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# FrontLine

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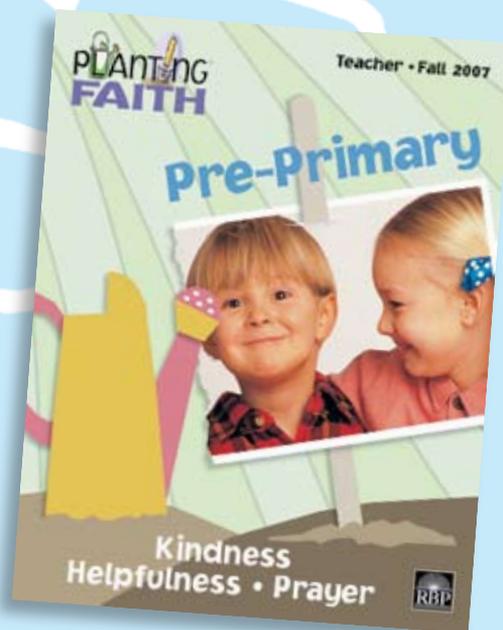
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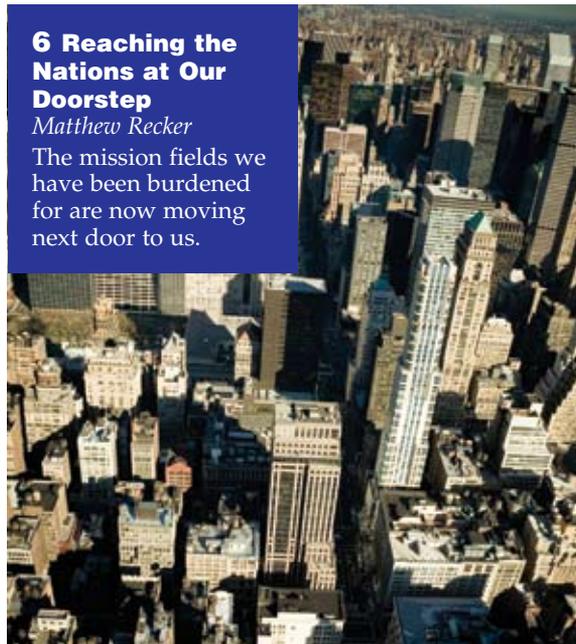
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You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.

I have received the *Frontline* magazine for several years and have enjoyed the well-done contents. Your writers have been qualified and on-target.

*Dr. Gordon E. Hanson*

of Republican." Better that the "different kind of Republican" disappears, losing on immigrations, rather than have his legacy remembered as a law breaker.

*Gerald Detandt  
Greenville, SC*

Thank you for the March/April emphasis on Moral Purity. When that issue arrived, I felt that it was a gift from God just for me. It has been especially helpful to my family as we were recently jolted into reality when this issue hit home for us. We have read and reread "Misdirected Passion." That article was just what we needed. Thank you again.

*Name withheld*

[Regarding May/June 2007 issue]: Dr. David Shumate's "not offering . . . legal advice but to orient the reader to some of the issues involved"—well received.

President Bush calls himself "a different kind

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Subscription prices for *FrontLine* Magazine are \$19.95 for one year, \$34.95 for two years, and \$54.95 for three years. Call us toll-free at 800-376-6856 or write to *FrontLine* Magazine, 500 West Lee Road, Taylors, SC 29687. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.



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## Time for Some Thank-You Notes!

John C. Vaughn

Sincere thanks are in order to **Dr. David Pennington and the people of Burge Terrace Baptist Church in Indianapolis.** They were exemplary hosts and provided us with a refreshing time of spiritual renewal. Each year we look forward to the blessings of the Annual Fellowship that come through preaching, workshops, and fellowship. We were certainly not disappointed. But in Indianapolis there was something extra, something we pray will continue as God works in the FBFI. Underlying the power of the proclaimed Word, there was an unusual and calm efficiency in the details, evidence of genuine spiritual peace.

From happy reunions at registration to lingering good-byes at the end, there was a spirit of love and revival. Burdens were shared with prayerful tears and joy was shored up by hearty laughter. Growing appreciation across the generations was obvious. We headed home with resolution to “let brotherly love continue,” knowing that the pastor and people of Burge Terrace had set the tone with their own calm dedication. As we drove away, they stayed behind to clean up and prepare for their next assignments. Dr. Pennington and other friends at Burge Terrace, you ministered to us by your prayerful preparation, your patient service, and your godly testimony during our stay. Thank you. We pray that the FBFI was a blessing to you, as you certainly were to us.



Dr. David Pennington

Thanks are also in order to **Dr. Matt Recker and his fellow pastors who serve the Lord faithfully in and around New York City:** they produced the bulk of this issue of *FrontLine*. As they demonstrate, the mission field has indeed come to America. Nations that we have sent missionaries to are strongly represented in our own cities. Other nations that are closed to American missionaries have growing representation right here. The challenge for all of us in the FBFI is not just to encourage each other for the sake of encouragement, but to encourage each other in the Great Commission.

Our vision is “to perpetuate the heritage of Baptist Fundamentalism complete, intact, pure, and undiluted to succeeding generations of Fundamentalists.” That heritage must not be lost in the negatives of necessary opposition to error. We have often been asked, “I know what you are against; what are you for?” The mission of the FBFI is “to provide a rallying point for Fundamental Baptists seeking personal revival and the opportunity to work with committed Bible believers in glorifying God through the uncompromising fulfillment of the Great Commission.” We have

a message that the world will reject in a “New York minute” unless it flows from personal revival.

And finally, **thanks are in order for everyone working toward the fulfillment of this 2 Timothy 2:2 vision:** taking the things that we have learned and committing them to faithful men.

This commitment takes time. When the founders of our movement left the seminaries that had been lost to the liberals, it took time to rebuild. Some of us, saved later in life, simply had no time to attend seminary while supporting our families. It has taken many years to get the technical education we needed, but in the meantime we made up for it with zeal. We were reminded in Indianapolis that “the worst thing that has ever happened to our movement was the ‘100 Largest Sunday Schools.’” But, thankfully, one of the best things that has happened is that Fundamental schools have found creative ways for those of us who have been “going to school on our families and our churches” to go back to school for real.

Zeal is always balanced by more complete knowledge. It is a wonderful thing when pastors can finish seminary near the beginning of their ministries instead of near the end (like some of us!). “Too soon old, too late smart” was how they said it in Dad’s generation. A poet once wrote, “In youth, I did not know the mountains, but my wings were strong and tireless. With age, I learned the mountains, but my weary wings could not follow my vision. Genius is wisdom and youth.”

So, thank God for those, both young and old, who have both zeal and knowledge. We have such men in our movement, and we need many more. Thank God for every conference—even the ones on the Internet!—that allows Fundamental Baptists to strengthen each other. The uncompromising fulfillment of the Great Commission is greatly needed today. Let’s not forget Ben Franklin’s words at the signing of the Declaration of Independence: “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

# Reaching the Nations at Our Doorstep

I approached the main entrance of an apartment building in a West Indian community and overheard two girls behind me say to one another, “That guy is in the wrong place.” I turned with a smile and said, “No, I am right where I am supposed to be because I am here to tell others of Jesus Christ!”

On another occasion I asked visitors to stand during our welcome time at church in the heart of an African American community to tell us how they found out about our church. Gladys stood and said, “I would like to know why you are here [in this community]!” A silence fell over our service as I answered, “Jesus entered the city of Samaria, and although the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink. She asked why, and Jesus said, ‘If thou knewest the gift of God, . . . thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.’ (John 4:10). I am here in this neighborhood to share the gift of God, which is eternal life!” Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, and Gladys stayed in our church and became a strong member of our spiritual family.

## Ministering amid Ethnic Change

More and more people will wonder whether we are in the wrong place, or they will question our motives for serving in a particular city. We must be convinced that God Himself in the gospel of Christ has cancelled any ethnic difference and social distinction as a dividing force in our fellowship and worship with one another. In Romans 15:8–13 God crushes the most notable ethnic difference on the planet when He receives Jew and Gentile on the same basis. (See also Gal. 3:27–29.) We therefore ought to do likewise. On the surface this may seem obvious, but the reality is that many pastors and churches are struggling with ministry in multicultural settings. Ministries that have long existed in communities with minimal cultural disparity are being inundated with a new generation of immigrants. Previously vanilla neighborhoods are changing in color, culture, creed, and language. We live in dramatically changing times regarding the population and demographics of our nation. Nationwide, population is skyrocketing with new immigrants from every nation. Urban areas in

the South and West are transforming before our eyes. The nations are here and are making great noise. They will not go away, and more are coming.

Churches faced with ethnic change in their neighborhoods can become irrelevant and die, move, or adapt to reach the changing culture. Frankly, it makes me sad when I hear of a strong Biblical church moving away from a particular community because it was changing culture and color. Why? I do not believe that we have a gospel that retreats from eternal souls. Should we surrender territory to cults, Charismatics, or the Roman Catholics? If we retreat with the gospel of truth, then who will reach them? These new immigrants must be reached, and we can do it. On the basis of Scripture we must be convinced that our message is for the nations of the world, not merely for a certain ethnic or income group. We know this when it comes to sending out missionaries to other nations, but we are more skeptical when the mission field comes to our doorstep. And this is what is happening before our very eyes.

### Ministering with Conviction

Romans 15:7–13 gives to us three reasons that we can minister confidently and authoritatively to reach the nations of the world that are moving into America. First of all, this must be our *conviction*, because of Christ's work for us. Romans 15:7 states, "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." Paul commands the diverse church in Rome: on the basis of Christ's work for the glory of God, receive the nations! In Rome there were Greeks and barbarians, wise and unwise, and Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 1:14–16). Cross cultural ministry is inherent in the Great Commission, and therefore it ought to be our Biblical conviction. The word "receive" is a command and means to take someone as your companion, to lead by the hand, to receive into one's home with the idea of kindness, to grant one access to one's heart, or to take into friendship. Because Christ has received us, we must receive others to the glory of God. When Jesus Christ died, He died for all nations and every ethnic group!

God mandates that we show kindness in receiving others into our churches and homes and to open our heart to people who speak different languages, eat unique foods, and have different cultures. Our conviction must be that the nations of the world are image bearers of God, equal in every way to you or any man, and we must see our calling from God to receive all nations of the world into our assemblies.

### Ministering with Passion

To evangelize in a multicultural community must not only be our conviction but it ought to also be our *passion* because of God's Word to us. In Romans 15:8–12, Paul explodes with a zeal for the nations based on the promises of God. His soul saturated with Scripture, Paul relates a great reason Jesus Christ came to earth: to reveal God's mercy to the world's nations so they would glorify God for His mercy. To prove his point, Paul quotes four Hebrew

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passages in verses 9–12, taking passages from the three sections of the Tanach: the Law (Deut. 32:43), the Prophets (Isa. 11:10), and the Writings (Pss. 18:49; 117:1). God's goal in missions is that He be glorified by Jew and Gentile and that all the nations experience His mercy. Is this our passion? Mercy is God's love in action, and God has ordained the church as the place where we are to experience His mercy! The word *ethnos*, translated as "Gentiles," is used six times in these few verses. "Gentiles" refers to individual Gentile converts or to any non-Jewish

unreached nation or people group.

We can group these Biblical quotations into three points. From the believer's perspective, we are commissioned to praise God among the nations. Romans 15:9 says, "For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." (Paul quotes from Psalm 18:49.) We are challenged with this fact: we have a God to worship, a Christ to confess, and a song to sing among the nations of the world. From the nations' perspective, God commands them to rejoice. There are three imperatives in Romans 15:10, 11: "And again he saith, *Rejoice*, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, *Praise* the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and *laud* him, all ye people." In quoting Deuteronomy 32:34 and Psalm 117:1, Paul is convinced that all people groups of the earth are commanded to rejoice and sing together with the people of God in the Lord! We must believe that we can worship God in unity within our local churches with other cultures and classes of people. From God's perspective, He has certified that He will rule over the nations and that the nations will hope in Him. Romans 15:12 says, "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust" (from Isa. 11:10). Ultimately, all nations will submit to the rule of the same King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Ministering with Expectation

To evangelize in a multicultural community should be our *expectation* because of the Spirit's power in us. Romans 15:13 declares, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." This verse tells us that we can have blessed assurance in cross-cultural ministry because we have boundless assistance in our task to make disciples of all nations that have moved to our communities. The power is in the Holy Spirit; it is not we who will accomplish this task.

