works to another; and shall declare Thy mighty acts."

Colossians 3:16—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Hebrews 13:15—"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

Tim Fisher reminds us about how easy it is for "canals" or "vessels" to become the center of attention, receiving praise and gratitude for musical performances.¹ Care should be taken that we do not receive the glory. This also must be conveyed to choir members, instrumentalists, accompanists, soloists, and other musicians. Perhaps the following Scriptural prompts could be distributed to your musical co-laborers with a brief connection to practical application. For example, it is clear that we are not to draw attention to ourselves, thus stealing the glory away from the King of Glory as indicated in the following passages:

Matthew 5:16—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

1 Corinthians 1:29, 31—"That no flesh should glory in his presence. . . . He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Galatians 6:14—"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So how does one draw attention to self as a musician? The secular world uses deliberate techniques to achieve this through scooping (also known as sliding), whispering (using a breathy or airy tone), and delaying vibrato (employing a straight tone often slightly off pitch for a note before adding vibrato).² Additional focus can be given to the performer through showiness and lack of preparation. Many musicians are gifted with technical ability and dramatic presentation skills. However, problems can arise when these come to the forefront

and move the glory to the presenter. For example, choir directors and song leaders can over-conduct or project their voices too much, thus creating a distraction while the choir is presenting music or when the congregation is singing. Equally problematic is a performance that is underprepared and lacks unity and like-mindedness between musicians. ("Y'all pray for us. We ain't practiced much.") In these instances, listeners can become concerned about whether the performer will make it through the piece without stopping. The focus moves away from praising the Lord to surviving the performance. Likewise, music directors must know their musical scores (including hymns) so that they are free to focus on praising the Lord and directing others to do the same. A miscue while directing the choir (even during rehearsals) or a misstated hymn text can immediately distract worshippers. We must be transparent as servant-leaders, always pointing others to the glory of God.

Distraction in worship can also occur when there is a lack of like-mindedness among the service leaders. As mentioned previously, we must focus our attention on our Savior so that we will "sing unto the Lord." A natural result of this like-mindedness in worship is unity. The Bible mentions several important connections between unity and praise to the Lord:

2 Chronicles 5:13—"The trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD."

Isaiah 52:8, 9—"With the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye. . . . Break forth into joy, sing together."

Jeremiah 31:12—"They shall come and sing . . . and shall flow together."

Romans 15:5, 6—"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Coming together with one mind is a key element in reawakening our worship. To make this happen, it is essential to anticipate and communicate. Many people serve in various capacities as a part of our worship services. We often construct an order of service so that information is communicated effectively to these individuals. Ushers, sound personnel, accompanists, and platform leaders can work harmoniously through a series of events when they are of one mind. However, a breakdown of this unified process can distract worshippers and draw attention away from the Lord. Choir directors generally understand that an important purpose of choral rehearsal is to be as one "to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD." For this reason we often stress the importance of common vowel sounds, clear entrances and cut offs, unified shaping of a musical phrase with a specific climax and flow of dynamics, and clearly articulated texts accentuated by word emphasis that reflects its meaning. We may spend

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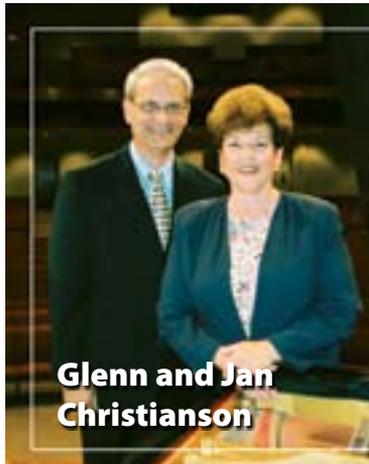
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SOUND WORDS

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

First Partaker

Preachers Ought to Study the Bible

When I began writing this column over ten years ago, my vision was to try to provide kindling for preachers eager to obey God's command for us to "stir up" (kindle anew) our ministry gift (2 Tim. 1:6). So I generally write about subjects that I know prod preachers. Perhaps *provoke* (Heb. 10:24) is the more apt word for it. I've sometimes worried that in the attempt I was being too critical or pointed, although never has it been my intent to hurt except in order to heal.

In writing, I've repeatedly asked myself the question, "What is it that I need myself?" And the answer always comes back, "I most emphatically need someone to be unsparingly frank." Not merely fault-finding and certainly not nitpicking. But when it comes to the undeniably big responsibilities—preparing to preach, praying faithfully, shepherding God's flock, evangelizing the lost, and keeping one's personal life in tune—I don't just want, I crave candor and conviction. To find it I ransack books, devour tapes, and now in the last few years troll the Web hungrily to find authentic voices who powerfully challenge my life and work.

I'm rarely done much good by men who speak in generalities and words without sharp edges. It takes something explicit to ignite me. I need someone to trouble my conscience with specifics, and to screw those into my soul with hard twists that fasten me inescapably up against the rigors of my calling. Oh, for just one hour of telling rebuke or shining inspiration from some impassioned Paul!

So if only for my own soul's sake, I need to be

direct again today. I'm going to write about a secret sin of many preachers. *They rarely study the Bible.*

Do preachers read the Bible? Yes, certainly. Memorize it? Some do. Work up sermons from it? Absolutely! Every week. But *study* it for themselves, that is, for their own growth in grace, wisdom, and knowledge? Well, I may be silently resentful for exposing it, but the hidden fact is that many preachers simply do not personally, greedily study their Bibles. Some couldn't begin to remember the last time they did so. Of those who can, there are probably few, this writer included, who even begin to approach the zealous consistent devotion it warrants.

Please note that what I'm talking about (in the first place) is *Bible* study. That is, the application of our minds to actual passages and themes of Scripture, as opposed to other men's writings on theology. The two simply aren't the same thing, and anyone who has ever drunk deeply from the first is nodding his head in emphatic agreement at just the reading of that clarification.

What I'm talking about (in the second place) is the *study* of those passages and themes, as opposed to simply reviewing them in the course of a personal Bible reading schedule. We study when we come to the Bible with questions we want answered. If we're not asking any questions, we're not studying.

Unless a man is the actual preaching pastor in his church, he may not do an hour's serious, personal Bible study in a week. Youth pastors, assistant pastors, even associates seem to spend little personal time in the Bible. In fact, in the average large church their job descriptions actually crowd it out. It's as though congregations don't even expect anyone on the staff but the preacher to be a Bible student. I hope this isn't actually the case, but I'm afraid that it is, and I believe firmly that it's a skewed model of ministry shaped

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

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largely by an activity-crazed culture that is squeezing the American church into its worldly mold.

There are three ways preachers state motivational propositions to their people. We strike the key of their ability: "You *can* do such and such." Or we promise benefits: "You'll *profit* if you do such and such." Or, of course, we often do what seems to come too naturally for brother-sinners, pile guilt heavily on them: "You *ought* to do such and such (and the Lord have mercy on you if you don't!)."

I guess I'd like to say it all three ways when it comes to this subject. (1) Ministers (whether senior, associate, assistant, youth, music), of all people on earth, ought to be continually engrossed in studying the Bible zealously, and ought to unsparingly realign their consciences if they aren't. Then (2) I would propose that there's no one, not even a professional theologian, who has the ability to do it any more insightfully than a pastor. I won't have space to fully develop that thought, but I want to at least point out that much of the real profit a man gets from the Bible is in direct proportion to the spiritual life experience he brings to it. Pastors, simply

My point is that there's hardly anyone in your community, even among its preachers, equipped to study the Bible at any more than a surface level but you! Praise be to God for every church member who loves and reads and memorizes and studies the Bible at whatever level he can, but the fact is that when it comes to serious digging, you're probably one of the only men within a ten- or twenty- or even fifty-mile radius who has the training and tools to mine the Word for treasure.

by virtue of the intimacy with which they enter into the joys, sorrows, temptations and trials of other people, are wealthy beyond all others in rich spiritual experience. So what they can get from Bible study is truly *silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

Lastly (3), though again I can't develop it to any length, I propose that the benefits of an eager, innovative, and industrious Bible study with nothing but one's own personal profit and growth in view, are truly peerless and priceless and cannot be won in any other way or by any other toil. *If thou criest after knowledge . . . if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as*

for hid treasures . . . then shalt thou understand. . . . Wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul (Prov. 2:3-5, 10).

You're One among a Thousand

Open your phone book. Start in the As and run your finger down the column. Don't stop until you come to someone who has the word *Reverend* or *Pastor* or *Minister* affixed to his name. Take a yellow highlighter and run it determinedly right through both name and title. Put down the highlighter, return your finger to the page and find the next man who claims to be a minister. Highlight him too. He dared to say he's a pastor. Find the next one. Mercilessly give his name a broad, bright yellow swath as well.

Finish all the columns, then go back and find the yellow. There won't be much of it, but what there is marks those who dare to advertise themselves to be ministers. But how many of them actually believe the Bible? Then of the Bible believers, how many are competently skilled to study it? How many ever had a single day of Biblical hermeneutics or an hour of Hebrew? How many can use a Greek lexicon? How many own even a dozen serious, exegetical commentaries or could use them if they did?

My point is that there's hardly anyone in your community, even among its preachers, equipped to study the Bible at any more than a surface level but you! Praise be to God for every church member who loves and reads and memorizes and studies the Bible at whatever level he can, but the fact is that when it comes to serious digging, you're probably one of the only men within a ten- or twenty- or even fifty-mile radius who has the training and tools to mine the Word for treasure.