Because evangelizing the nations coming to us is our conviction, our passion, and our expectation, allow me to share the following practical suggestions. First, make the preaching of God's Word central in our worship. People need to hear the life-giving sound of God's Word. The Scripture ministers to the spirit of man no matter his culture. Preach the whole counsel of God with compassion and without compromise and you will reach the souls of men!

Second, fearlessly invite involvement of different ethnic groups into the work of the ministry (Acts 13:1–3). The lead-

ers of the church of Antioch were of diverse cultural backgrounds. Invite faithful people to pray, to usher, to read the Scripture, to open the worship service, to give a testimony, or to put away hymnals or chairs. Raymond is a Hispanic “on fire” Christian who started coming to our church while on a prison work release program. He was a drug dealer known as “Peligro” on the streets of Washington Heights. He has now taken our membership class and joined our church. I have asked him to do the Scripture reading and prayer. He puts on a tie and serves as an usher. His vibrant spirit is a breath of fresh air!

### Ministering beyond the Nonessentials

Are you convinced that the church of Jesus Christ is to be comprised of all the nations of the world (Rom. 1:14–16)? The church is His and consists of new creations of every gender, class, color, and culture. Evangelize, disciple, and welcome those who are black, Hispanic, or Asian into your church family. Rave about their food. Be sensitive to their needs. Be interested in their culture. Learn their language. Refuse to allow nonessentials to divide you. For example, is someone’s political affiliation going to hinder his fellowship in your church? I decided a long time ago that my goal was not to lead people to agree with my political positions but to make disciples of Jesus Christ!

Encourage others in your congregation to greet new visitors regardless of their background. Follow up their visit with a phone call. Offer to have lunch with them. Suggest having a Bible study in their home to invite their other friends. If your church is not naturally welcoming toward different ethnic groups, “preach the word” to reprove, rebuke, and exhort your church family that God’s grace and God’s gospel do not make divisions.

Thirdly, give away ownership of the church to those God brings in. In our membership class, one of the things I emphasize is that the church is not mine. If I hear anyone call the church “your church, Pastor,” I cringe and then immediately correct them. One man, Jorge, did so while speaking to me one day. I said, “Whose church?” He said, “Your church, Pastor.” I said, “It is not *my* church, it is *our*

church!” He said, “Oh, you got me on that one!” From there on he would say, “This is our church.” I love it when people take ownership of the local church and feel so connected to it that they see it as theirs because they are in Christ.

Perhaps we need to repent of our unbelief, our apathy, our pride, or our negative attitudes toward differing ethnic groups. Believe God can do this in your ministry! Or do you need to refocus your heart and your prayers to teach, preach, and reach the nations of the world around you? Maybe some need to refocus a portion of your church’s mission dollars to reach the nations of the world who are moving into your neighborhood. Fundamentalism has been a missions-minded movement, and many of our churches give sacrificially to the cause of worldwide missions. But now it is time to transition our thinking to this: the mission fields we have been burdened to raise money for and send missionaries to are now moving next door to us. By the power of the Holy Spirit we must use our creative energy to reach the Hispanics, Asians, and blacks all around us.

American church priorities are often focused on building projects—nicer auditoriums and gymnasiums. This is not all wrong, but when our main concern is to have a bigger auditorium intentionally removed from the ethnic masses that are coming our way, something is skewed with our thinking, our vision, and our expectation of what God can do among the nations of the world.

May God help us to see that we can and must reach the nations of the world moving into our cities and more and more into our suburbs. God can give us grace to successfully evangelize in multicultural communities. May we have a conviction, because of Christ’s work, to reach the nations of the world! May we have a passion, based on God’s Word, to reach the nations of the world! May God give us an expectation, because of the Spirit’s power, to reach the nations of the world for His eternal glory!

Matthew Recker has established three urban churches in New York City: City View Baptist Church in Flatbush, Brooklyn; Parkway Baptist Church in Jamaica, Queens; and Heritage Baptist Church in Manhattan, a multicultural church in the heart of America’s largest city. Since 1997 he has hosted *The Heritage of Faith*, a live radio broadcast that focuses on Biblical exposition. Matthew is the author of a book on urban ministry called *Behold the City*, published by BJU Press. Matthew can be contacted at [MRecker@hbcnyc.org](mailto:MRecker@hbcnyc.org). Their website is [www.hbcnyc.org](http://www.hbcnyc.org).



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# Seeing through Spiritually Sensitive Eyes

## Impressions of an Urban Church Planter

Upon first stepping foot on the busy streets of Brooklyn years ago to evangelize, my initial impression was that I had entered a foreign mission field. The world has come to New York City like no other place. Research reveals it is the largest, most diverse cosmopolitan city on earth.<sup>1</sup> Because the City is such a melting pot, almost any people group can be evangelized. However, there often seems to be a mental disconnect between foreign missions and making it the Church's mission to reach foreigners right here on American soil.

### The Importance of Research

Of course, impressions must be verified by reliable research. Through proper research the church planter can gain a better understanding of his target and will be enabled to make informed decisions about reaching the people there. There are two types of research that a church planter must employ. First, he should study the demographics of the area. This type of query can be done from a distance and yields valuable raw statistics (such as population numbers and income and education levels), which reflect the *quantities* of the city. This

information can be found in libraries, business bureaus, real estate agencies, or on the Internet. For example, it is very convenient to go online and tap into the figures gathered by the US Census Bureau.

An ethnographic study is the most important type of research any church planter can do. Ethnography can be done only on site and gives an overwhelming vision for and an in-depth understanding of the community. It digs down beneath the surface and discovers the forces involved in the formation of the neighborhood. It reveals the *qualities* of the area and will give insight that will never be discovered in any other way. Through these means, the church planter will learn how to best reach the people.

### The Best Plan

Some leaders arrive in the city with a prepackaged plan, but the best plan is to be deeply embedded in the community where the church will be started. To live with the people of the area is an excellent way to get to know and to gain a vision for reaching them. In this way the church planter can begin to get a sense of what the gospel can and

will do there. Of course, this approach requires a significant time investment.

There is another alternative however, and that is seeing the city with spiritually sensitive eyes. Church planters must acquire the kind of vision that Jesus demonstrated (John 4:27–38). While His disciples were preoccupied with satisfying their physical hunger, Jesus was feasting His eyes while He fasted. Hungry for the souls He came to seek and to save, Christ willingly missed a meal to reap a harvest.

When Dwight L. Moody was in London during one of his famous evangelistic tours, several British clergymen visited him. They wanted to know how and why this poorly educated American was so effective in winning throngs of people to Christ. Moody took the three men to the window of his hotel room and asked each in turn what he saw. One by one, the men described the people in the park below. Then Moody looked out the window with tears rolling down his cheeks. “What do you see, Mr. Moody?” asked one of the men. “I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior.” Obviously, D. L. Moody saw people differently than the average observer does. And because he saw eternal souls where others saw only people strolling in a park, Moody approached life with a different agenda.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Example of Paul the Apostle**

Paul possessed this same kind of vision, and his visit to Athens provides an extensive example of ethnographic research (Acts 17:16–21). Athens was a world-famous city. It was the site of the Acropolis and the Parthenon (one of the architectural wonders of the world), the cradle of Greek civilization and the cultural center of Hellenism. It was the highly sophisticated intellectual capital of the world, the premier “university town” of the empire, and the hub of Greek philosophy.<sup>3</sup> This city above all others represented the glory of the Greeks.

While waiting on other team members to meet him there, Paul did some sightseeing. As he observed the buildings and statues and altars, he appreciated the beauty of the city because he was a cultured man. But he did not view Athens as would a tourist, for he was not focused on its exquisite architecture. Instead, Paul was struck by the fact that the city was “wholly given to idolatry.” What he saw helped him to know how to approach the Athenians with the gospel, which was directly related to the rampant idolatry he perceived. Every building he saw and everywhere Paul went in the city, he saw some god or goddess represented. He was overwhelmed by the fact that Athens

was crammed with altars, images, and statues dedicated to the gods. The population of the city at the time was about 10,000, but scholars estimate that there might have been as many as 30,000 statues of gods erected there.<sup>4</sup> In fact, some historians have said it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens!<sup>5</sup> Paul was familiar with idolatry from his childhood in Tarsus and from traveling through the many cities of his day planting churches. But it was the pandemic idolatry he observed in Athens that grieved his heart and moved him to the core of his being.

Paul looked at life through spiritually sensitive eyes, which caused his spirit to be deeply stirred within him. Significantly, the Greek word *paroxymo*, translated “stirred,” which describes Paul’s reaction to the idolatry he observed in Athens, depicts violent emotions that are an intense

mixture of both rage and grief. It is precisely the same word used to describe God’s reaction to the idolatry of the Israelites (Isa. 65:2, 3). Paul was outraged by such blatant rebellion against a holy God and its disastrous affects upon people. He saw all the beauty of the city, the culture, and the art. On the surface, everything looked good. But he knew that underneath things were not good at all. Paul was so in tune with the Spirit of God that he was able to look at the city through God’s eyes, feel the very throb of the Lord’s heart, and likewise share His response. He was also moved with compassion because he viewed people as being held in Satan’s grip. These deeply complex feelings led the apostle to take bold action. This kind of spiritual sensitivity is the result of walking in the Spirit and is *the* crucial ingredient in reach-

ing the mission field that has come to us; it is indeed the key to church planting.

Paul accurately saw the mission field as a spiritual battlefield and waged spiritual warfare on two separate fronts. Before dealing with the systemic idolatry he encountered, Paul did something that was this church planter’s custom everywhere he went. He first entered the local synagogue. Using the Jewish Scriptures, he entered into a mutual discussion with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles who joined themselves to the assembly. However, in the scripturally illiterate pagan sector, he daily spoke in the Agora (“market”), which was the heart of daily life in the city.<sup>6</sup> Around the outside of the marketplace stood a series of covered porticoes, called *stoas*, where the philosophers debated and presented their views. With people milling about buying and selling and philosophers debating with one another, there was no shortage of people to listen. There, Paul found the proper venue to engage in open-air preaching and began to effectively convey the Gospel to the city of Athens.

*There are unique challenges in reaching postmodern society. Ethnic diversity requires people-sensitivity. Cross-cultural ministry necessitates learning new ways of thinking, acting, and relating.*

## Spiritual Sensitivity in Action

While pastoring in Connecticut, I made a few trips to Brooklyn, New York, to do open-air evangelism. I would return from these evangelistic excursions excited about the wide-open opportunities on this “foreign” mission field. I recall a developing burden for the Russian Jewish area where I would evangelize. Several years later when the Lord called me to start a church in that general area, I made periodic trips to Brooklyn in order to get a feel for the neighborhood. I went around observantly, considering what was being promoted and discovering people’s values. I tried to talk to the “man on the street” and asked questions that would give me helpful impressions and insights. The collation and analysis of the information that I had gleaned played an important role in planting and charting the course of Bethel Baptist Fellowship, which now includes a Russian language ministry and the training of men to plant more churches in New York City.

There are unique challenges in reaching postmodern society. Ethnic diversity requires people-sensitivity. Cross-cultural ministry necessitates learning new ways of thinking, acting, and relating. All of this is greatly accentuated in the city. Primarily, the urban church planter’s impression of the city must mirror Paul’s Athenian experience. He must walk in the Spirit to view the city through God’s eyes. It is too easy to become indifferent to the familiar. He must constantly realize that the city is “wholly given to idolatry.” Effective outreach requires identifying and addressing the idols of the particular people groups. These idols are the major spiritual barriers that Satan is using to blind their minds to the gospel.

Paul felt outrage at the rebellion against God’s holiness, but he also was moved with compassion because he saw that idolatry had enslaved the people in darkness. If either of these feelings is absent from your witnessing, you will be greatly ineffective. You must allow the Lord to blend compulsion and compassion in your outreach. Only then will your heart function like God’s, and only then will your evangelism will be on target.

Jim Bickel and his wife, Nancy, have been married for thirty years. Jim is a graduate of Bob Jones University and a pioneer church planter with over twenty-five years of ministry experience. In 1980 he planted a church in Connecticut where he pastored for over fourteen years. He was next used of God to plant Bethel Baptist Fellowship in 1999 in Brooklyn. Each summer, Jim is engaged in a very active internship program training future pastors in urban church planting. In the spring of 2008 Bethel will be launching a mother-daughter church plant in Queens.

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en), <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-34.pdf>, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Today in the Word* (Chicago: Moody), February 1, 1997, p. 6.

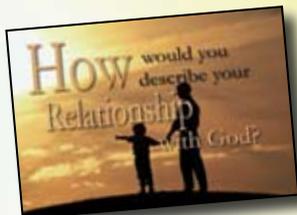
<sup>3</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 384–85.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary, Vol. 2: New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 476.

<sup>5</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. 3: The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), p. 278.

<sup>6</sup> John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament* (Scripture Press, 1983), p. 402.

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Program is thorough and theocentric. It introduces people to God, and invites them to relate with Him as a person Who is knowable and wants to begin an intimate relationship with them.

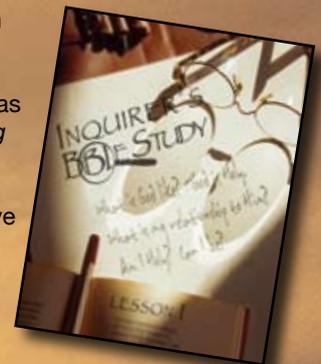
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Written by Jeff Musgrave. Used by Baptist World Missions for training their missionaries.

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# The Melting Pot of Mission Fields

Developing a Foreign Missions Mindset in United States Ministry

## Our Default Is God's Design

A uniformed police officer stood outside of Dan Hyden's home in Ivanovka, Russia, in February of 2003. Six other men came in from the Siberian cold to question the group of believers that had met to worship. Pastor Hyden was told to meet the following week with Russian officials. At that meeting Captain Mashtakov told Dan the church could no longer meet in their home and he could no longer preach. The church complied until a few weeks later. Dan was summoned again. This time he was given ten days to leave the country.

The Hydens were forced to leave a fledgling church and ordered not to return for at least five years. Why would God allow this? They had just begun adjusting to the Russian culture and language. Were their years of preparation and language study for nothing? It may have seemed so, but often our default is actually God's design. The Lord opened an opportunity in a new country, and within just a few short months they were ministering in a city with over 500,000 Russian-speakers. Within a year they saw the Lord bring together a core group of twenty-to-thirty Russian speaking people. Where? Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn.

Watching the Lord use the Hyden family this way at my home church in Brooklyn made me rethink the way we treat the mission field among us. We should be doing this all over the United States! Although the Hydens cannot reach the Russians in the Russian Federation, they can disciple Russian-speaking people in

our own borders and send them back to their own home to make more disciples.

## Why Should I Reach the Nations?

The Great Commission commands us to "teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The men Jesus gave this command to were astounded by the breadth of this mission. Make disciples of all nations! How? The answer to that question came when the Lord gathered thousands of men and women from all over the world to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. Then He gave His disciples the gift of foreign languages so that they could disciple them; the thousands who became disciples went throughout the world making more followers of Jesus.

Why did God command them to reach the nations? It was for His glory. People of the nations who have placed their trust in the Lord glorify God for His mercy (Rom. 15:8, 9). His glory is also echoed in the heavens by the angels who are amazed at the wisdom of God in building the Church from all nations. The Church is like a masterpiece of many different colors and shapes of people from all walks of life and cultures (Eph. 3:8-10). Jesus will also be glorified for His mercy to the nations throughout all eternity. When we examine the presence of God in Heaven we hear the same chorus resounding God's praises for His multifaceted mercy (Rev. 5:9, 10). Are you passionate about the glory of God? If so, you will be passionate about making disciples of the nations.

**Tim Richmond**

## Where Can I Reach the Nations?

So where do I go to find the nations? Well, a good place to start is your back yard. Ease of transportation and communication has been shrinking the world over the past thirty years. Within that time we have seen an unprecedented increase in immigration. Has there been an unprecedented increase in our efforts to reach them? There are now over 35 million people in the United States who were born in a foreign country. That is twelve percent of our nation's population! In order to reach them when they were born you would have to have been a foreign missionary. Thirty-five million people—that is a larger population than most countries in the world today! We have a nation-sized foreign born population to reach for the glory of God.<sup>1</sup>

Do you want to reach Mexicans? Go to Mexico City. Do you want to reach Japanese? Go to Tokyo. Do you want to reach the nations? Go to the cities of America. Three of the five cities of the world with the largest foreign-born population are in the US or Canada (New York City, Toronto, and Los Angeles). Although Tokyo is more populous than NYC, the foreign-born population of NYC is larger than the entire country of Japan's foreign-born population. The same is true of Mexico City. It has a greater population than NYC. However, NYC's foreign-born population is four times larger than the foreign-born population of the entire country of Mexico!<sup>2</sup> The foreign-born population of some cities like Miami, Florida, or Santa Ana, California, has outgrown the US population of those cities. To reach these cities we must approach them as a foreign mission field. The nations are pouring into our country more than into any other country at any other time in history. How do we reach them?

## How Do I Reach the Nations?

### 1. Be Willing

First, be willing to expend the same effort to reach a foreign-born person in your back yard as in his own country. What does it take to disciple Igor, who lives in the Ukraine? A missionary family would take a survey trip to target a specific area. They would then spend years on deputation raising the support to move to the Ukraine. Perhaps they would use the first term to learn the culture and language. After spending a year on furlough in the States they would return to Ukraine and start a church. Is that worth it? Absolutely! But what happens when Igor gets on a plane and flies to Atlanta, Los Angeles, or NYC? Do we expend the same effort eight hours later? We should, but we do not. Now it is Igor's responsibility to learn the language and culture. He has to spend the years studying and adjusting. We should be targeting Igor within our borders just as if he were on the mission field. Why not treat the foreign-born population of the United States as the foreign mission field? Are you willing to expend that much effort?

### 2. Be Aware

Second, be aware of the specific mission fields of your area. One way to find a detailed breakdown of the foreign-born population in your city is to type your Zip Code on the home page of the US Census website.<sup>3</sup> From here you can view a map pinpointing the areas in your community with the greatest foreign-born population as well as a diagram detailing their ethnic and language background.

You should also be aware of some of the cultural distinctives of the people you are trying to reach. If I were a missionary on deputation to Mexico you would expect that I would know something of their major religion, history, culture, and foods. Why should it be different if I am ministering to them in their new home in the US?

### 3. Be Proactive

Now that you know a little more about the "foreign" mission field in your community, be active in reaching out to that culture. Many Fundamental churches have done an excellent job in reaching out to different people groups in their community by starting a church in a foreign language. However, you do not have to start a separate church to begin to reach that community. Perhaps you should start by ordering tracts that are printed in Spanish or Russian. Here are a few ideas that churches have used to reach the foreign-born population of their communities:

- Foreign Language Bible Study: Perhaps you already have a trustworthy person in your church who could lead a Bible study in a foreign language. As the Bible study grows, you may want to begin a Sunday school class in this language as well.

- Teaching English as a Second Language Class: This is a great way to reach the foreign-born population. If you do not have the certification or resources to start a large program, consider offering language study time where people in the community can meet with people in your church to practice speaking English.

- "Racial Profiling" Evangelism: There are many ways to develop a specific outreach targeting a language or people group. At youth outings you could have "Viva Mexico" night and beat piñatas or "A Tribute to Italy" and sling spaghetti. You may want to keep the spaghetti slinging out of your Sunday evening service, but don't let that stop you from organizing some dinner or church activity that shows the people from that culture that you are interested in them. Contact a foreign missionary who is targeting the same people group and ask him how he reached out to the culture on the foreign field.

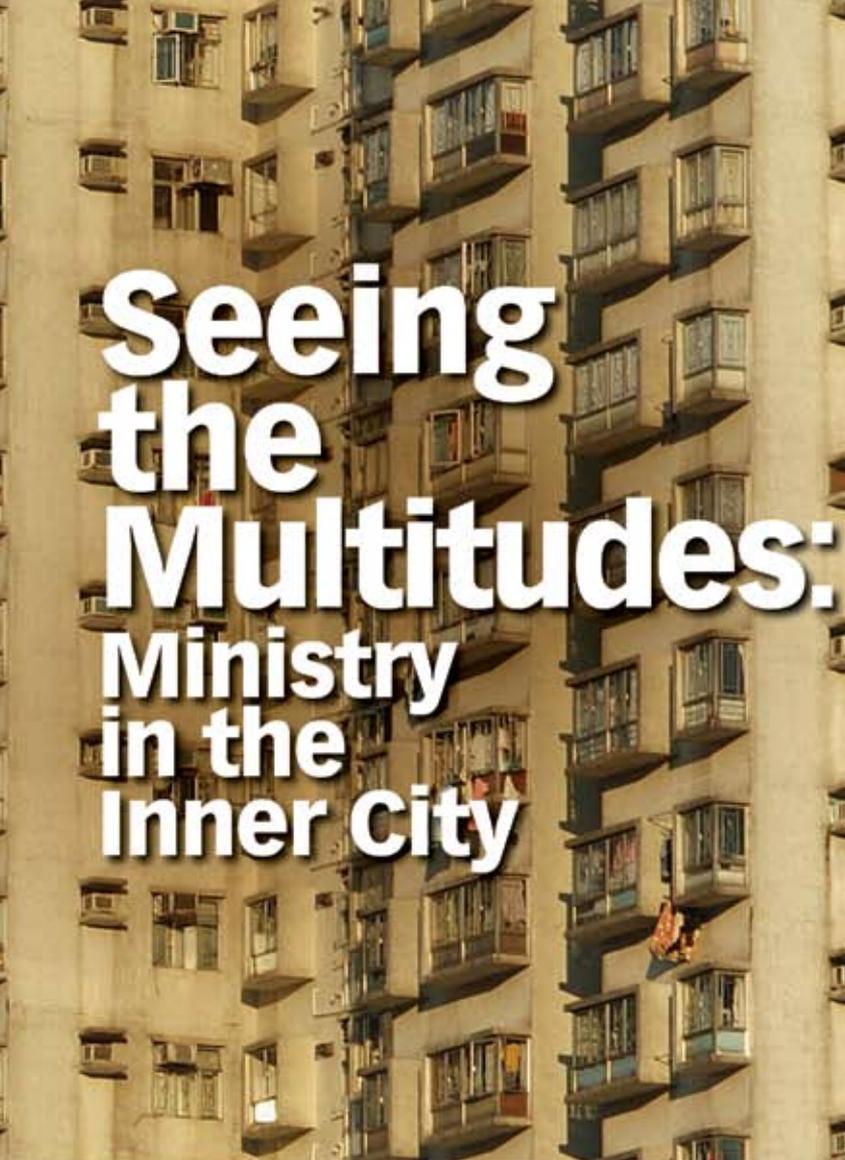
We should not sit around while the millions of foreign-born Americans stand deceived by their own religions. Inconvenience is not a consideration as we reach out to the mission fields of the world in our borders. To obey Jesus' command and glorify our Father, we must make disciples in this melting pot called the United States of America.

Tim Richmond has spent the last three years as a youth pastor at Bethel Baptist Fellowship in Brooklyn, New York, and is on deputation with Gospel Fellowship Association to plant a church in Queens. He and his family are targeting a diverse neighborhood where they will be able to reach Russian, Chinese, and Hispanic people groups. His email is [tim@nycnations.com](mailto:tim@nycnations.com), and his website is [www.nycnations.com](http://www.nycnations.com).

<sup>1</sup>For information on the foreign-born population of the world cities see Lisa Benton-Short, Marie D. Price, and Samantha Friedman, "Globalization from Below: The Ranking of Global Immigrant Cities" in *The International Journal for Urban and Regional Research*, <http://www.gstudynet.org/gum/Publications/GlobalizationfromBelow.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>For further statistical data see <http://www.nycnations.com/NYC%20Facts.htm>.

<sup>3</sup>Go to [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).