Look again at that highlighting in your phone book. Stare hard at it until you see with the eyes of your spirit. Focus until your conscience comes alive and shouts that you're *it*, my friend. You're the only trained Bible scholar in your whole town. So if *you* won't study the Bible, who will? Not the attorneys. They're educated, but it's unlikely that they can or will dig down into a Bible. Not the doctors or the nurses. Thank the Lord for them, but they're preoccupied with medicine. I could go on naming professions, but it would belabor the obvious point. It's up to us, those who have our degrees in *Bible*, to search the Scripture. Bible study is what we out of all people have been sovereignly called and professionally equipped to do.

Insatiable Hunger Is the Drive

I think the phone book exercise is a healthy reminder of our nearly unique position in the community, but I want to clarify now that the Bible study of which I'm thinking isn't motivated primarily by pastoral calling. It's fueled by personal appetite.

Unsatisfied appetite *drives* us to the Word. *He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him* (Prov. 16:26).

When pastors are hungry for knowledge, renewal,

and personal transformation, Bible study is their feeding trough. This is the kind of experience that Jonathan Edwards craved to have constantly. He wrote his twenty-eighth resolution to give a measurable standard to his appetite: *Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.*

Linger over those words—*study the Scriptures . . . steadily, constantly, frequently.*

Do it to the extent that I can *plainly perceive myself to grow.* The growth I want is *knowledge.*

This is the kind of study that glories in discovery. It covets commands of the Scriptures. It wants to be mighty in them, in head and heart and life. Its pulse throbs to the beat of the 119th Psalm. *I will delight myself in thy statutes. . . . Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. . . . My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. . . . Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. . . . I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. . . . Thy statutes have been my songs. . . . O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. . . . Thy testimonies are my meditation. . . . How sweet are thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! . . . Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. . . . Thy testimonies are wonderful. . . . I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments. . . . Consider how I love thy precepts. . . . I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil (vv. 16, 18, 20, 36, 47, 54, 97, 99, 103, 111, 129, 131, 159, 162).*

The man baring his soul in those pleas wasn't preparing sermons. There's nothing professional or occupational that was fueling his desires. He was pleading naked, unashamed, personal ambition.

What an awful delusion it is for preachers to think that they've studied the Bible as they ought once they've dutifully prepared Sunday's sermon on the next section of verses in a passage. The measure of our love shouldn't be the measure of the time it takes to complete our sermons from week to week. That's nothing but to load the pulpit gun and fire . . . load the gun again and fire . . . coolly load the gun once more and fire. But oh, oh! for the soul-breaking, open-mouthed panting hard after God's testimonies that turns statutes to songs and savors Scripture more than spoil.

Pace Setters

I search constantly for hard-charging, athletic role models at this. Recently I discovered a new one in the experience of future 19th-century missionary Henry Martyn while he was still just a student at Cambridge (see the excellent biography by Constance E. Padwick).

Three times daily in his college rooms he bathed his soul in Holy Writ; and on walks . . . or on solitary rides he learned whole books by heart. His journal entries testify

to his insatiable appetite. *I addressed myself with earnest prayer and a strong desire to know and learn the Epistle to the Romans in the Greek. . . . Read the Psalms with a bright light shining upon them. . . . Read the Acts this morning with great delight. I love to dwell in sacred scenes . . . especially those in which the men of God are concerned. . . . Read the latter end of Revelation, and so very lively was the impression on my mind, that I was often in tears. So awful, so awakening was this book to me.*

My pulse quickens at his pace-setting words, *learn . . . in Greek . . . a bright shining light . . . dwell in sacred scenes . . . awakening was this book to me.*

That's the kind of personal, hungry Bible study that goes to the deep well and drinks long and life-changingly. You can almost perceive it happening to yourself. C. H. Spurgeon described that intake and consequent sense of blessedness as *eating into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in scriptural language, and your spirit is flavoured with the words of the Bible, so that your blood is **Bibline** and the very essence of the Bible flows from you.*

Spurgeon has for years been to me a bright and burning example of his own counsel. For twenty years

What an awful delusion it is for preachers to think that they've studied the Bible as they ought once they've dutifully prepared Sunday's sermon on the next section of verses in a passage. The measure of our love shouldn't be the measure of the time it takes to complete our sermons from week to week.

the Psalms were his particular field of personal study. Though published under the title that has now become nearly a household name among Christians (*The Treasury of David*), Spurgeon's studies in the Psalms were originally and principally for his own delight. His reminiscences recorded in the prefaces to the six volumes testify to the fact that his work was first intensely personal and only secondarily for the press.

The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever-growing pleasure. . . . In commenting upon some of them, I have been overwhelmed with awe. . . . More and more is the conviction forced upon my heart that every man must traverse the territory of the Psalms himself if he would know what a goodly land they are. . . . Happy he who for himself knows the secret of the Psalms. . . . We have lingered for months over a

Psalm, feeling quite unfit to enter upon it. . . . We have done our best and have grappled honestly with all the hard places. . . . Blessed have been the days spent in meditating, mourning, hoping, believing, and exulting with David! Can I hope to spend hours more joyous on this side of the golden gate? Perhaps not. . . . Often have I ceased my commenting upon the text, that I might rise with the Psalm, and gaze upon visions of God. . . . The author arose fresh as the morning to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it; and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. . . . Happier hours than those which have been spent on these meditations on the songs of Zion he never expects to see in this world.

Or take the most famous English commentator of all time, Matthew Henry. It was only after many years of Bible study for his own profit that he thought of pub-

But God doesn't intend their examples for imitation anyway but for inspiration. Perhaps I'm not enough of a self-starter, but my heart hungers for challenging inspirational example nearly every day. I don't know many other ways to get it than by measuring myself against those who got up earlier, studied harder, kept at it longer, and grew deeper than I'm doing.

lishing the notes he had made for himself. In the preface to the first volume of his commentary he explained, *It has long been my practice, what little time I had to spare in my study, from my constant preparations for the pulpit, to spend it in drawing up expositions upon some parts of the New Testament, not so much for my own use, as purely for my own entertainment, because I knew not how to employ my thoughts, and time more to my satisfaction.*

When Henry clarifies, *not so much for my own use*, he's talking about the use he made of study for sermon preparation. It wasn't at all unusual for him to be preaching six and seven times a week. So in order to have time for his *own entertainment*, meaning "pleasurable occupation," he was usually in his study about 5:00 A.M. for the personal feeding on the Word. It

wasn't duty but delight that got him out of bed that early. *No place is like my own study*, he testified. *No company like good books, especially the book of God.*

A friend said to me recently something to the effect that he's learned not to let unusual men like this frustrate him. I know what he means, and it's a valuable lesson.

But God doesn't intend their examples for imitation anyway but for inspiration. Perhaps I'm not enough of a self-starter, but my heart hungers for challenging inspirational example nearly every day. I don't know many other ways to get it than by measuring myself against those who got up earlier, studied harder, kept at it longer, and grew deeper than I'm doing. Oswald Chambers observed, *You can never give another person that which you have found, but you can make him homesick for what you have.* That's what I'm hoping that small pithy samples from Martyn and Spurgeon and Henry might do for you.

Phillips Brooks's Advice

One can sometimes find good advice in unlikely places, even the sermons of men not entirely orthodox. In a sermon entitled *The Joy of Self Sacrifice*, Phillips Brooks, the 19th-century liberal pastor of Boston's Trinity Church, stated something insightful about human nature and work. *No man does any work perfectly*, he observed, *who does not enjoy his work.*

Could it be that one reason more pastors don't have the appetite of a Martyn or a Spurgeon is because they don't enjoy Bible study? Is that why they don't work at it?

If so, then the loss of joy is their loss, not of a nonessential, but of a fundamental.

Brooks warned, *To do your work because you must; to do your work as a slavery; and then having got it done as speedily and easily as possible, to look somewhere else for enjoyment—that makes a very dreary life. No man who works so does the best work. No man who works so lingers lovingly over his work and asks himself if there is not something he can do to make it more perfect.* His counsel was, *Try just as far as possible to find the pleasure of life in the work to which it has been settled that your life must be given. Study its principles. Let your interest dwell on its details.*

The way God states this same principle is that the blessed man's **delight** is in the law of the LORD. It's that *delight* that fuels his meditation day and night. Without it, as Brooks cautions, there will be no *lingering lovingly over his work.*

Joy isn't something one can simply turn on and off like a faucet. But it is something that can be prayed for. *Restore unto me the joy.* . . . And it is a return for the investment of obedience. *Walk in the Spirit.* . . . *The fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy.*

There's a way, therefore, for a barren preacher devoid of appetite and joy to face his hollow life honestly, confess it, and humbly pick up his Bible again with the prayer that God would graciously make the *chords that are broken to vibrate once more.* ☞



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Bring . . . the Books

A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards

The year 2003 marked the tricentennial celebration of the birth of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) and was probably the high-water mark in the revival of interest in America’s most famous theologian. In conjunction with this celebration, several new biographies and literary works related to his life, ministry, and theological contributions were produced by pastors, theologians, and church historians.

For years Edwards was largely forgotten. With the exception of “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” most pastors could not have told you what he believed or even where and when he preached. Thankfully, the literary labors of men like Iain Murray, George Marsden, Perry Miller, and others have reintroduced Edwards to the pulpits and pews of contemporary Evangelicalism. One of the more helpful of these works is actually a compilation of ten relatively brief essays on Edwards’s life and legacy, his ministry and philosophy, and on his major theological works. Each essay was written by a conservative evangelical with a deep appreciation for Edwards’s life as well as a personal commitment to Edwards’s theology. Since most of the contributors are pastors as well as writers, the book has a distinct devotional flavor that makes it unusually spiritually refreshing. The book is titled *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (Crossway Books, 2004).