# Seeing the Multitudes: Ministry in the Inner City

*Therefore seeing  
we have this ministry,  
as we have received  
mercy, we faint not.*

*2 Corinthians 4:1*

**Jeff Knudson**

The American inner city has sadly become neglected as a mission field of choice among believers. That is unfortunate—mainly because an ambassador for Christ in the inner city has the distinct privilege of serving in an incredibly untapped mission field. Excitement, adventure, and many surprises await the missionary who desires to serve in the concrete jungle. But the inner city often has a bad reputation with some Christians, and understandably so.

Cain, a murderer, built the first city, and many cities are still plagued by that very sin. It is interesting that whenever the inner city is considered as a mission field, believers tend to show partiality toward different cities. For example, Denver, for the most part, is acceptable to Christians. San Francisco, however, is not. Cleveland? Perhaps. Harlem? You're kidding, right? Of course, not every missionary is called to go to the inner city, but every servant of God should prayerfully consider this unique mission field, which is not only expanding constantly but is also, in many ways, a microcosm of the whole world.

## **God's Love for the City**

Throughout Scripture, God dispatches His servants into the urban complexes to reprove men of their wickedness and exhort them to turn to Him. The fact that He would even send anyone to warn godless people enveloped in idolatry and spiritual darkness demonstrates His love for the masses in the city. Consider Ninevah, that "great city," where the resistant and cynical prophet Jonah was called (twice) to preach repentance to the city's inhabitants who were sworn enemies of Israel. Or consider Jerusalem, the city over which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself bitterly wept; consider the various cities throughout Israel where Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitudes. Whether He chooses to pour out amazing grace or fiery judgment, it is unmistakable that God has a profound interest in cities.

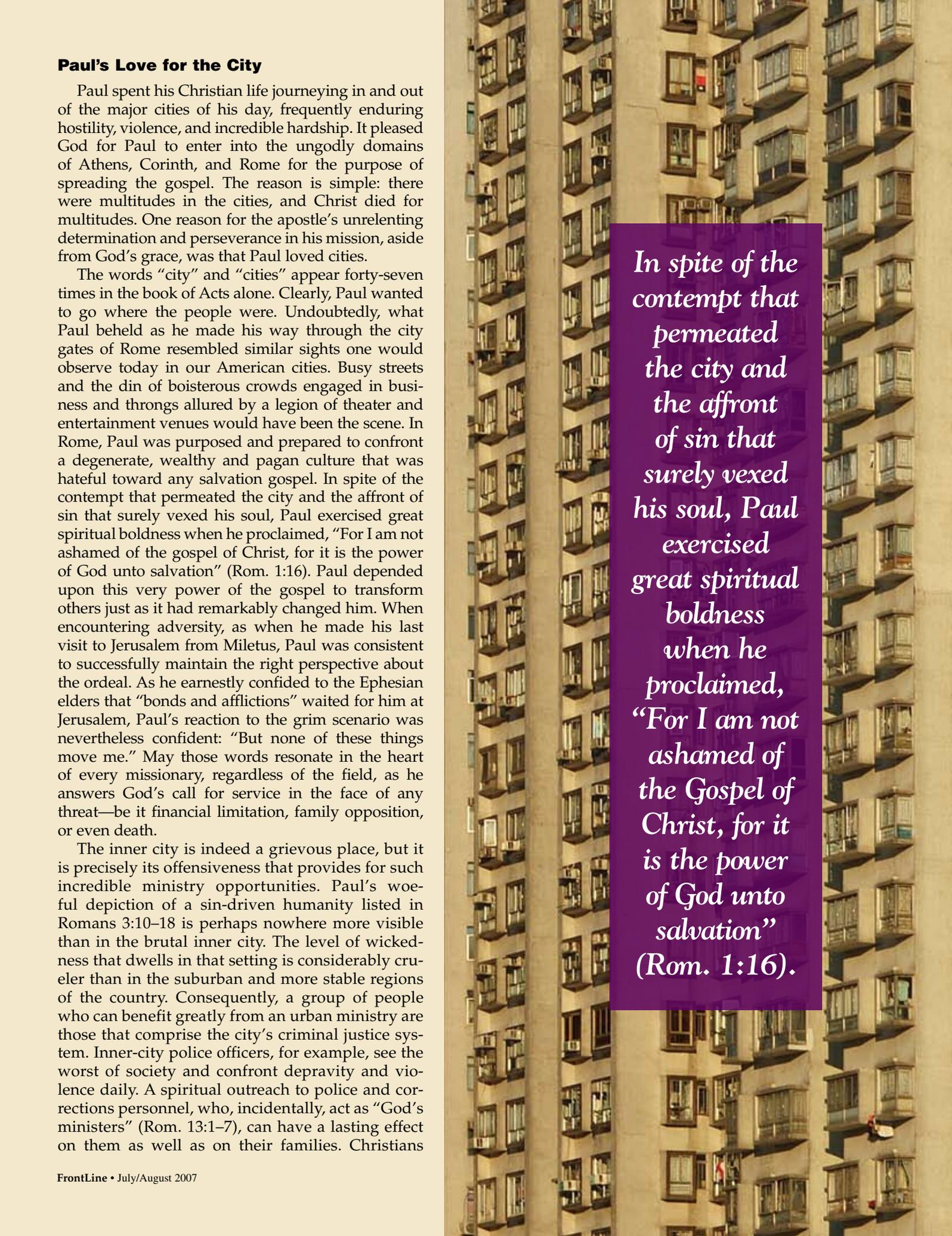
Reasons for not wanting to go to the inner city are obvious. Besides being an often dirty and crowded place where sin and depravity are blatant, the inner city is also an incredibly expensive area for a family to live in and minister. Real estate, especially in a metropolis like Manhattan or Los Angeles, is astronomical for a church planter who seeks to purchase even a sparse property. Undeniably, however, inner cities have influenced and will continue to affect the rest of the country by often setting the nation's moral and cultural tone. Gang violence and the nation's drug problem, for example, both have their origins in the inner city. Arts, entertainment, and fashion, all intrinsic American staples, are usually forged in major cities and ultimately make their mark upon the rest of society. But God can accomplish great works through an inner-city missionary—as He did through the apostle Paul—and will often use these influences to His advantage.

## Paul's Love for the City

Paul spent his Christian life journeying in and out of the major cities of his day, frequently enduring hostility, violence, and incredible hardship. It pleased God for Paul to enter into the ungodly domains of Athens, Corinth, and Rome for the purpose of spreading the gospel. The reason is simple: there were multitudes in the cities, and Christ died for multitudes. One reason for the apostle's unrelenting determination and perseverance in his mission, aside from God's grace, was that Paul loved cities.

The words "city" and "cities" appear forty-seven times in the book of Acts alone. Clearly, Paul wanted to go where the people were. Undoubtedly, what Paul beheld as he made his way through the city gates of Rome resembled similar sights one would observe today in our American cities. Busy streets and the din of boisterous crowds engaged in business and throngs allured by a legion of theater and entertainment venues would have been the scene. In Rome, Paul was purposed and prepared to confront a degenerate, wealthy and pagan culture that was hateful toward any salvation gospel. In spite of the contempt that permeated the city and the affront of sin that surely vexed his soul, Paul exercised great spiritual boldness when he proclaimed, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Paul depended upon this very power of the gospel to transform others just as it had remarkably changed him. When encountering adversity, as when he made his last visit to Jerusalem from Miletus, Paul was consistent to successfully maintain the right perspective about the ordeal. As he earnestly confided to the Ephesian elders that "bonds and afflictions" waited for him at Jerusalem, Paul's reaction to the grim scenario was nevertheless confident: "But none of these things move me." May those words resonate in the heart of every missionary, regardless of the field, as he answers God's call for service in the face of any threat—be it financial limitation, family opposition, or even death.

The inner city is indeed a grievous place, but it is precisely its offensiveness that provides for such incredible ministry opportunities. Paul's woe-filled depiction of a sin-driven humanity listed in Romans 3:10–18 is perhaps nowhere more visible than in the brutal inner city. The level of wickedness that dwells in that setting is considerably crueler than in the suburban and more stable regions of the country. Consequently, a group of people who can benefit greatly from an urban ministry are those that comprise the city's criminal justice system. Inner-city police officers, for example, see the worst of society and confront depravity and violence daily. A spiritual outreach to police and corrections personnel, who, incidentally, act as "God's ministers" (Rom. 13:1–7), can have a lasting effect on them as well as on their families. Christians



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can do much in the way of ministering to these “God-ordained” law enforcement officers by helping to make them aware of their Scriptural calling. Christian leaders can also provide tremendous support and comfort to victims of crime, who not only feel defenseless after a disturbing incident but also may become spiritually disillusioned. And those who are incarcerated are in dire need of the life-changing gospel that stands as the only hope of halting the revolving-door syndrome associated with over eighty percent of inmates in the United States. As evil men in our society continue to wax worse and worse, the Lord persists in opening up new horizons of ministry to those within our criminal justice system. The church would do well to take advantage of these important witnessing opportunities.

### **Revival in the City**

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the amazing Fulton Street revival in New York City. In the summer of

added to churches across America. Soon, God’s revival fires spread throughout the country, affecting such cities as Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Louisville, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. This mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit had such an effect in America that by 1860 revival had even crossed the Atlantic and broken out in Ulster, England, Scotland, and Wales.

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). America’s inner cities today desperately need that same bountiful outpouring of God’s grace that will pierce men’s hearts and convict them of sin. On the days following the tragic events of 9/11, scores of Fundamental Christians from around the country streamed into New York City because they saw not merely a great opportunity to minister but an urgent need to go and be a help and blessing to those in despair. God used this sudden and unspeakable tragedy to rouse Christians to behold the city, and many answered the call. It is interesting that those who went did not deliberate about crime, safety,



1857, a young businessman named Jeremiah Lamphier was commissioned as a city missionary by the Dutch Reformed Church to canvas lower Manhattan to seek new converts. He was led to hold a midweek noon prayer meeting at the church and issued a community notice stating, “This meeting is intended to give merchants, mechanics, clerks, strangers, and business men generally an opportunity to stop and call upon God amid the perplexities incident to their respective avocations.” Six people attended the first week, forty people the next, until soon prayer meetings were being held every day in various buildings in Manhattan’s financial district.

Six months later, the number of men gathering for daily prayer miraculously increased to ten thousand! It is estimated that within two years, one million converts were

and expense issues before going; they simply adjusted themselves and went unhesitatingly because it was the reasonable thing to do. Back in the fall of 2001, a fire of sorts was lit in the hearts of Christians that caused a majority of them to discount the hazards synonymous with New York City and instead charge in with lots of tracts, lots of time, and a surging desire to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Jeff Knudson is a law enforcement chaplain and the director of Inner-City Chaplaincy based in New York City, where he ministers to the NYPD, to victims of crime, and to inmates and corrections personnel at Rikers Island Detention Center. He and his wife, Melody, have eight children and are members of Heritage Baptist Church in Manhattan, pastored by Matthew Recker. Pastor Jeff can be reached at [nycchaplain@aol.com](mailto:nycchaplain@aol.com). His website is [www.hbcnyc.org/icc.html](http://www.hbcnyc.org/icc.html).



## ***“The Yiddish Are Coming! The Yiddish Are Coming!”***

A Review of the  
Jewish Migration to America

**Craig Hartman**

**T**hough “The Yiddish are coming” is not the phrase attributed to Paul Revere during his famous midnight ride of April 1775, the migration of the Jewish people to this country, which began before the Colonial Period, has had a profound affect on our land.

Long ago the Jewish people were driven from their homeland and have endured numerous expulsions from countries where they have sought to build their lives. Many of the dispersed Jews headed north to Europe. Ultimately, scores fled Europe and other areas and came in their largest numbers to America, where they have enjoyed their greatest freedoms and growth.

### **A History of Immigration**

The impact of the Jewish people on this country began before America was settled. Some have suggested that Christopher Columbus was Jewish. That claim cannot be stated with certainty, but several of his crew were Jewish and thus were among the first Europeans to set foot in the New World. The story of the Jews in America, however, really begins with a group of twenty-three refugees who arrived in New Amsterdam (later New York) from the Dutch colony of Recife, Brazil, in 1654.

Prior to their expulsion from Spain in 1492 (which was completed the day before Columbus set sail), the Jews enjoyed centuries of relative peace under (ironically) Muslim rule. Things changed, however, under “Christian” Spain around the start of the fifteenth century, culminating in the edict for them to leave. Many of the Jews who left Spain settled in Portugal but were expelled from there in 1496. A large number of Jews in Spain and Portugal, however, chose forced conversion over expulsion and remained in those countries. Though they had become “Christians,”

these Jews were still considered outcasts and suffered greatly at the hands of the Catholic Church, especially during the Inquisition. Eventually, a number of these secret Jews fled to Amsterdam, where they sought religious tolerance and opportunities to earn modest livings as merchants. Many returned to the open practice of Judaism.

The Jewish people enjoyed relatively peaceful lives in the Netherlands, and by the early 1600s many had migrated to other lands held by the Dutch, including colonies in Brazil. By 1645 nearly fifteen hundred were living there. Unfortunately, in 1654, Portugal captured the Dutch colony of Recife, and the Jews who lived there fled to other lands. Among them was the group of twenty-three who landed in New Amsterdam.

Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch director-general of New Amsterdam, met the travelers upon their arrival but did not welcome them. The Dutch West India Company convinced him to let the Jews stay, but he did not make life easy for them. They were determined, however, to establish a home there, and they overcame the difficulties they faced. In 1655 the community received permission to build the first Jewish cemetery on American soil: the Jews were now permanent residents of the United States.

### **A Sephardic or Ashkenazic Heritage**

Geographically, Jews are often described as either Sephardic (from the Hebrew word for Spain) or Ashkenazic (from the medieval Hebrew name for Germany). Sephardic Jews are generally from Western Europe, Iberia, and the Middle East. Ashkenazic Jews are generally from Central and Eastern Europe. The first Jewish settlers in America were Sephardic, and their arrival encouraged other Sephardic Jews to travel there. By 1660 a Sephardic

community had settled in Newport, Rhode Island. By 1700 the number of Jews in the United States was two hundred. By 1750 Sephardic Jews had settled in Charleston, South Carolina, which by 1800 had the largest population of Jews (500) in the United States. During this time, a number of Jewish communities developed in other port cities, including Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Savannah, Georgia. By the late 1700s the population of Jews had grown to 2500, and by 1820 it was 4000, most of whom were Sephardic.

America was attractive to European Jews because it offered the hope of religious tolerance and opportunities for work in the expanding New World. These benefits were especially attractive to the Ashkenazic Jews. They came in large numbers during the following decades because of the persecutions they had endured and the terrible poverty that typified their lives. Among the hardships they endured was the confiscation of their land, which made their involvement in agriculture impossible. In addition, developing trade guilds and many craftsmen often barred Jews or required a proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ for them to participate, thereby making it impossible for them to maintain their skills or crafts. America was growing, and traders and laborers were needed, so it was an ideal place to make a new start. Many Jews came and made their start as peddlers. Others, because of their experience dealing with Christians and Muslims and because of their language skills, were able to find work as merchants.

### **The Jewish Population in America**

Between 1820 and 1880, the Jewish population in America grew to approximately 300,000 with the majority centered in cities where work could be found. As trade routes were established, the Jewish people followed them west and established communities in cities along the way. The first Jews to settle in Chicago arrived there in the 1830s and 1840s, and a synagogue was established there in 1851. The move west brought them as far as Oregon and California. In time, peddlers saved enough money to buy stores of their own, while other Jews were learning trades and marketable skills as more communities were springing up in cities throughout the country. The Jewish settlers attracted other Jews from various parts of the world, and the Jewish presence in America grew rapidly.

Due to the increasing atrocities and harsh treatment of the Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia, from 1880 to 1920 nearly three million came to America. By this time the spread of Jewish people across the country had slowed, and most immigrants settled in northeastern cities, especially New York City. By 1900 the Jewish population there reached 350,000, many settling on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where my grandparents lived. By 1915 the number of Jews living in New York City had climbed to one million. From 1920 to World War II another quarter of a million Jews arrived in America.

After World War II the dramatic migration of Jews shifted to Israel, but the population in America was well established and had grown to over six million, with two million in the New York metropolitan area. Today, approximately the same number of Jews who live in Israel also live in America.

As the Jewish people have migrated to America, they have

made a tremendous impact on this country. Contributions in the fields of medicine, philanthropy, education, science, the arts—the list could go on and on—have been tremendous blessings to our land. When immigrants come to this country, they pass the Statue of Liberty, whose famous inscription was penned by Emma Lazarus, a Jewish woman. In it she speaks on behalf of America welcoming “huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” but Emma was apparently inspired by the tired and poor masses of Jews who had come to this great land looking for freedom. The Jews have come to America and are a vital part of America.

A cursory review of the Book of Acts reveals the fact that chapter after chapter chronicles events in synagogues at various cities. Though he was the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul was determined to reach the Jewish people wherever he went, and he did so with an emphasis. Particularly interesting is the record in Acts 28 of Paul under house arrest. Typically, he looked for Jews upon his arrival in a city, but he could not do so in Rome because of his circumstances. The scene that followed was remarkable as Paul actually calls for the Jews to be brought to him so he could witness to them. He was so determined to bring to them his message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah (1 Cor. 15:1–3) that he sought them though he was in chains! One could say that, in Rome, the mission field was brought to Paul.

In the context of considering “When the Mission Field Comes to America,” it is essential for one to consider Paul’s example. God has scattered the Jews to the four corners of the earth but will bring them back to their land one day. For now, He has clearly brought many to America. As with Paul, they have been brought to us. What will be our response? Will we pass them by, or will we be determined to reach them?

After all, these are the people for whom Paul was willing to be accursed (Rom. 9:1–3), and they are the people for whom God stands with outstretched arms, desiring their return (Rom. 10:21). These are the people “to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises” (Rom. 9:4), and they are the people through whom the Savior came. They are “the apple of [God’s] eye” (Zech. 2:8), and the Bible is clear that “salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy” (Rom. 11:11). In Matthew 9 when Jesus remarked about the harvest being plenteous but that more laborers were needed, He was speaking of a Jewish harvest. God had not yet permitted the message to go to the Gentiles. There is a plenteous Jewish harvest that has come to America, and workers are needed in those fields.

The Yiddish have come. Please tell them about Messiah. Blessings will follow (Gen. 12:3).

Craig Hartman is founder and director of Shalom Ministries Inc., a New York City-based ministry to the Jewish people. He is a frequent conference speaker and is an adjunct faculty member at Bob Jones University. Craig may be contacted at [info@shalomnyc.org](mailto:info@shalomnyc.org). His website is [www.shalomnyc.org](http://www.shalomnyc.org).

For further reading, the author suggests the following:  
*The Jews in America* by Max Dimont  
*The Jews of the United States* by Hasia Diner  
*A New Promised Land* by Hasia Diner

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## ADAPTATION



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# On the Home Front

FBF NEWS AND EVENTS

## Upcoming Fellowships

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Alaska Regional Fellowship  
Maranatha Baptist Church  
7747 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99504  
907.338.2321

### September 15, 2007

Mid-Atlantic Regional Fellowship  
Troy Baptist Temple  
691 Staunton Road  
Troy, OH 45373  
937.339.3207

### October 12–13, 2007

Mid-America Regional Fellowship  
Christian Leadership Conference  
Bethel Baptist Church  
200 North Roselle Road  
Schaumburg, IL 60194  
847.885.3230

### October 22–23, 2007

South Central Regional Fellowship  
Faith Baptist Church  
1001 South Scenic Drive  
Manhattan, KS 66503  
785.539.3363

### October 25–26, 2007

New Mexico Satellite Meeting  
Scripture Baptist Church  
4440 Elks Drive  
Las Cruces, NM 88005  
505.642.360

### October 29–November 2, 2007

Caribbean Regional Fellowship  
Iglesia Bautista Christiana  
Ave 27 de Debrero #542  
Mirador Norte  
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
809.537.5645

### November 12–13, 2007

Southern California  
Regional Fellowship  
Ironwood Christian Camp  
49191 Cherokee Road  
Newberry Springs, CA 92365  
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Lucerne Christian Camp  
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# SOUND WORDS

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

## First Partaker

### Infinite, Infinite Sin Forgiven

There's a fearful ministerial professionalism that threatens to shrivel up a preacher's capacity for feeling deeply. Perhaps that's why God from time to time seems to withdraw His protecting restraints and allows us to tumble miserably down into our own appalling depravity. Those excruciating plunges teach us so painfully that we're absolutely *nothing* by our own powers that when we come crawling back to God, humiliated and broken, we can once again feel.

There's a confessional scene like this from church history that I always read about wistfully. It comes from a prayer meeting convened at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. C. H. Spurgeon's practice was to invite ministers to begin the new year with him at the Tabernacle for a week of concentrated prayer. During the prayer meetings held at the opening of 1856, one of the services broke open into candid confession among the brethren. A pastor recalled the sacred hour.

Sins of omission and commission, neglect and shortcomings were acknowledged. Solemn, simple, earnest appeal was made to the eye of the heart-searching God, that His servants might wish to hide nothing from His gaze. . . . And when the words, "Lord, is it I? is it I?" were uttered, many broke forth saying, "It is I! It is I!"

The beloved pastor of the Tabernacle Church wept like a child, and sobbed aloud, while the brethren around could not restrain their weeping and groaning before God.

Great, indeed was the relief and calm, the peace which followed the sweet words uttered by Mr. Spurgeon, "There is a fountain filled with blood."

I've never been in a prayer meeting like that, though like many of us, I covet at least one such experience in life. But anguish can't be scheduled and compelled. It bursts out at truly sovereign moments granted only by the Spirit's coming where and when He wills.

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

Yet a man can and must constrain himself to break open his own ossified heart, deceitfully content with conventional patterns. But to lay bare tortured transparency, he may need hammers and wedges. I'd like to offer one to someone really needy today. It comes in the form of a sermon by one called the German "Spurgeon." His name was F. W. Krummacher (1796–1868), he pastored in Berlin and Potsdam, and became well known through various printed series of his sermons, including *The Suffering Savior*, from which the following is taken. May the Lord make it both an awakening blow and a soothing balm.

### Peter's Fall

We again meet with Peter at the horrible moment when, completing his denial of Jesus, he formally abjures his discipleship with heavy curses. Observe, this is done by the very individual from whose lips the great confession had previously proceeded, "We have known and believed, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" and the ardent and sincere declaration, "Though all men should forsake Thee, yet will not I."

But what are even the best of men, when left for a moment to themselves? And what would become of the most faithful of Christ's followers, if the Lord were only for a short time to remove the restraints of His grace? O the folly of trusting to the finest feelings, seeing that we are not sure of them for a single second! What childish presumption to rely for success on the airy weapons of what men call good-will, or noble resolutions!

Peter has first to learn, in the school of experience, like us all, that we presume too much if we rely upon

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ourselves, even in the most trifling temptation. The love of Christ constrains us to venture everything for Him; but it is only the belief in Christ's love for us, and the trusting to His gracious power and strength, that enables us to overcome. He who trembles at himself, as being capable above others of denying his Master, will gain greater victories than he who deems himself sufficiently strong to be able to say, "Though all men forsake Thee, yet will not I!"

"Thou standest by faith," writes Paul to the Romans, "Be not high-minded, but fear." "Therefore," says the same apostle, "I will rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Peter is vanquished. Hell triumphs. And why should she not? Had ever a soul become hers, which had drawn down upon itself the curse so deservedly, as that of this apostate disciple and did the cause of Christianity, so hated by her, ever receive such a painful shock, as in this instance, where one of its apostles basely succumbs under the first danger which menaces a candid confession of his discipleship, and is unable to find language strong enough for his affirmation that "he knows not the Man"?

---

**As regards the shock which the cause of the Gospel endured through Peter's denial, it will survive this also. Yet a little while, and there is One who will be able to give such a turn to the whole affair, that it must tend rather to the advancement than the injury of the Gospel.**

Nevertheless, hell begins to cry "victory" too soon. There is no such hurry with regard to the curse which is to light upon Peter. Listen to what is passing in the judgment-hall of the palace. The appalling sentence has just been uttered in the midst of a tumultuous uproar. "What further need have we of witnesses! He has blasphemed God, and is guilty of death."