Committed to reintroducing Edwards to a new generation of Christian evangelicals, the contributors are even more passionate about reintroducing Edwards’s driving theological passion for a theocentric vision that should govern all areas of the minister’s public and private life. To this end the first section of the book sets out to acquaint the reader with Edwards’s life and legacy and to correct misperceptions commonly held by many about Edwards—such as the notion that Edwards was a cold, graceless, fire-and-brimstone preacher. As well-acquainted with the topic of Hell as Edwards may have been, he was even better acquainted with Heaven: “Jonathan Edwards was in his truest element not as the faithful, fiery preacher of ‘sinners in the hands of an angry God’—though this he ever was and remained—but at the rhapsodic seer of the ‘beatific vision’” (15).

John Piper has contributed a fine chapter in which he suggests that Jonathan Edwards’s philosophy, theology, and “God-entranced” vision stand as helpful correctives to the weakened state of contemporary Evangelicalism. He suggests that the key to understanding and adopting Edwards’s vision is to see that the way to glorify God is by enjoying Him. He ends by answering several objections commonly raised against this aspect of Edwards’s theology. Stephen Nichols describes Edwards as the “last of the Puritans” in a chapter that provides a historical sketch of Edwards’s life and ministry endeavors. This chapter is especially helpful for its depiction of

Edwards’s consistent passion for God in the times of deep trial and affliction as well as in the times of revival and awakening. One of the more fascinating chapters in this section was the one written by Mrs. Noel Piper on the incredible ministry that Sarah Edwards had with her husband and children. Mrs. Piper addresses the little-known episode in Sarah’s life in which some have suggested she had a nervous breakdown. This chapter makes a compelling case that what in fact happened was an outpouring on God’s grace that permanently affected her for the better.

The second section of the book discusses Edwards’s thinking regarding the nature of genuine revival and lists the elements of such revival: (1) God comes down; (2) God’s Word pierces; (3) man’s sin is seen; (4) Christ’s cross is valued; (5) change goes deep; (6) love breaks out; (7) joy fills hearts; (8) churches experience God’s presence; (9) lost men are saved; (10) Satan attacks. Donald Whitney contributed a helpful chapter discussing Edwards’s pursuit of spiritual passion by the practice of such spiritual disciplines as Scriptural intake, prayer, private worship, solitude, fasting, journaling, learning, and wise stewardship of time. Perhaps the most helpful chapter in the book is Mark Dever’s discussion of Edwards’s famous firing after twenty-three years of ministry to the same congregation. Dever points out what Edwards could perhaps have done differently, but ultimately observes he was fired because he remained solidly committed to what he believed to be a Biblical position for the preservation of the purity of the visible church. This resolve, though costly in his day, stands in stark contrast to the majority of Evangelical pulpits today.

The final section contains a chapter discussing Edwards as a slave-owner, as well as chapters examining some of his more important literary contributions on the doctrine of original sin, the nature and freedom of the will, and the role and regulation of religious affections (emotions). Two appendices include Edwards’s sermon on 2 Corinthians 3:18–4:7 dealing with God’s enlightenment of a sin-darkened soul, and an annotated list of the best of Edwards’s literary works.

Jonathan Edwards’s life and ministry richly profit any who will invest the time required to work through the voluminous material currently available. *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things* charts a clear path, bringing the reader to the key lessons and major episodes in the legacy of this faithful servant of God. 

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

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

An important principle of the Word of God is separation from doctrinal and ecclesiastical compromise and from unrighteous lifestyles and practices. Yet we are inundated with publications and ministries that insist that we must attract people, especially young people, by appealing to contemporary desires. Paul's statement "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22) is cited as justification for the methods and practices in many modern churches.

In contrast, believers who take seriously God's demand for purity consider another statement by Paul an equally important requirement: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).

Any supposed conflict is resolved by a thorough understanding of the context and terminology that God uses. We must seek to reach all with the gospel but without compromising moral and doctrinal purity. The two verses above must be considered in their immediate settings.

"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Consider Paul's compelling motive (1 Cor 9:16b): *Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!* Under that compulsion he is willing to make personal sacrifices. First, he is willing to sacrifice his freedom. Paul was entitled to all the privileges of Roman citizenship, but for the sake of preaching the gospel he was willing to take the lowest societal position—a slave. The obligation expressed in *υω*, to make oneself a slave, is vividly demonstrated in Matt. 6:24 and Acts 7:6.

Second, Paul was a Jew of the most observant class—a Pharisee. But now as a Christian he is free from the compulsion of the Law with its ceremonies, rituals, and traditions. His identification with his heritage is compelled by love for his Hebrew brethren (cf. Rom. 10:1ff.). When among Jews, he is willing to accommodate himself to their observances—refraining from certain foods, abiding by ceremonial regulations, and observing special days in order to present the gospel of Christ.

Third, when among Gentiles—those "without [outside] the law"—he is willing to follow Gentile customs. In doing so, he makes clear that his responsibility to Christ precludes any violation of the moral law of God: "being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21).

Next, the apostle speaks of "the weak." Commentators are divided in their identification of the weak. Some, based on "save some" of verse 22, view the weak as unbelievers. Others view the weak as a reference to the believers discussed in chapter 8, whose consciences Paul would

avoid offending. Paul's controlling purpose expressed in verse 23 is the gospel—evangelization. But the context does not support using the words "all things to all men" as justification for "giving people what they want" in lifestyle, worship, or church life. Paul is referring to his *personal* sacrifices for the gospel.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate.

Likewise, 2 Corinthians 6:17 must not be divorced from its immediate context. The focus is on a ministry that does not compromise its effectiveness. The interrelationship of the apostle and the recipients of the letter *as workers together* indicates that the ministry of all believers is in view. Every believer must be careful not to hinder that ministry.

This leads to three specific concerns: (1) that the grace of God not be received in vain (6:1); (2) that there be no dishonor to the ministry (6:3); (3) that there be proof of the ministry (6:4). To accomplish these, there must be cleansing and perfecting of holiness (7:1). Verses 4–10 list twenty-seven factors that demonstrate approval and lead to two calls for separation, one based on principles, the other on God's promises.

The principles are set forth in a series of contrasts made vivid by distinct comparisons: no partnership (cf. Luke 5:7) of righteousness with unrighteousness; no communion of light with darkness; no harmony of Christ with Belial; nothing in common between believer and unbeliever; no agreement of the temple of God with idols. These incompatibilities prompt two specific commands: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (6:14) and "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (6:17). The unequal yoke is a metaphor readily recognized in the New Testament era both by its allusion to the Old Testament Law against mixing draft animals and by the practical problem of two different animals bound by the same yoke. They must both move in the same direction. As God called His people to be separated from idolatry and sin (Isa. 52:11), He now calls those He has redeemed from the penalty of sin to separate from its defilement in order to enjoy His fellowship. "Touch not" carries the idea of purposely touching.

The second call for separation is based on a threefold promise of God. (1) God will dwell in His people; (2) God will walk with them; (3) God will receive them welcomingly and warmly. The context continues through 7:1 with a call for personal cleansing and holiness.

Rather than contradicting or competing principles, these passages are in perfect harmony, leading believers to service untainted by unrighteousness and un hindered by either unnecessary cultural divisions or adaptations to contemporary desires of unregenerate humanity or immature Christians. *✍*

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

Randolph Shaylor, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church, Riverdale, Georgia, is an editor and contributor to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* and *God's Word in Our Hands*.

While waiting for a subway train a man stood next to me looking truly grotesque. Huge tumor-like growths protruded from all over his face. Some of these swellings began on his cheek and hung down past his neck. I glanced at his hands and similar fat growths covered them as well. My heart went out to him, so I introduced myself, gave him a gospel tract, and told him that God loved him. As I walked on, the thought hit me: What does God see when He sees him? He was difficult for me to look upon, but does God not look beyond mere appearance to see the heart? And how does God see us? And I wondered at all the beautiful people in our city of New York who may be easy to look upon but are far from God, worldly, proud, lustful, and selfish. I wonder whether God sees their desperately wicked hearts and is sickened yet moved with compassion.

We need to have compassion. The expression “moved with compassion” is a great clue to the entire Christ life (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; Mark 1:41; cf. Luke 7:13). This Greek word is employed by the Gospel writers to express the deepest emotions of Jesus. Compassion feels another’s hurt in my heart, it bears another’s burden upon my back, and it hears another’s groan in my gut. Compassion “approximates the moral equivalent of a physical cardiac arrest” (Douglas R. McLachlan, *Reclaiming Authentic Fundamentalism* [Independence, MO: American Association of Christian Schools, 1993], p. 74).

True compassion **results in action**. Compassion is not static and does not lead to inactivity. Compassion is dynamic and points us to powerful assistance. The compassion of Jesus moved Him to love the unlovable and touch the untouchable leper to make him clean (Mark 1:40, 41). It continually motivated Him to teach, preach, and heal (Matt. 9:35, 36). Jesus’ love led Him to insignificant places and unknown people in order to speak with the voice that raised the dead (Luke 7:11–15). The compassion of Jesus moved Him to feed multitudes even when His disciples chided Him to send the irritating yet needy people away (Matt. 14:14–21).

The compassion of Jesus Christ in us is a going force, a speaking force, and an acting force. One evening I went to the hospital to visit Jason. Tubes ran into his mouth and nose. Belts strapped his hands down to keep him from ripping the hoses out. His body was bloated with fluid, and he gasped for air. The irreversible death process had set in as he lay dying of AIDS. I had met Jason out on the Brooklyn streets, and he had briefly attended our church along with his wife and four precious children. But the street life filled with drugs tempted him, deceived him, and finally destroyed him. I wish every person who thinks he can play with sin like a harmless toy could see what I saw. As Jason lay in that hospital bed dying, I pictured how he had frequented some

crack house and shot his body full of drugs with dirty needles. While he made such selfish decisions, his family remained home and wondered where he was, unsure whether he would ever return. When I attended his funeral, his family now knew where his body was, and they were left to wonder where his soul may have gone. The reality of knowing Jason continues to motivate me to preach the gospel and to see lives and families rescued from this destiny.

Secondly, true compassion **requires a vision**. One must get out of the comfortable confines of his house or office in order to see the vast need surrounding us. Jesus sees beyond the outward state of the multitude to examine their true condition. And as He sees, His inner being groans with compassion.

How is your eyesight? If we perceive incorrectly, we will not be moved to compassion. If we see one’s ethnic background, which may be different from ours, we may be intimidated. Perhaps we view a person’s material wealth and are demoralized by thinking he has no need. Or we can observe a person’s outward happiness and are led to think that he is at peace. We must look beyond skin color and realize every individual possesses an eternal soul. We must gaze beyond one’s “stuff” and get a glimpse of his spiritual bankruptcy. We must peer beyond a person’s smile and become conscious that he has sorrows and will one day meet death.

Jesus saw that the multitude was defeated: “they fainted.” They were falling apart amidst the stress and pressure of the daily grind. They were also directionless: “scattered abroad.” They were cast down and thrown aside. Jesus saw them as defenseless: “as sheep having no shepherd.” They were wilting under pressure, wallowing in great perplexity, and wandering without purpose!

Much of Jesus’ compassion for the multitude resulted from the religious leaders of the land who were wicked shepherds. The people were spiritually and emotionally distressed because those who should have taught them only used them. They were mishandled by their shepherds and were therefore wandering defenseless, directionless, and defeated. The shepherds in Israel were hypocrites and blind leaders of the blind. Likewise, our hearts should go out in compassion for the many people deceived by religious systems overrun with traditions that reject God’s salvation by grace alone in Christ alone. We should be moved by the multitudes ensnared in cults that devalue the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must be moved to compassion by the evolutionists who worship the creation rather than the Creator.

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

Charles Spurgeon

Many in our world today are in lands with no Scripture. Dr. Hantz Bernard, the Director of Bibles International, told me there are 6809 known languages in the world. Of them, only 400 have both an Old and New Testament; 1100 have a New Testament; and 4500 language groups still do not have the Word of God. Without Scripture, they will be as sheep without a shepherd and never know of God's gift of eternal life.

I read a news story recently telling of a seventeen-year-old high school student who was dropped off by an alleged escort service to the \$500,000 home of a fifty-year-old executive. After doing drugs, the girl passed out, and when the man called the escort service to come pick up the girl, they told him to just "pick her

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up and throw her in the shower." That is how much her employers cared about her! When the man offered them \$4,600 to take her away, they did, and dumped her body on Interstate 95 in New Jersey. The article said it was her first "trick." And her first trick ended up being her last. We need to have compassion because people are as sheep having no shepherd.

A recent newspaper headline simply read "WASTED." Two lively college-age girls, the sort who were the life of the party—outgoing, adventurous, fun—were found dead in a lower eastside housing project from drug overdose. These girls became friends at a Roman Catholic high school. They loved punk rock music and had a rebellious streak. Many people think that a little bit of religion is fine. And so is a little bit of punk rock or cocaine. The fact is, a little bit of sin has the power to waste, destroy, and condemn a person to Hell for all eternity. We need to have a vision for those who are lost in sin.

A third fact is compassion **realizes a solution**. Jesus tells us, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:37, 38). A great harvest field of souls has inestimable value, is in immense danger, and has an immediate need. It is obvious that a few laborers cannot do the

work of a great harvest. Many laborers are demanded. Notice that we do not pray, "Lord, the harvest is great, the laborers are too few, so Lord, figure out a way to do the work on Your own!" No, rather our Sovereign God has chosen to involve willing laborers in the work of preaching and seeing a harvest brought home to Heaven. Only common "laborers" are needed. Fancy degrees and titles are not required. We must be willing to get dirty, to sweat, and to work hard. Souls are in great danger if they die without Christ. The Lord is in emergency mode regarding their eternal salvation.

Souls will respond if we speak to them! I went into Spanish Harlem with Ernie Kent, a preacher-in-training who was visiting in my home in New York City. We came to a park bench outside an urban project and two ladies just sat there, Denise and Anita. They received us as if they were waiting for someone to come and talk to them! We challenged them to believe in Christ, and then we prayed with them for God to open up their understanding in order to be saved.

We continued walking in the projects, and coming toward me was a man gaunt and sickly. His haggard face was withered, and his eyes were sunk into his skull like dimming lights. As I spoke to him he told me that he had less than six months to live with his disease. I shared the gospel of God's righteousness with him, and he wanted to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We prayed together, and he professed faith in Christ.

The work of the harvest means that there is coming a day of judgment. The great harvest speaks of the coming of the Lord when He will send forth His angels and there will be a great reaping. The tares will be gathered and burned in the fire. All things that offend and that do iniquity will be cast into a furnace of fire, and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:40-43).

Jesus teaches His disciples to offer sincere prayer for more laborers in the harvest field. In order to pray this authentically, we must be genuinely willing to go. Those disciples, who began praying for more laborers, soon became the preachers for whom they prayed (Matt. 10).

Each of us can be a laborer in the harvest wherever he is. Do not think the harvest is somewhere you are not! The harvest is here and now! You do not need to get into an airplane or go to some far away "mission field" to find the harvest! But we can pray that the Lord will send laborers to where we are not.

Notice that the solution is not mere education, better technology, more money, or stronger schools. The problem of the harvest will not be through a political solution but rather through prayer and a true perspective of the harvest. May God give us a renewed compassion to endure all things for the elect's sake, for knowing the terror of the Lord we must seek to persuade men, that by all means some may be saved! 

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Keys to Musical Reawakening (Continued)

hours on these musical details yet not stress the importance of like-mindedness in worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Here is a wonderful opportunity to connect the items mentioned previously so that we might be word filled offering glory to God as transparent vessels coming together with one mind and one voice. This approach can also encompass the communication between the music director and the pastor. As sermon topics are determined, this information can be communicated to the song leader so that hymn selection can be one in mind with the focus of the message. I do not suggest this so that the hymns will prepare us for worship. It is important that people come to church prepared to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. I have found that when people are aware of the title or Scriptural text of the message before worship, they can have even more depth to their worship preparation. This cultivates the soil of their hearts so that it can be applied to the word when it is preached. Knowing this, they are word filled ready to offer praise to the Lord in the midst of the congregation.

Perhaps you see the connections between these Biblical principles that supply keys to musical reawakenings. It is also evident that it is not the adeptness of the music director or any other human for that matter.

Revival of Biblical worship is centered on the Word of God as people filled with the Word come together, falling on their knees crying out to the Most High God, who is able to revive us again. May we as humble servants step out of the way lest we draw attention to ourselves—for “Thine be the glory.”

Gene S. Trantham is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Music Theory, Bowling Green State University, and the Music Director of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio.

¹ Tim Fisher, *The Battle for Christian Music*, 2nd ed. (Greenville, SC: Sacred Music Services, 2004), 115–16.

² For more discussion on this topic, see Frank Garlock, *Music in the Balance* (Greenville, SC: Majesty Music, 1992), 93–97.

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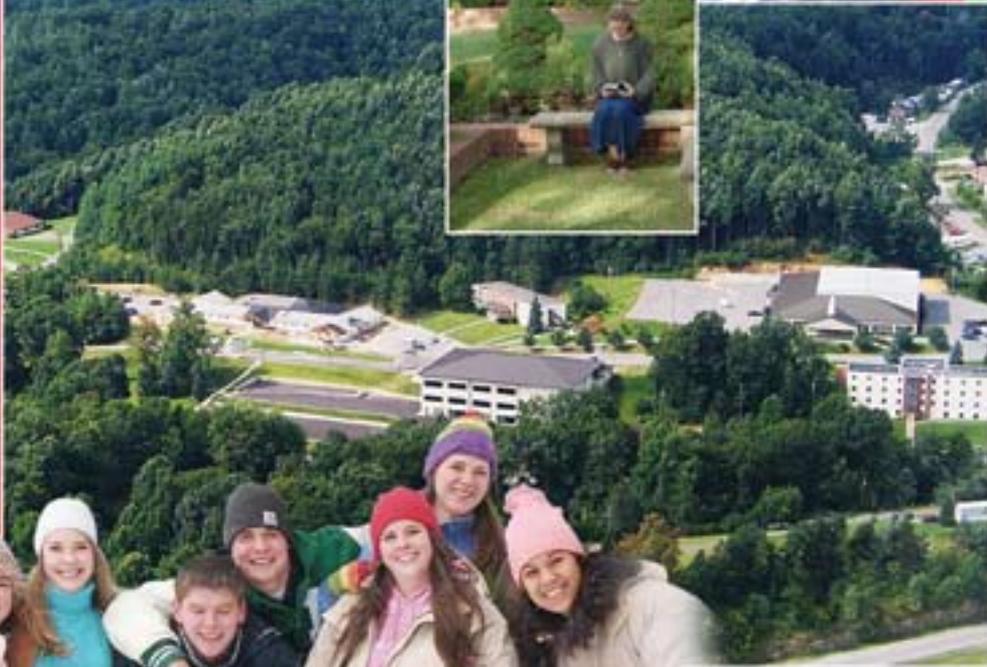
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“Witnessing is not a once-a-week activity. You don’t go witnessing, you are a witness.”
—Dan Greene