"Who," we ask astonished, "Simon Peter?" No, another, a Holy One; even He who once exclaimed, "I lay down My life for the sheep." He is now ready to do so, and Peter belongs also to His flock, from whom the curse is transferred to Him, the Surety, and with respect to whom the words are henceforth applicable, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." As regards the shock which the cause of the Gospel endured through Peter's denial, it will survive this also. Yet a little while, and there is One who will be able to give such a turn to the whole affair, that it must tend rather to the advancement than the

injury of the Gospel.

Just as Peter has filled up the measure of his sin by a formal repudiation of his Master, the cock crows. What is the result? A return to sober-mindedness, repentance, and tears. God only knows with what clamour Satan deafened the disciple's ears, so that the first cry of the feathered watchman did not penetrate into them. Peter sank only still more deeply into the snare, and midnight darkness, enlightened only by solitary flashes of his accusing conscience, enveloped his mind.

An awakener of some kind or other is appointed to every one. Wherever we may be, there are voices which call us to repentance. Nature, as well as our whole life, is full of them, only our ears are heavy and will not hear. There is an awakening call in the rolling thunder, which is a herald of infinite majesty—in the lightning, which darts down before thee, carrying with it destruction—in the stars, which look down upon thee from such remote regions, as if they would say, "How far, O man! art thou cast out from thy home!"—in the flower of the field, which in its transient blooming and fading, depicts thy own brief existence upon earth—in the midnight hour, when the church-bell strikes upon thy ear, like the pulse of time, which rapidly hastes away, and calls out to thee to hasten to save thy soul. Nay, where are we not surrounded by awakening voices of this nature? Behold them on the tombstones of our churchyards, and their language is, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." Their warning voice resounds from every funeral car that rolls past thee. It may be heard on every birthday which thou celebratest; in every fit of illness by which thou art attacked; in every danger that threatens thy life; as well as in that secret uneasiness which incessantly steals through thy soul.

And besides these general calls to repentance, do we not find something similar in every family circle, and in each individual! Some unrepented sin lies upon thy soul. When will this awakening call fill thine eyes with tears? One misfortune after another has lately crossed thy threshold. O how many alarming voices have been contained in these strokes of Almighty's rod! You feel your strength decaying, and that the sun of your life is declining. Do you not hear in this fact the crowing of the cock? On every side we may be conscious of it—in visions of the night, in the events of the day, in serious thoughts, which we are unable prevent in sermons and admonitions, which are addressed to us. But to what purpose? Something must be added to this warping cry—something superior and more powerful than itself, or it will never succeed in awakening us, who are by nature so "uncircumcised in heart and ears," from our deadly sleep.

The cock in the court-yard of the high-priest crows a second time. Let us, however, return for a few moments, to see what occurred in the council-hall. Something of importance has just taken place. The accused has declared upon oath that He is the Son of the living God. The high-priest, in dissembled indignation, rends his clothes. Amidst wild uproar, sentence of death

is pronounced upon the Holy One of Israel, and the minions of justice seize Him to lead Him away into the court-yard, and there vent upon Him their unlicensed fury. The Divine Sufferer has just passed through the doorway into the court-yard, when the crowing of the cock reaches His ear. "And the Lord turned Himself"; we know towards whom. That sound announced to Him His disciple's fall, and His eye and His compassionate heart go in search of him.

Such is Jesus the Saviour. He embraces His followers with more than maternal tenderness, and their want of fidelity does not prevent His being faithful. What waves of sorrow beat over His head, and yet He can forget everything in His anxiety for His fallen disciple! Sooner than one of them should be forgotten, He would forget the government of the world; and would suffer the nations to take their course, rather than lose sight of one of His little ones. And happy are ye who are the weak of the flock, the poor and needy above others! It would seem that you lie the nearest to His heart.

Deeply was Peter immersed in the mire of sin, yet the Lord turned towards him. Tell me, you that are parents, do your erring sons and disobedient daughters cease to be your children, because of their wanderings? Do you not rather still more deeply feel that they are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh? Does not your love to them increase with the danger to which you see them exposed? And are you not more fully conscious, when compelled to weep over them, that your life is bound up with theirs, than when they merely caused you joy? If ye then, being evil, cannot reject your own seed, how should He be able to forget those who are of His flesh and blood, who said, "As My Father loveth Me, so have I loved you"; and by the mouth of His prophet, "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Lo, I have graven thee on the palms of My hands."

Certainly, had it not been the Lord's will that we should believe that the covenant of grace, on His side, stood inviolably fast, He would have hesitated to have set before us such examples as those of David and Peter. "And Jesus turned and looked upon him." Yes, "though we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself"; for "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are His."

The Lord turned Himself. The conversion of every sinner begins with that for which David prays, "Look upon me!" By nature we are like dry bones in a huge churchyard, and cannot come to Him. But when the Lord begins to look upon us, its effect is soon felt. Before we are aware we enter into closer connection with Him, and feel that He is near us. We are conscious of being deeply and wondrously affected by things, which, otherwise, we scarcely noticed. The idea occurs to us, in a variety of circumstances, that God intends by them to call us to repentance, and we are often inclined to say with Jacob, "Surely the Lord was in this place." The Almighty is then no longer distant from us on some far-off height, but

pervades our chamber, and meets us in the daily occurrences of life. Not a day passes without something happening which compels us to say, "It is the Lord!" Yet this state of things may continue long without our attaining to real conversion of heart. But when the faithful Shepherd begins to follow after us, He does not leave us without accomplishing His purpose.

It was not simply the crowing of the cock that raised the disciple from his fall. Nor did the turning of the Lord towards him produce the desired effect. A third and more powerful means was added. What was it? A word, a call, an exhortation? No; a look which the eye of the Keeper of Israel cast upon His disciple, who was staggering on the brink of destruction.

This look did wonders. What a look must that have been! What Divine sorrow and love must it have expressed! And how accompanied by the effulgence of the Spirit and the radiance of Divine grace! It acted both as a sword to wound, and as a balm to heal. It struck like destroying lightning, and at the same time expanded itself like refreshing dew. O there is inexpressible power in the look of the Lord! His dying look on the cross melts stony hearts, and transforms lions into lambs. With a

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***Deeply was Peter immersed in the mire of sin, yet the Lord turned towards him. Tell me, you that are parents, do your erring sons and disobedient daughters cease to be your children, because of their wanderings? Do you not rather still more deeply feel that they are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh? Does not your love to them increase with the danger to which you see them exposed?***

look of forgiving mercy, He makes a contrite soul forget heaven and earth in its happiness and by means of a grieved and loving look, He restores lambs to His fold, which had long gone astray in the wilderness. To this day His people feel that His eyes are upon them, and according to what they read in them, their peace and joy rises or falls.

The Lord's look did not fail of its effect upon Peter. No sooner did the disciple's eyes meet His, than the magic band which held him is dissolved, his ear is opened, and reflection returns—nay, sin is acknowledged—his heart is melted—the snare is broken, and the bird has escaped. "Gracious God," is now his language, "how

deeply have I fallen! Wretch that I am, was not all this foretold me? Said He not on the way, 'Before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice?' Woe is me, that in foolish presumption I repelled the warning, and only remember it now, when it is too late! I vowed to go with Him to prison and to death; and yet I am the first to deny and abjure Him! How is it that the earth still bears me, and that heaven's lightnings do not blast me!"

Such may have been the language of Peter's soul, when, as the narrative informs us, "he remembered the word of the Lord, which He had spoken to him." He would now have infallibly become a prey to despair, had not the Saviour's loving-kindness, by means of the conversation on the way to Gethsemane, made every arrangement for preventing Satan from sifting the poor disciple too severely. His Master's prayer, that "his faith might not fail," had surrounded the abyss, as it were, with a balustrade, and by His injunction, that, "after his conversion, he should strengthen his brethren," had made preparation for wiping away his tears long before they fell.

Peter, by the look of his Master, is wholly dissolved in grief and humiliation. He covers his head with his mantle,

an ardent thirst for grace, and what fullness of fervent love to the Lord beam forth from their pure light! "Be not dreadful to me, Thou who art my refuge in distress! Cast me not away from Thy presence! Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" Such are the aspirations which issue from his heart. All his desire and longing center in this, that he may again rejoice in the favour of the Lord. Though he were to become an outcast from the world all the days of his life, and as regards his body, were compelled to follow in the steps of Job and Lazarus, yet he would gladly submit to all this, if he might only again hope for mercy. His tears announce the birth of a new man. The old, presumptuous, self-seeking, self-trusting Adam is dead, and a man of humility, filial resignation to God, and sincere desire that the name of the Lord may alone be glorified, rises, phoenix-like, from his ashes.

It is said that a tear glistened in Peter's eye as long as he lived. If this is anything but a legend, it was not a tear of sorrow only, but of joy at the mercy experienced, tempered only by a permanent melancholy. The remembrance of his fall never left him for a moment; and in the degree in which it kept him low, it sharpened his spiritual vision for the mystery of the cross and of salvation by grace. This is abundantly evident, especially in his first epistle. He there comforts believers with the cheering assurance that they are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." He calls upon them to "hope to the end for the grace that shall be revealed." He impressively reminds them of the weakness and evanescent nature of everything human, whilst calling to their recollection the words of the prophet: "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." He speaks of "the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot," with a fervour, which immediately indicates him as one who had deeply experienced its healing power. It is he who addresses the warning to us, "Be sober, be vigilant: for your adversary the devil goeth forth as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." And when he quotes the psalm—in which it is said, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; and His ears are open to their cry; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"—does it not seem, as if he intentionally referred to that look from his Master, which had once so overwhelmed him and cast him to the ground?

In conclusion: are there any of my readers who, with reference to Peter, are presumptuous enough to say with the Pharisee of old, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as that man!" O how much of the guilt of denying Christ, either in a gross or subtle manner, rests upon us all! How much reason have we also to be alarmed at the words, "He that denieth Me, him will I also deny before My Father in heaven." Let us therefore cover our heads with our mantle, and with Peter, go out and weep bitterly; that a day of grace may also dawn upon us, and that the words of the apostle may be also applicable to us, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 

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**The remembrance of his fall never left him for a moment; and in the degree in which it kept him low, it sharpened his spiritual vision for the mystery of the cross and of salvation by grace. This is abundantly evident, especially in his first epistle. He there comforts believers with the cheering assurance that they are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."**

as if unworthy to appear before God or man, and begins to "weep bitterly." These are the tears of which it is written, "Put them into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?" and from the sowing of which a harvest of joy is promised. Like the pearly drops which burst, in spring, from the branches of the vine, they testify of the existence of life; and in the eye of the sinner, announce to Satan the loss of his suit, and the end of his triumph. O how much is reflected in these tears! What thorough contrition before God, what holy indignation against sin, what



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

# Bring . . . the Books

## The Power of the Gospel: The Life and Influence of William Carey

He was an industrialist. An economist. A medical humanitarian. A media pioneer. An educator. A moral reformer. A botanist. And a Christian missionary. And he did more for the transformation of the Indian subcontinent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than any other individual before or since.

With these words, Vishal Mangalwadi introduces his brief but captivating work on the life of William Carey. *The Legacy of William Carey* (Crossway, 1993) makes a unique contribution to the wealth of literature related to Carey's life and ministry. Although his primary influence was seen in the spread of the gospel to many parts of the Indian subcontinent, it was by no means his only influence. Carey's story demonstrates how God can use the life of one man to alter the complexion and character of an entire continent.

It is the story of a young man with almost no formal education, from a small town, speaking the wrong dialect, losing all his hair in childhood illness, yet uncovering high purpose in a far-off land . . . where he was constantly harassed by colonial functionaries, deserted by his arm-chair mission leaders back home, misunderstood and opposed by the younger recruits sent out to help him, buffeted by colossal setbacks, and yet, without trying, becoming perhaps the most influential person in the largest outpost of the British Empire.