“While there is a poor, lost girl upon the streets, while there remains one dark soul without the light of God—I’ll fight! I’ll fight to the very end!”
—William Booth

“The salvation of a single soul is more important than the production or preservation of all the epics and tragedies in the world.”
—C. S. Lewis

“Take a lesson from the mosquito: he never waits for an opening—he makes one.”
—Unknown

“The lure of the distant and the difficult is deceptive. The great opportunity is where you are.”
—John Burroughs

“Linguist: a talented person who can make mistakes in more than one language.”
—Unknown

“The tyrant dies and his rule ends, the martyr dies and his rule begins.”
—Soren Kierkegaard

“Recipe for a long life: be careful not to exceed the feed limit.”
—Unknown

“The whole course of life is upset by failure to put God where He belongs.”
—A. W. Tozer

“There is nothing more awful than conscious humility; it is the most satanic type of pride.” —Oswald Chambers

“When your work speaks for itself, don’t interrupt.”
—Henry J. Kaiser

“When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us.”
—Alexander Graham Bell

“How many people have you made homesick for God?”
—Oswald Chambers

“Lord of himself—that heritage of woe.” —Lord Byron

“The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we must become.”
—Henry Martyn

“It is the cause, and not the death, that makes the martyr.”
—Napoleon Bonaparte



You have reached the church nursery . . . you can communicate with your child using the following menu . . . if your child is the one causing the disturbance, press one, if she refuses to listen, press two, if he enjoys throwing food, press three, if she screams a lot, press four . . .

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

Happy Un-Valentine's Day

Marilyn Janke

Warning: This article is not all about chocolates and flowers. It is, however, about one of my Valentine's Days, and how it made me stop and think. Read at your own risk.

We had a run-in with rats one memorable Valentine's Day. (British Columbia gardeners love their compost piles, but so do other creatures, and our home's previous owners didn't tell us about the hidden woodpile next to the shed). Well, I had the run-in, and then I informed my husband. It then became *his* run-in, too. He set the bait and was soon duly rewarded.

I learned that, in person, rats are much bigger than mice. Lest you think me daft, I was already aware of that fact. The key words are, *in person*.

I learned that I can scream loudly enough for my husband to think I am dying, but not loudly enough to be recorded as some freak seismic activity.

I learned that, while it may appear that a rat is running *directly at you*, he is indeed running *past you* to his burrow.

I learned that I am still terrified by things that can sprint faster than I can.

I was reminded that I do not need flowers, chocolates, or jewelry to feel loved. Seeing my husband's retreating back the next day as he walked off with a shovel and a plastic bag is enough for me. I saw the rat in the trap!

I was reminded that the daily, yucky, boring things of life can produce just as much love and appreciation as big-ticket items, *if you let them*. Washing the car, making trips to the dump, fixing things I've broken, picking the broccoli out of my teeth—or at least telling me about it, which still counts—disposing of unmentionable rodents, listening to me, and other husbandly efforts . . . these are things that I don't have to do, things that lighten my load. Are these spectacular things? No. Do I take them for granted and tend to expect them from him? Yes. And, I can't believe I'm saying this, but if my husband came up to me with a bag of M&Ms and a shovel and asked, "Honey, would you rather have the M&Ms or have me get rid of the rat?" the chocolate would lose miserably.

Feel like patting me on the head and saying, "This is a nice article, dear, but Clarence and I have been married for 150 years and we have an understanding—he knows how I feel about him—I don't need to say it." Or, do you feel like exploding with a list of things your husband *doesn't* do and how often *he* forgets Valentine's Day and how you wouldn't care if you *ever* got candy or flowers if he would just do *something* besides sit there?

Here's the challenge. Make a list of all the things your husband does that help you out (be specific

and honest). OK—so it all fits on one side of a sticky note—at least you won't get writer's cramp. Put it in a thank-you card (alternate choice: buy him a sympathy card and thank him for putting up with you). Give it to him along with a big hug, kiss, and an "I love you." Try it—it won't hurt any worse than plucking your eyebrows, but if you should feel faint, sit down and put up your feet. "But you don't know my husband," you say. "He does nothing." Unless he is comatose in the back bedroom, he must do *something* productive. Either you need to get your mind in gear fast and come up with some things, or at least thank him for marrying you. (After all, he must have thought that he was getting a deal, right?)

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." If you're like me, you can say Romans 12:10 as easily as you can load the dishwasher. That's what makes it so easy for us to follow, right? The subtitle in my Bible says that verses 9–21 are "In Relation to Society," but my commentary says that it can be translated, "With brotherly love have *family affection* for one another, in honor giving place to one another." Hmm . . . family affection—that couldn't mean husbands and wives, too, could it? We skate over these words like we were on a hardwood floor with socks: "kindly," "honour," "preferring." Then Philippians 2:3 comes along and says "let each esteem other better than themselves"—ouch! And you thought Valentine's Day came only once a year. Sorry, girls—every day is Un-Valentine's Day.

With that little fact written in your Day-Timer (in pen), let's move on. Grab a paper bag and breathe into it deeply. I'm for Men's Lib (breathe, girl!). I'm for Women's Lib too. The kind that comes through salvation in Christ, as in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The passage goes on to talk about being "ambassadors for Christ" and being "made the righteousness of God in him." I'm never going to be asked to be the ambassador to Outer Slombovia, but I sure can be one in my own home. And let me tell you, that is one difficult assignment. Not impossible, just difficult. Unfortunately, it's not made any easier by this: we are practically clobbered over the head with the fallacy that we are to treat men rudely, or, at best, *expect* them to be our (to use a rodentism) gofers. Fathers, husbands, pastors are multimedially made to look like doofuses, while the women are smarter, cleverer, and braver (and some may be). She can bring home the low-fat bacon, fry it, and have her man wash the pan. Yes, I realize that every home has its own job-

placement system. Maybe you're better at handling the finances than he is. But it's often our attitude (not the rose) that bears the thorns. Are we teaching our daughters that "this is how you treat a man"? We are teaching them by our own example, whatever that example is.

I can hear you yelling into your paper bag, and you're right—I don't know your situation or your husband. There are those verses in the book of Whymee 19:2, 3 that say, "If thou thinkest that thy husband be hopeless, it is thy task to see that he knoweth it. Though shalt yammer at him day and night, and speak to him of all of his wrong-doings. Thou shalt teach thy daughters to yammer also, lest they marry and become weak wives, and allow their husbands to think that he (gasp) ruleth his family. Woe be to the wife if she alloweth her husband to rule over her."

And, by the way, remember 1 Corinthians 5:17—that's "new creature," not "shrew creature." No wonder some men feel the crushing guilt of Valentine's Day. How would you react to being married to one of us shrews all year, then on February 14 suddenly being expected to shower us with tokens of affection? No wonder they forget: "Is this all I got? One lousy rose? I was expecting a romantic night for shrew—make that two—at a romantic restaurant, where you would romantically give me a romantic ring and tell me romantically that you love me all over again . . . plus a couple of boxes of my favorite chocolate and a spa coupon." Now he really feels the romance!

What to do, what to do? We really get into predicaments with these old sin natures, don't we? We can always go back to another "wood floor and socks" passage, 1 Corinthians 13. If it were an ointment, the directions might read like this: "Liberally apply this soothing salve directly to husband's bruised heart. Use continuously throughout the day. Refill as often as needed. Contains

v. 4—patience, kindness (Don't give up already!)

v. 5—a lack of rudeness and self-seeking; not easily angered (Ouch!)

v. 6—perseverance, which means "remain steadfast in the face of unpleasant circumstances"

v. 7—God's love, which never fails—so don't let yours fail.

It's not your personality to be all mushy? Good news—it doesn't matter. If God tells us to do something, He's going to give us the strength to do it (Phil. 4:13; Eph. 3:20).

Well, my tail is told, and not a very ro-rat-ic tail at that (sorry, had to do it). This Valentine's Day will definitely be remembered as "The Year of the Rat." But, hopefully, you will be encouraged to try some good, old, wifely love (and yes, Clarence wants to be told *and* shown). Now, set *your* trap for your husband, and give him something to love.

Marilyn Janke and her husband, David, are missionary church planters in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada. You can read more of Marilyn's articles at www.ribtickler.org.

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Love Offerings for the Evangelist

Jerry Sivnksty

How does a pastor take love offerings for evangelists he has in his church? Should he give a certain amount? Should he take the evangelist's weekly expenses out of the love offering? These are the questions I want to address in this article, and I hope it will help pastors as they endeavor to take care of the evangelists they have in their local churches.

I have been in evangelism for more than thirty-five years, and the majority of pastors do a great job in helping meet the needs of their guest speakers. But there are also some pastors who are doing a very poor job; this could be due to ignorance, and if this is the case I trust that this article will help them. Before I proceed any further, I want to remind evangelists that they are invited by the kindness of the pastor to speak in his church in the first place, and the utmost concern of the evangelist should not be how big a love offering he's going to get! He is called to preach the Word of God and should long to see souls saved, Christians brought to a deeper relationship with Christ, and pastors encouraged. If the evangelist is dominated by the desire of a large offering, he needs to be reminded of what the apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:3: "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre." Pastors, if an evangelist says he won't come to your church unless you guarantee him a certain amount of money for the week, that should be an instant red flag for you to cancel that evangelist.

Here are some suggestions I'd like to share with pastors who want to do right by the evangelist. First, don't give him a predetermined set amount for the love offering. If the Lord blesses in the meetings and the people give a generous offering that exceeds a set amount, it would be holding back blessings from both the evangelist as well as the congregation. Proverbs 11:25 says, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

Second, don't deduct the evangelist's expenses from the love offering. Many churches include in their yearly budget a plan to take care of the expenses of their special speakers. By the way, the expenses of evangelists are ever increasing: they have vehicles, trailers, insurance, hospitalization costs, rising gas or diesel prices, and many other things to take care of. May I add that things are always breaking down as these men travel on the road constantly. I speak from experience after pulling a trailer for more than twenty-eight years! Be

generous with travel expenses and food allowances for evangelists.

Now what about the love offering? How do you prepare the congregation to give? Dr. Charlie Kittrell who pastors in Indianapolis, Indiana, told me that many years ago that Evangelist Glen Schunk said to him, "Always be generous with the evangelist, and the Lord will greatly bless your ministry and your church." Any evangelist who has held meetings with Dr. Kittrell will tell you how generous he is to them in love offerings; he is a great example of taking care of the Lord's servants.

Several years ago I had a meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, where Evangelist Bill Hall is a member. At that time the church was without a pastor, and Dr. Hall was taking up the love offering for the week of meetings. He said some things I want to share with you as he took the love offering every night. Brother Hall told the congregation that most evangelists have about thirty meetings a year. If every one of the thirty churches gave \$500 to the evangelist, the yearly amount would be \$15,000. He said that isn't very much, and it wouldn't be right if their church gave just \$500 to our family. Then he said that if every one of the 30 churches gave \$1,000, the yearly amount would be \$30,000. He said that sounded better, but he wanted the people to be aware that the evangelist has to pay for his own insurance, Social Security, the upkeep of a truck and trailer, a home base, utilities, and many other expenses. (By that time I even felt sorry for myself!) Dr. Hall then asked the congregation how they would fare on \$15,000 or \$30,000 if they were responsible for all these things. His comments were very stirring, and that church gave us the largest love offering they had ever given in their history. Why? Because they had an evangelist explain it in such a fashion that they could see the importance of being liberal in their giving to the Lord's man.

My wife and I agreed together before we started in evangelism that whatever we received from the love offering, we would know that that was the amount the Lord wanted us to have. We have never been disappointed—the Lord has and always will take care of us!

I've shared my heart with you pastors and trust this will help you in taking care of the special speakers you have in your church.

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

Written and Compiled by Dr. Layton Talbert

This column concluded 2005 with a variety of suggested prayer “exercises”—methods for making our prayers more Scriptural. Why is this necessary? Paul testifies that there are times when “we know not what we should pray for as we ought,” when we are aided by the secret intercessory work of the Spirit of God. It stands to reason, then, that much or most of the time we should know what and how to pray. But that does not mean prayer is intuitive, or that we simply pray according to our whims and wishes. Our fallenness and ignorance and need for biblical instruction affect our praying as much as they do our Bible study or our pursuit of holy living. We require grace and training in our praying as much as in any other area of Christian endeavor. To that end, the Lord has given to us in the Bible not only practical instructions regarding what and how and when to pray, but also personal examples that model what Biblical praying looks and sounds like.

Messiah’s Model Prayer

In response to a specific request from His disciples that we do well to echo (“Lord, teach us to pray,” Luke 11:1), Christ offered a model prayer (Luke 11:2–4; Matt. 6:9–13). Not an “officially sanctioned” formula for rote repetition on liturgical occasions, but an instructive example. “When you pray, say these kinds of things, voice these kinds of priorities, be occupied with these kinds of requests.”

In this most widely known (but by no means the only) instruction our Lord gave regarding prayer, the proportions themselves are suggestive. Out of seven specific requests, only one has to do with temporal needs or material concerns. Does our praying reflect that kind of proportion? A major request is “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Christ put a very practical edge on the blade of this prayerful practice in the very next point of His teaching, when He exhorts His followers not to worry about the most basic necessities of life—food and clothing—because the Father knows we need these things and He will supply them (Matt. 6:25–32). Instead, Jesus directs our attention to where our prayerful concern ought to concentrate: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these [necessary but lesser] things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

Do you see the link back to the prayer instruction Jesus gave only a few moments earlier? *Seeking* God’s kingdom does not mean *searching* for it (as though it were hidden somewhere), but *pursuing* it, being *preoccupied* with its priorities—including in prayer. This is *not* to say that it is wrong to pray (and pray earnestly) for our material needs. Indeed, we are commanded to do so. But we are equally commanded *not* to be *preoccupied* with material needs. Rather than being consumed with the temporal and the

material—in life or in prayer—we are to make God’s kingdom and righteousness our central concern, the focus of our prayers and pursuits. What preoccupies our prayers is a good barometer of our personal priorities.

What does this kind of preoccupation look like fleshed out? What does it sound like in prayer? No one exemplifies this more pervasively in the New Testament than the apostle Paul.

Pauline Patterns of Prayer

Have you ever looked at Paul’s epistles as prayer letters? Ever noticed what kinds of things Paul asks believers to pray about for him? Or exactly what he asks God to do for other Christians? The remainder of this column is a study guide, a list (arranged chronologically) of all of Paul’s requests *for* prayer and Paul’s requests *in* prayer. The specific prayer requests are summarized below each passage (along with occasional discussion).

Paul’s Requests for Prayer

Beyond a general appeal for the prayers of God’s people (1 Thess. 5:25), Paul made a variety of specific requests.

2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2

- Ministry of the Word to be unhindered and glorified
- Ministers of the Word to be unhindered by (delivered from) enemies to the truth

2 Corinthians 1:8–11

- Successful resolution to ministry-threatening persecution (historical context, Acts 19:23–20:1)

Romans 15:30–32

- Deliverance from unbelievers in Judea. Was this request answered? After all, he was shortly afterward imprisoned. If Paul could be directed by the Holy Spirit to give a prayer request—for which he himself was also clearly praying (“strive together with me”)—that was not answered, what confidence can we have that our attempts to pray in the will of God will be answered? Paul certainly knew that “bonds and imprisonment” awaited him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23). Despite the subsequent imprisonment because of the Jews in Judea, this request was answered on several levels: (1) he was delivered from being beaten to death by the Jews (Acts 21:26–36); (2) he was delivered from being torn apart by the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30–23:10); (3) he was delivered from their attempt to sway the court and ambush Paul (Acts 23:11–35); (4) he was delivered from them and to Rome (Acts 25); (5) he was ultimately delivered from prison in Rome as well.
- Reception of gift (i.e., success of Gentile-Jewish solidarity gesture)—answered (Acts 21:15–20a)

PRAYERS

- Arrival in Rome by the will of God (to visit and minister to believers there)—answered, though perhaps not as anticipated (Acts 27–28)
- Refreshment (in fellowship)—answered (Acts 28:11–16)

Paul's following requests were made during his Roman imprisonment.

Ephesians 6:18–20

- Utterance (opportunity for ministry)
- Boldness (fearlessness, frankness, uninhibited openness of speech)

Colossians 4:2–4

- Open opportunities for ministry (“door of utterance”)
- Clarity in ministry

Philemon 22

- A visit in answer to Philemon's prayer

Philippians 1:19

- Deliverance from prison by God's will (either by death or release)

Measure Paul's prayer concerns with Jesus' exhortation regarding kingdom-preoccupation. Then measure your prayers and prayer requests by Paul's. It's great to pray over specific temporal needs for people, and great to see God answer those. Like short-term prophecies that are designed, when fulfilled, to strengthen our faith and confidence in larger, long-term prophecies, answered prayer for specific temporal needs is not an end in itself but an encouragement to faith and confidence that our prayers for larger spiritual needs will likewise be fulfilled.

Paul's Requests in Prayer

General requests are expressed in a number of passages (1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; Col. 1:3; Philemon 4; 2 Tim. 1:3–5). Specific prayers are outlined below.