Mangalwadi introduces facets of Carey's ministry that are almost unknown to modern readers. For example, his botanical interests led him to translate and publish major works on science and horticulture. He introduced the English daisy to India and discovered a unique variety of eucalyptus, *Careya herbacea*, named in his honor. He introduced the mechanical steam engine to India and was one of the first to manufacture indigenous paper for his publishing houses. His moral outrage over and efforts to curtail the disgraceful usury practices common in his day resulted in a revolution in the banking establishment. He built a large printing press and established a publishing house that endured for years after his death. He formulated and published the first Sanskrit dictionary and labored to make the national tongue, Bengali, a respectable literary language. He started schools that launched an educational revolution by offering education to all regardless of sex or caste. He was instrumental in stopping the deplorable cultural practices of infanticide, child marriage, and "sati" (widow burning), and insisted on humane treatment for lepers who were shunned, burned, and even buried alive by their superstitious countrymen.

Carey did not go to India to reform a country. His ambition was to make the gospel accessible to the common man and woman there. He dedicated the larger por-

tion of his ministry to translate the Bible into over forty Indian dialects. Carey's cultural impact was directly tied to his commitment to preach the gospel. His moral outrage over the sins of India's culture combined with his passionate preaching of the gospel as the only remedy for such sins had a potent impact on the entire culture of the land.

The influence of his life and ministry was not purchased cheaply. Nor was the price confined to personal health or family tragedy. He suffered a devastating setback when most of his translation work, including the first draft of his Sanskrit dictionary, his original manuscripts, and ten of his Bible translations, was destroyed in a massive fire. He took this setback as God's way of reclaiming glory that perhaps had been misdirected by Carey.

In one short evening the labors of years are consumed. How unsearchable are the ways of God. I had lately brought some things to the utmost perfection of which they seemed capable, and contemplated the missionary establishment with perhaps too much self-congratulation. The Lord has laid me low, that I may look more simply to Him.

Carey faced an even greater trial in the later years of ministry when several newer missionaries fell out with the original pioneer missionaries they had come to help. Most painful were the accusations leveled against him. Though eventually proved unfounded, the accusations cost him dearly back in England.

I do not recall in my whole life anything which has given me so much distress as this schism. Many sleepless nights have I spent examining what we have done to give it occasion but can discover nothing on which I can fix. The Mission, however, is rent in twain, and exhibits the scandalous appearance of a body divided against itself.

Despite all this, Carey never swerved from his purpose to see the conversion of the heathen. His belief that all the ills plaguing Indian society were rooted in moral rebellion gave impetus to his lifelong passion to preach the truth that true conversion to God, grounded on faith and demonstrated by repentance, was the only hope for those held captive in the darkness of sin.

Mangalwadi's book is not a complete biography of Carey's life. But it is one of the more thought-provoking works that I have read in recent years. It has driven me back to Carey's life with a renewed interest to preach the gospel that conquered and transformed a culture darkened and oppressed by sin. 

“. . . 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.

The Book of James is unique in the New Testament. Unlike Paul's epistles, James includes no extended doctrinal section. James cuts to the quick and immediately makes applications to everyday problems Christians face. One of the most difficult passages in James is in the second chapter, verse fourteen. At face value there appears to be a contradiction between James's statement and Paul's teaching of justification by faith alone (Rom 3:28; Eph 2:8, 9). The contradiction evaporates, however, when the passage is properly understood.

The context, both theological and immediate, is crucial when determining what this verse means. It is important to notice the contrast between Paul's context and James's context theologically. Paul was arguing against a view that insisted that it was necessary to keep the Old Testament Law in order to be saved. Whether it was the Judaizers at Galatia or other false teachers, there were those who were teaching Christians that genuine faith in Christ was not sufficient for salvation. They insisted that "works plus faith" was the basis of justification.

On the other hand, James's context is quite different. He is arguing against libertinism—using the doctrine of justification by faith alone as a license for disobedience. James was dealing with a group of Christians who were mistreating the poor (2:1–3, 15, 16) and failing to take care of those often abused (1:27). Throughout chapter 2, James makes clear his emphasis: faith that does not produce fruit is not genuine or saving faith (2:17, 20, 26).

In addition, James uses the term "works" differently than Paul does. Paul views works as keeping the OT Law or doing good deeds to earn merit with God. James views good works as godly obedience that is the product and proof of a genuine faith. Paul and James then are not "antagonists facing each other with crossed swords; they stand back to back, confronting different foes of the gospel" (Alexander Ross, *The Epistles of James and John*, p. 53, quoted by D. Edmond Hiebert, *James*, p. 158).

"Can faith save him?" James's question begins with a Greek word that is untranslated in the KJV and most versions. It is a common word for "no" in the New Testament. This word is a marker to indicate that the intended answer to this rhetorical question is negative. A rhetorical question functions like an exclamation. James is saying that it is not at all possible for faith to save a man who does not have works. On first hearing, this may sound problematic,

but the verse contains another small yet important word. It is the Greek definite article which, in this passage should be translated as "that." The article points back to the previous usage of the word "faith" at the beginning of the verse. James is not saying "faith cannot save" but "that faith [that does not produce the fruit of works] cannot save."

Another important word in this context is the word "save." Some have argued that it is used in a physical context in James 2. Some who want to guard against adding works to the gospel (a good motive) have unfortunately gone too far at this point. Because the word is used in a physical sense in James 5:14, they argue that this is James's meaning throughout the epistle. This may seem to solve the problem, but it does not do justice to this text. It is overly creative exegesis pushed on by a theological agenda. First, physical salvation is not the normal usage of this word in the New Testament epistles. The word appears thirty times outside of James. Of those occurrences, twenty-nine times the word refers to spiritual salvation, not physical rescue (Douglas Moo, *The Letter of James*, p. 124). Second, James 1:21 is part of James's argument that includes James 2:14. However, in that context the word "save" communicates a clearly spiritual meaning ("receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls"). It is the salvation of a person's soul that is at issue. Third, James 2:14 makes little sense if the word "save" has a physical deliverance in view. In what way would a lack of works keep faith from delivering someone physically? One could come up with creative solutions, no doubt, but they only illustrate the awkwardness of seeing the word "save" as anything other than salvific in James 2:14.

James 2:14 is not at odds with Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is in agreement with Pauline theology, which also teaches that saving faith produces obedience to God (Phil. 2:12). The teachings of Paul and James on faith and works are still needed. There are plenty who believe the error that good works will earn them salvation (Paul's theological target). On the other hand, there are plenty of professing believers in America who believe they are saved though they have no fruit and no understanding of genuine faith. James's exhortation is just as needed today as it was two thousand years ago. ☞

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

# Windows

This edition of *Windows* features illustrations to make soulwinning clear and compelling. Close relationships are made by taking time to get to know each other. Here are four simple characteristics about God that will allow you to meet Him for yourself.

## God Is Holy and Cannot Tolerate Our Sin

The word “holy” means “separate” or “unique.” One implication of God’s holy nature is that He is totally set apart from sin. He is perfect!

*God’s Intolerance*—Habakkuk 1:13a teaches that God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” and cannot even “look on iniquity [sin].” It’s not that God doesn’t like sin. He cannot tolerate sin, because He is holy.

*God’s Reflection*—The Ten Commandments are not arbitrary rules set by God. They are a reflection of His nature. Imagine parents with a child who is allergic to peanuts. If she is exposed to peanuts she might die. Obviously, those parents would have strict rules about peanuts. To have a relationship with them, you would have to abide by those rules. They are a reflection of their needs based on their characteristics. To have a relationship with God, you have to deal with your inability to keep His laws because they are a reflection of His character.

*Man’s Dilemma*—This leaves man with a dilemma. Romans 3:23 teaches that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” An analogy that illustrates this might be as simple as imagining a contest between two people attempting to touch the top of a thirty-foot flagpole. One might be able to jump higher than the other, but neither could reach the top. They would both “come short.” The glory of God is His holy standard of perfection. Some might be better than others, but no one is perfect, and everyone falls short.

If this were all one knew about Him, who could have a relationship with God? Nobody!

## God Is Just and Cannot Overlook Our Sin

*God’s Standard*—God judges every man by the same standard. Romans 6:23b states, “the wages of sin [what we “earn” by sinning] is death.” What does this mean to us individually?

*God’s Judgment*—In Matthew 25:41 Jesus is shown judging the nations. “Then shall he [Jesus] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” God never intended for people to go to Hell. He prepared this eternal place of judgment for the Devil and his angels. But here people are being cast into Hell! Who are these people “on the left hand?”

*Man’s Dilemma*—Revelation 21:8 sheds light on the subject. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the

abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” When a man sins, he alienates himself from God’s holy nature. This verse shows that God’s just nature demands His judgment against each of man’s sins, and that every liar is going to be condemned to Hell!

Someone might say, “I thought God was a loving God.” Imagine a judge presiding over a murder trial, and a mountain of evidence proves that the defendant is guilty. If the judge chose to overlook the obvious guilt and acquit the murderer, would that be just? No! Suppose the guilty man was the judge’s brother, who loved him more than any man. If the judge overlooked his guilt and acquitted his brother, would that be justice? No! His love for the guilty would not change the demand for justice. God’s love for you doesn’t change the demand of His holy/just nature to judge you!

## God Is Loving and Has Reached Out to Us

God has provided a way for us to be close to Him that satisfies His holy/just nature.

*God’s Son*—Jesus is God come to earth in the flesh. “The Word [Jesus] was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

*God’s Exchange*—Though He is God in every sense, He humbled Himself and became a man so that He could give His life in exchange for the lives of sinners.

*Our Substitute*—“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18) As the just and holy God who came as a human, Christ is the only One qualified to die in our place. He took your sins on Himself.

*Our Righteousness*—He dealt with your sinful record thoroughly, but He also offers His own record to you as a perfect completion to the exchange. “For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). When we take His exchange, we take His righteous record and meet His holy standard. Now God can give us a home with Him in Heaven forever and still be just.

*Our Full Payment*—One of the last things Jesus said before He died was, “It is finished.” The word in the original language was sometimes used to mean “paid in full”! He paid the entire price. There is nothing left for you to pay!

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

Charles Spurgeon

Jesus proved that He could conquer sin and its penalty—death and Hell. He rose from the grave. His resurrection proved that God was satisfied with His payment for our sins. He loves far more than most people suspect, and His love is powerful enough to reach sinners!

## God Is Gracious and Gives Us Salvation as a Gift

The word “grace” has been explained this way: God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.

*God’s Gift*—Grace is God’s giving to us what we could never earn. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is not that God gives us part and we earn part. We don’t have the ability to earn holiness or meet His just standard.

*God’s Offer*—So, if He does all of the giving what do we do? *Receive!* “But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

*Man’s Decision*—And how do we receive? *Believe!* “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Since this most important issue of life depends on one simple word—believe—it is imperative to define it accurately. Some may say it means “to *understand* a fact and *agree* with it.” The following story shows the deficiency of that definition. In 1859 the famous acrobat Charles Blondine stretched a tightrope 190 feet above the mighty Niagara Falls. Crowds gathered daily to watch him navigate the thousand-foot span. He walked across in a large burlap bag. He carried his manager across on his back. He even fitted a special wheelbarrow for the rope and pushed it across. Once he put a cook stove in the wheelbarrow and stopped in the middle of the rope to cook and eat an omelet. The story is told that once he approached the cheering crowd and asked who believed he could take a man across in the wheelbarrow. The crowd went wild. Everyone wanted to see that. They began to chant, “I believe, I believe!” Blondine pointed to a man waving his hand and chanting, “I believe!” He said, “You, sir, get in the wheelbarrow.” The man bolted and ran the other direction. What was wrong? The man “believed” that Blondine could put a man, some other man, into the wheelbarrow, but he wasn’t willing to *trust* Blondine to take *him* across. Likewise, this third element of saving faith is often neglected. You must choose to *depend* on or *trust* in Jesus.

## A Complete Definition of Saving Faith

### Understanding

God is holy and just and cannot tolerate or overlook my sin.

God is loving and has given His life in exchange for mine.

God is gracious and wants to give me eternal life.

### Agreeing

I am a sinner and need a savior.

### Trusting

I am willing to depend on Jesus to take my sins and death, and I want to receive His righteousness and eternal life.

Another word that is used in the Bible to describe this decision is the word “repent.” “Except ye *repent*, ye shall all . . . perish” (Luke 13:5). The word “repent” means *to change your mind*.

Maybe you’ve been thinking that your sin isn’t that bad, or maybe you’ve thought that you could do enough good to counteract your sin. You’re going to have to change your mind about that. You have to make a choice. Will you continue to trust yourself and your way of thinking, or will you transfer your trust to Jesus?