1 Thessalonians

- that we may see you and perfect what is lacking in your faith (3:10)
- your complete sanctification and preservation of spirit, soul, and body blameless (5:23)

2 Thessalonians

- that God would count you worthy of this calling, fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and fulfill the work of faith with power, that the name of Christ may be glorified, and you in Him, according to the grace of God (1:11)

Romans

- that I “by some means” may find a way in the will of God to come to you (1:9)

- my prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved (10:1)

Ephesians

- 1:15–23, that believers may . . .
 - have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him
 - have the eyes of your understanding enlightened
 - know what is the hope of His calling
 - know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
 - know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe
- 3:14–21, that believers may . . .
 - be strengthened with might in the inner man through His Spirit
 - that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith
 - have power to grasp the boundless love of Christ
 - being rooted and grounded in love
 - that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

Colossians

- that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (1:9)
- that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord (1:10–12)
 - pleasing Him fully
 - being fruitful in every good work
 - increasing in the knowledge of God
 - strengthened with all might by His power
 - for all patience and long suffering with joy
 - giving thanks to the Father for qualifying us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints

Philippians

- that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment (1:9)
- that you may approve excellent things (1:10)
- that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ (1:10)
- that you may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ, to the glory and praise of God (1:11)

Do we ever think about others this way? Do we even know how to pray this way for others, or for ourselves? The prayers of Paul betray a consistent preoccupation that is spiritually minded, God centered, and kingdom focused. Each prayer is a deep well that warrants thoughtful probing. A final column will explore one or two of these prayers to see how they can and should inform our praying for others, and what kinds of spiritual ambitions should characterize our own prayers for ourselves.

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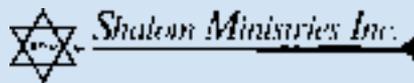
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This edition of Newsworthy is dedicated to news about Hispanics in the U.S. We hope that this information will help you better understand the plight of many of your Hispanic neighbors.

Population Growth

“California had the largest Hispanic population in July 2004 (12.4 million) and the largest numerical increase (351,000) since July 2003; New Mexico was the state where Hispanics comprised the highest proportion of the total population (43 percent). Los Angeles County, Calif., had the largest Hispanic population (4.6 million) in 2004 and the biggest numerical increase (76,400) since July 2003.

“The nation’s Hispanic population reached 41.3 million as of July 1, 2004, according to national estimates by race, Hispanic origin and age released . . . by the U.S. Census Bureau. Hispanics, who may be of any race, accounted for about one-half of the national population growth of 2.9 million between July 1, 2003, and July 1, 2004. The Hispanic growth rate of 3.6 percent over the 12-month period was more than three times that of the total population (1.0 percent). The total number of preschoolers (under age 5) in the United States in 2004 was estimated at 20.1 million. Nationally, 7 percent of the population was under age 5. By race and Hispanic origin, this proportion ranged from almost

11 percent for Hispanics to 6 percent for single-race non-Hispanic whites and for American Indians and Alaska natives.” (<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005514.html>, accessed 11.05.05)

Aspen, Colorado, for Instance

“More children were born to Hispanic mothers in Garfield County in 2004 than ever before, according to state health department statistics compiled by the county’s Human Services Commission. Sandy Swanson, director of the Family Visitor Program and the early childhood services representative to the commission, said births to Hispanic mothers are likely to make up half of all the county’s births in the next two years. In the Roaring Fork Valley, she said, that generally means more children born to recent immigrants from Latin American countries who come from poor families and have little education. The statistics, which lag a year behind, show that nearly 44 percent of all 2004 births in the county were to Hispanic mothers, most of whom had less than a ninth-grade education.” (http://www.aspendailynews.com/article_12055, accessed 12.22.05)

Hispanics in America Survey

Recent surveys conducted by the Pew Hispanic

Center (PHC) are very enlightening. Forty percent of adults in Mexico say they would migrate to the U.S. if they had the means and opportunity to do so. Two out of every ten say that they would live and work in the U.S., even without legal authorization to do so. These findings covered all classes of Mexican society. There are presently about 11 million people, most of whom are Latinos, living in the U.S. without government authorization to do so. By contrast, relatively few Hispanics in the U.S. favor increasing the flow of legal immigration from Latin America. (http://www.pewtrusts.org/pdf/PHC_attitudes_0805.pdf, accessed 12.28.05)

“Overstays”

Millions of undocumented immigrants from Europe, Canada, and Latin America have entered the U.S. on student or tourist visas and have remained in the country after the visas have expired. “The Department of Homeland Security estimates the overstay population at 2.3 million as of January 2000, according to congressional auditors. Most overstays came on student, work or tourism visas. In 2000, they accounted for about a third of the total undocumented population, auditors said. The 2.3 million estimate, however, did not include overstays from Canada and other visa-exempt countries who entered

legally without visas, or overstays from Mexico who entered legally with border crossing cards. Earlier reports by the former Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated overstays accounted for as much as 40 to 50 percent of the nation’s undocumented population, auditors noted.” (<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/1224overstays.html>, accessed 12.26.05)

U.S. Government Immigration Policies

“With the House of Representatives’ approval of a Republican-sponsored bill to tighten U.S. borders and increase penalties on illegal immigrants, Congress last week took the first steps into the murky waters of immigration. The Senate will take up the issue, a complex subject that threatens to split both parties as lawmakers try to walk a tightrope between good policy and good politics. President George W. Bush has made immigration a top item on his domestic agenda, but his proposals—including a guest-worker program—have gone nowhere. Americans, polls show, are upset about the government’s inability to control illegal immigration, which now accounts for about 11 million illegal residents inside the U.S. borders. They are particularly unhappy with Bush’s handling of the issue. One poll showed that only

24 percent of those polled approved of his approach. Social conservatives see the massive influx of immigrants, nearly 8 million over the past five years, as a threat to American culture. . . .

The American Chamber of Commerce estimates that 25 percent of dishwashers and drywall installers are illegal immigrants." (<http://www.mercurynews.com/mld/mercurynews/news/politics/13464241.htm>, accessed 12.27.05)

Regional Identity?

In recent surveys in North Carolina, "Interviews and studies suggest most [Hispanics] don't yet feel a cultural tie to the region. But some scholars say it's only a matter of time before Hispanics stop seeing themselves as outsiders and start making an indelible mark.

"A recent Associated Press/Ipsos poll was consistent with an analysis of 10 years worth of surveys by the University of North Carolina, both finding that barely half of Hispanics living in the region identified culturally with it.

"In fact, in the N.C. studies there was a 20-point drop in the percentage of Hispanics who identified themselves as 'Southern' from 1991 to 2001—the largest of any ethnic group in the region.

"They're arriving in the United States and in the southern United States at a time of declining regional identity," said Tulane University professor Carl Bankston, who has studied migration patterns in the South.

"Much of Southern regional identity is an identification with the

NOTABLE QUOTES

Would that God would make Hell so real to us that we cannot rest; Heaven so real that we must have men there, Christ so real that our supreme motive and aim shall be to make the Man of Sorrows the Man of Joy by the conversion to Him of many.—J. Hudson Taylor

Notice the kind of people that God brings around you, and you will be humiliated once you realize that this is actually His way of revealing to you the kind of person you have been to Him. Now He says we should exhibit to those around us exactly what He exhibited to us.—Oswald Chambers

We languish for men who feel themselves expendable in the warfare of the soul, who cannot be frightened by threats of death because they have already died to the allurements of this world.—A. W. Tozer

No matter how well we live the Gospel (and we must live it well, else we hinder its reception), sooner or later we must communicate the content of the Gospel before a person can become a disciple of Jesus Christ.—Donald S. Whitney

The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but its sending capacity.—Mike Stachura

People who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that they too are expending their lives . . . and when the bubble has burst, they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted.—Nate Saint

I am ready to die for the salvation of the Aucas.—Jim Elliot

Was very weak and scarce able to perform any business at all, but enjoyed sweetness and comfort in prayer, both morning and evening. Was composed and comfortable through the day; my mind was intense and my heart fervent, at least in some degree, in secret duties. I longed to spend and be spent for God.—David Brainerd

Compiled by Robert Condict.

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

past that Latinos simply don't have. They're much more likely to develop an American identity than a Southern identity.' Six Southern states—North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina and Alabama—saw their Hispanic populations increase by more than 200 percent in the 1990s; since 2000, the Hispanic population in all Southern states outside of Florida and Texas has grown by an estimated 680,000 people." (<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/mld/myrtlebeachonline/13289607.htm>, accessed 12.02.05)

Alzheimer's and Hispanics

"Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are projected to increase more than sixfold among Hispanics in the U.S. during the first half of the 21st century, according to a new report released by the Alzheimer's Association. This increase means that 1.3 million Hispanics will have Alzheimer's disease by 2050, compared with fewer than 200,000 currently living with the disease.

"This report should serve as a wake-up call to Congress and the nation," said Stephen McConnell, Ph.D., senior vice president of public policy for the Alzheimer's Association. "As the fastest-growing population in the country and the group that will have the greatest life expectancy of all ethnic groups, Hispanics will experience a dramatic rise in their risk of Alzheimer's disease. This will overwhelm their families and communities unless we take action now." (<http://www.rockrivertimes.com/index.pl?cmd=viewstory&cat=6&id=12027>, accessed 12.28.05)

How to Study U.S. Demographics

David Shumate

A great advantage to conducting Hispanic and other ethnic ministries in the United States is the great abundance of demographic information available here. Although there are many sources of helpful information, the one you should first become familiar with is the Census Bureau website (www.census.gov). By federal law, information published by the Federal Government is not subject to copyright protection and is therefore free to the public to copy and use. The Bureau asks only that you give proper attribution for the information that you are using.¹ In addition to many statistics and reports, the website has a very helpful search engine that mines the data from the decennial census. The search engine is called *American FactFinder*, and among other things it has the capacity to produce custom maps showing important demographic information from the national level down to an area as small as a city block. The search can be conducted with a dial-up connection, although it may require some patience when generating maps. With broadband, the program works rapidly.

The following is a hypothetical search to demonstrate how the program works. Suppose that your church were located in Dalton, Georgia, an area with a rapidly increasing Hispanic population. Further suppose that you wanted to know where to begin canvassing and tract distribution efforts. The American FactFinder feature can be of great assistance to you.

First go to the Census Bureau home page at www.census.gov. From the menu in a sidebar on the left side of the page, select the link to American FactFinder. From the American FactFinder page, again look in the left sidebar menu and select "Maps and Geography." In the main part of the page that appears you will see the choices "Reference Maps" and "Thematic Maps." Reference maps let the viewer see the various geographic divisions used by the Census Bureau in conducting the census and organizing the data. Among the more important geographic areas are State, County, County Subdivision, Census Tract, Block Group, and Block. The Census Bureau also organizes data according to other geographic divisions, the most important of which is the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that often contains parts of multiple counties.

The link to select for this project is "Thematic Maps."² This feature allows the user to produce maps that show demographic groups selected by the user. Following this link generates the thematic maps page that defaults to a view of the nation as a whole, with the states color-coded to show population density. Across the top of the page, you will find a site map that says "Main> All Data Sets> Data Sets with Thematic Maps> Geography> Themes> Results." The two factors that you want to change are "Geography" and "Themes." First change "Themes" by clicking on the link in the site map. This produces a drop-down menu that lets you select the group you are looking for. The map you want is "TM-P0001H. Persons who were Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 2000."³ Click on the button that says "Show Results." This will produce a map of the entire United States showing the Hispanic population by state. For each thematic map you

can display results by state or smaller geographic subdivisions by selecting choices from a drop-down menu just above the map. There are also buttons that allow you to zoom in or out or retrieve information about the geographic division that the cursor is resting upon.⁴

In order to gather data from a more specific geographic area, click on the "Geography" site-map link at the top of the page. This generates a series of drop-down menus that let you select your geographic area, from "Nation" all the way to "Block." The interface is very intuitive, with each choice of geographic area generating a new menu of geographic subdivisions. In our case you will select "County Subdivision." You are then prompted to select first the state ("Georgia"), the county ("Whitfield"), and finally the county subdivision ("Dalton CCD"). Finally you are ready to select "Show Results,"⁵ generating a map of Dalton, Georgia. This particular map shows an area 65 miles across and shows the data by census tract. However, you can choose to display the data by a smaller geographic subdivision by using the drop-down menu ("Display data by:") just above the map. In this case, selecting the choice "Block" causes many of the blocks to be too small to distinguish; however, zooming in allows you to produce a map that is as small as one-half a mile across.⁶

This program is capable of identifying very specifically the places where there are significant Hispanic populations. Once you have learned the basic function of the program, there are many additional features that you can explore. For example, you can search by many different demographic characteristics. You can also control such features as map color scheme. This is particularly useful if you wish to print the maps or copy them into a presentation. Although the data that this program uses is now more than five years old, it still has much value to a church in locating areas of significant Hispanic population. Moreover, if you or someone else in your church can become familiar with this tool, you will be in an excellent position to take full advantage of the data that will be generated by the 2010 census.

David Shumate is the General Director of Mission Gospel Ministries, International.

¹ See the Census Bureau home page and enter "copyright" in the search field of FAQs.

² Also on this page is a tutorial for making and using maps.

³ You might also be interested in "TM-P0004H. Percent of Persons who were Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 2000."

⁴ This information comes in a pop-up. Therefore, you may need to adjust any pop-up blocker that you may have installed.

⁵ The other choice, "Map It," produces the reference map for the particular geographic area in question.

⁶ An alternative is to go back to the "Geography" page and select a smaller geographic subdivision to map, such as your census tract.

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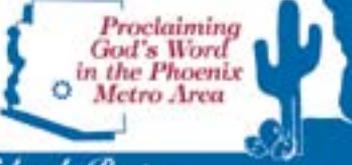
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Chaplain News

The FBFI acts as a Department of Defense-authorized ecclesiastical endorsing agency for military chaplains. In recent years, God has permitted the FBFI Commission on Chaplains to see a dramatic increase in the number of military, police, sheriff, and fire department chaplains endorsed. FBFI-endorsed chaplains have been impacting the lives of thousands, with dozens coming to a saving knowledge of Christ each year.

Listed below are the names of all FBFI-endorsed chaplains and chaplain candidates. Please use this list as a prayer list for our chaplains and their families. In future issues of *FrontLine*, we will be focusing on individual chaplains. If the chaplains could speak to you individually, their request would be, "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thess. 5:25).

Active Duty Chaplains

Army

Chaplain (Capt.) Gary Fisher
Chaplain (2LT) Ralph Nab
Chaplain (Capt.) Greg Odiorne
Chaplain (Capt.) Brian Palmer
Chaplain (Capt.) Roger Rodriguez
Chaplain (Capt.) Mike Shellman

Navy

Chaplain (LT) Dan Hall
Chaplain (LTJG) Robert Johnson
Chaplain (LT) Tavis Long
Chaplain (LT) Daniel Owens
Chaplain (LT) Richard Wiese

Air Force

Chaplain (Maj.) George Youstra Jr.

Reserve Chaplains

Army

Chaplain (LTC) Joe Willis

Navy

Chaplain (Capt.) Wayne Bley

Air Guard

Chaplain (Maj.) Michael Sproul

Civil Air Patrol

Chaplain (Capt.) Daryl Jeffers
Chaplain (LTC) Daniel Perry

Police

Chaplain Dan Cleghorn
Chaplain Fred Henzler
Chaplain Bob Keller
Chaplain Don Karnes
Chaplain Michael Privett
Chaplain Daniel Perry
Chaplain John Vaughn

Hospital

Chaplain David Cotner II

Chaplain Candidates

Army

Seth Hamilton

Navy

Christopher Harrison
Robert Spivey

Air Force

John Lockhart
Aaron Meany

FBFI-Approved Applicants Completing Requirements

Phillip Stephens
Daniel Warf

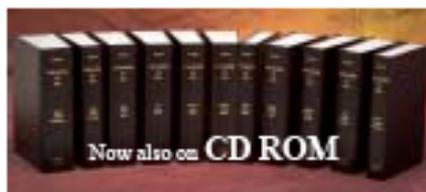
Rev. Bob Ellis is the National Field Representative for the FBFI Commission on Chaplains. He and his wife travel extensively, promoting the FBFI chaplaincy ministry in Fundamental Christian colleges and seminaries. He is also available to speak in churches and can be reached at (850) 261-6647.

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Your Biological Clock Is Ticking

Gordon Dickson

A little over 2.5 billion: that's approximately how many heartbeats you will have enjoyed if you live to be seventy. If you are nearly eighteen, you've probably already used one out of every four of your potential heartbeats. Once you've cleared fifty-two-and-a-half, you have most likely used three out of every four. See, your biological clock really is ticking! And there is no guarantee that it will continue to do so. One of my best friends recently passed away at 54 years of age. Dr. Ted Harris was known to many *FrontLine* readers for his work with the Frontline Clubs and his recent article on abortion in these pages. His recent passing has had a most palpable effect on this author. The fact is that the passing parade of heartbeats should have a striking effect upon all of us.

The Psalm of Moses reminds us "so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." In the forty years of the wilderness wanderings of Israel's millions, Moses undoubtedly became well acquainted with death through daily funerals. This familiarity with death gave him a new appreciation for life. As Solomon explained it, "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth" (Eccles. 7:4). That small drum in your chest is beating a cadence, always advancing

toward its last beat. Why not take the time right now to resolve to use every possible beat to glorify the name of the Lord? By applying yourself to the wisdom of the Word, prayer, and, sincere obedience, you can make each heartbeat count (even when you are asleep, according to Proverbs 6:22*)!

Take a few moments to get out a calculator and number the days of your life to this point. Subtract that number from the number of days in the life of a seventy-year-old, and you may be surprised. There are only

a certain number of sunrises and sunsets left on this earth for you. Or, try thinking about the matter this way: how many summers do you have left between now and seventy? And how do you intend to use them?

Of course, there are those reading this who are much older than seventy who are asking, why is that author fixated on seventy? It is only for the purpose of illustration and application of Psalm 90. My own father is still "alive and kicking" at 83! The point of these illustrations is that each moment of time is more precious than we can possibly perceive—but we can try. One application of 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18 is the recognition that each moment has momentous importance; it works for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Verse 18 reminds us that you must look through the window of the Word to see this. Each and every moment must be used

wisely and well. If yours turns out to be an early, untimely death, this means that those passing heartbeats were even more precious because there will have been fewer of them. Moses' prayer was that we would use such calculations to "apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The Lord used Moses to lead the way to the most excellent use of your remaining heartbeats. He led the way with a corporate prayer that should spring from each of our hearts. He cried out for the transforming mercy of God, which makes us rejoice when we remember our earthly lives (vv. 13–15). Then, he asked that our God-given work would be plainly obvious to each of us. (What is it that God has uniquely prepared you to do that you should use your remaining heartbeats to accomplish?) Moses asked that this work would appear to God's servants in such a way that the children of those servants would see the great glory of God. Finally, in verse 17, he prayed for the beauty of God and stability from God to do something that really counts for eternity. Isn't this the prayer of every maturing servant of God? Let's use each of our remaining heartbeats to please the God who gave us heartbeats. This passing, pounding parade reminds us that we have but a short march to our heavenly home.

Gordon Dickson is the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio. He can be contacted at gdickson@fbfi.org.

*Proverbs 6:22 teaches that the Word of God can guide you, guard you, and greet you!

Let's use each of our remaining heartbeats to please the God who gave us heartbeats.

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