Imagine two chairs side by side. The one on the left represents yourself and your own efforts to get to Heaven, and the one on the right represents the finished work of Christ. If you’re sitting in the chair representing self, what must you do to transfer your dependence to the chair representing Christ? You have to get out of one chair and sit in the other. In order to transfer your dependence to God’s grace for salvation, you have to stop depending on what you can do. *It is a decision*. Just like someone would have to get in Blondine’s wheelbarrow to demonstrate real dependence on his ability to take him across, you have to *decide* to trust Jesus alone.

What if a person decides to sit in both chairs? Is he really trusting in either chair? No! When a person tries to trust in Jesus and in his own efforts, he is really showing that he doubts that Jesus is enough. Saving faith is choosing to trust Christ’s payment and nothing else. It’s a transaction, an exchange. You trust Christ’s work on the cross, and He gives to you forgiveness of sins (our earned record), His perfect righteousness (His earned record), and eternal life.

There is a point of no return on the Niagara River where the current from the falls is too powerful for a boat to navigate safely. If a boat goes past that point, it is bound to be pulled by the current over the roaring falls. Imagine a man in a rowboat absent-mindedly crossing that line. Realizing what he has done, he tries to turn back to safety, but it is too late. No matter how hard he rows, he is still being pulled inch-by-inch closer to impending doom. Suppose someone on the shore sees his plight and expertly throws a rope across his lap. *Now he has a choice to make*. Will he continue his own self-efforts only to eventually plunge to sure destruction, or will he drop the oars of self-effort and trust in the safety of the rope? What would you do? ☞



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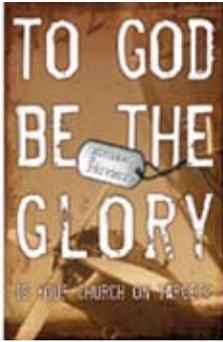


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## *To God Be the Glory: Is Your Church on Target?*

Michael R. Privett

(Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2005)

94 pages

This review begins with a disclaimer. I have known Michael Privett for about twenty years. He grew up in Engleside Baptist Church of Alexandria, Virginia, where BWM Trustee Dr. E. Wayne Thompson was his pastor. I had the privilege of preaching a meeting for him at Faith Baptist Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. If I reveal some bias in this review, you will understand the reason.

Brother Privett went to Williamsburg and planted a church after he completed his graduate studies at Bob Jones University. He founded and now pastors Faith Baptist Church in that city. This book is the result of his Doctor of Ministry writing project at BJU. Pastor Privett challenges pastors and church planters from Scripture and his experience in Williamsburg.

The author states his thesis in clear fashion:

My burden is to help all Christians—especially church planters, missionaries, preachers, and local church leaders—to avoid aimless years of church ministry bouncing around between the influence of church growth gurus, popular church trends, and pastoral peer pressure. Many churches today are emphasizing psychology over theology, popularity over priorities, tradition over truth, and crowds over consecration. An honest and diligent study of and realignment with God's Word will result in a biblically based reason for the existence of your local church. (vii)

Part One of the book consists of chapter one, "The Glory of God." Privett argues that the glory of God is the *raison d'être* for local churches. The chapter provides a brief, simple, but adequate theological survey of the glory of God as Scripture reveals it. The chapter concludes by setting an agenda for making the local church

a God-glorifying institution. Privett speaks of glorifying God in worship services, music ministry, teaching and preaching, interpersonal relationships, church administration, church financial administration, maintenance and grounds upkeep, and the church's outreach ministries. The subhead dealing with interpersonal relationships constitutes an all-too-brief but thought-provoking study on Biblical teaching concerning unity in the local church.

Part Two of the book includes chapters two through seven, which are devoted to evangelism, instruction, fellowship, worship, prayer, and equipping believers, in that order. Privett accurately relates each of these functions to God's glory.

The book ends with a conclusion, two appendices, and an illustrative target.

The strengths of this book lie in its clear focus, solid Biblical base, and lucid style. Dr. Privett planted a church in the United States, but I believe this book is worthy reading for church planters in any culture. He deals with timeless Biblical principles that apply to the work in any country.

There is no place where I disagree with Privett in any matter of substance. The only criticism I can make of the book grows from one of its strengths. The brevity and simplicity of the book makes it *too brief* in some points. As I read the sections on the glory of God, unity in the local church, fellowship, and worship, I found myself wishing the author had gone into more detail. The book will challenge you to further study of some of the Biblical themes. It will also lead you to reflect on how you will implement the Bible principles into your own ministry.

Altogether, you will wish the author had said more, rather than being relieved that he quit. I recall hearing a humorist once say, "It's better that something be good and over, than rotten and still going on!" This book is certainly good, but it is too brief. I believe church planters everywhere will profit from reading it.

Dr. Fred Moritz is an FBFI Board Member and the Executive Director of Baptist World Mission.

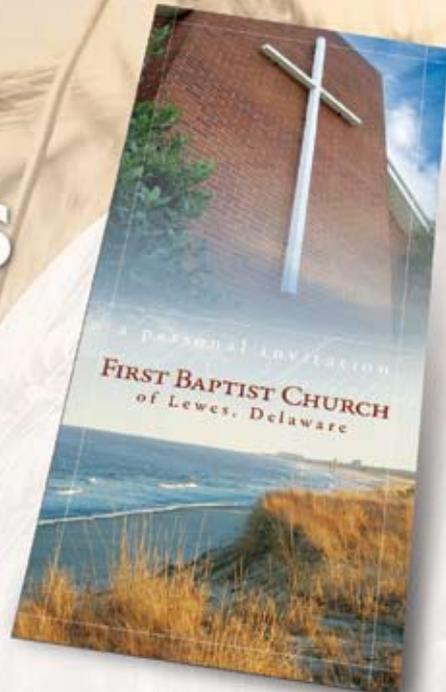
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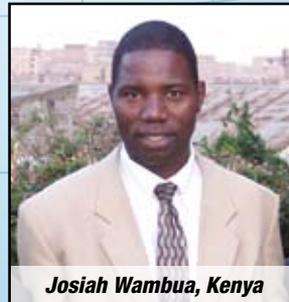
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## Questions about Imprecatory Prayers

Dear Dr. Vanhetloo,

I am currently reading the Book of Psalms in my personal devotions and can't help but be surprised by the vindictiveness of many of its parts. For example, in Ps. 104:35a: "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more." This is a far cry from "love your enemies," which Jesus taught. Psalm 109 is a similar example. Obviously, David did not view himself as a "sinner" or "wicked" (which of course EVERYONE is) at the time he wrote this. I realize that 2 Timothy 3:16 reminds us that "all Scripture is profitable," but I need some help in understanding that when I read many of the Psalms. I already have a hard enough time loving my enemies and not wishing vengeance on them. I guess we need to keep in mind that Jesus contradicted some of the Old Testament when He preached (e.g., in the Sermon on the Mount)? Any thoughts? Thanks.

Several replies:

1. Though David wrote many of the Psalms and they passed through his thought system, the real author of the Psalms is God. God never contradicts Himself. We "make" contradictions or Satan instills them in our minds. Until we start our first class in Heaven, we will have deficient understanding of God's perfect revelation. Until then, we accept what we can by faith and await full comprehension later.

2. Jesus is God. Neither in Heaven eternally nor while on this earth has He contradicted His Father. Rather, we should realize that He gave us guidance for correct understanding of the Old Testament. What is recorded is for our admonition. Jesus could speak with certainty; we can only approximate the full truth He comprehended. The Holy Spirit can guide us into all truth. The fullness of that truth will not be radically different from the clear, simple comprehension of the "ordinary" men who heard Jesus speak.

3. As I look at Psalm 104:35, I think immediately of "Thy kingdom come." This is not some evil desire for retribu-

tion, but a longing that all men and all the earth honor the Creator. It is a request that God through His directing of circumstances halt the intents of the ungodly and in His own good time establish His own kingdom on earth. Some of God's ways are temporal (Ps. 104:29). Those who know the Lord have great cause to exalt Him (Ps. 104:31-35). The closing invitation is that all praise the Lord. That's still an invitation to the ungodly to get right.

4. Retribution is a desire for personal revenge on another, for our pride, not for God's honor. It often is expressed as getting even—"You stole a sheep from me, I'll steal two from you, and we'll be even"—with the retribution usually exceeding the offense, real or imagined. We should desire justice, not retribution. Innocence or guilt is to be determined by proper authority. If guilty, proper restoration (one sheep for one sheep) is determined by proper authority. Our hearts should long for justice, not retaliation.

5. In Psalm 109 David is clearly praying that God will uphold His standards of righteousness. He is not asking that he be God's tool to destroy the ungodly, but that God will so direct circumstances that evildoers will be thwarted. (We desperately need that today too.) David himself realized his need as a sinner (vv. 21-31), fully dependent on the grace of God. We can still love our enemies—that is, desiring the best for them—at the same time as we pray that God will offset their evil inclinations.

6. Throughout His ministry Jesus contradicted many wrong teachings based on wrong interpretations of the Old Testament. The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed. Jesus did not bring a new message nor a contradictory message; He set forth the correct understanding of the Old Testament (at twelve years of age already!). His disciples were slow of learning, as we are yet today. The Holy Spirit can give us illumination, but not so that we can speak as authoritatively as Jesus did. We do our best, and He uses us for His glory.

Warren Vanhetloo, A.B., B.D., Th.M., Th.D., D.D., is Adjunct Instructor in and Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Calvary Baptist Seminary in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. He now resides in Michigan.

How often do we attempt work for God to the limit of our incompetency rather than to the limit of God's omnipotency. —Hudson Taylor

Uncommonly weaned from the world today; my soul delighted to be a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. —David Brainerd, journal entry

In the case at Corinth (with respect to the offender of I Corinthians 5:4, 5) we see the Apostle Paul's principle of mutual responsibility. The difficulty with us is that we cannot appreciate this doctrine of mutual responsibility. . . . A Chinese church would not be surprised if the Apostle upbraided them with complicity if they failed to excommunicate an offender. —Roland Allen

The missionaries taught us to read, but the Communists gave us the books. —Gandhi's grandson

The greatest mistake of the Christian Church has been to put her money into buildings instead of the printed message. —Oswald J. Smith

Anywhere, provided it be forward. —David Livingstone

The greatest foes of missions are prejudice and indifference, and ignorance is the mother of them both. —Henry Martyn

The church which ceases to be evangelistic will soon cease to be evangelical. —Alexander Duff

The Chinese pushed back into obscurity the gods in one of their largest temples, and cleaned and fixed over for our use the part that had been occupied by them. —Rosalind Goforth

Christian life properly began with baptism. . . . Till that decisive step was taken he could not be more than a friendly heathen. —Gwatkin, *Early Ecclesiastical History*

For the Christians the spread of the doctrine of salvation was the highest and most sacred duty. —Dr. Friedlander, *Roman Life and Manners*

Give according to your income lest God make your income according to your giving. —Oswald J. Smith

You have one business on earth—to save souls. —John Wesley

The teaching of the Gospel is not a mere intellectual instruction: it is a moral process, and involves (demands) a moral response. If then we go on teaching where that moral response is refused, we cease to preach the Gospel; we make the teaching a mere education of the intellect. —Roland Allen

A very wealthy man was sitting in his pew, but as the offering plate came along he indicated to the usher that it was not his practice to give anything. "Then," said the usher, "put in your hand and help yourself. This money is for the heathen." —Source unknown



“ . . . the problem is, I started my own special interest group years ago and I'm still the only member . . . ”

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

## A Testimony of God's Goodness: Because His Compassions Fail Not

**Priscilla Marsceau**

I will never forget the morning of Friday, September 15, 2006. I'd seen my husband and eleven-year-old son off to work and school, my seven-year-old was still asleep, and I had a few moments of quiet for my morning Bible reading. I sat in my rose-pink armchair, Bible in lap, and opened to where I had stopped reading the day before—Leviticus 10.

Now, I must tell you, I haven't always studied my Bible every day. By God's grace, I accepted Christ as my Savior at the age of four. That may seem young to you, but around our home, things like learning to love God and live for Him were part of everyday conversation. Because of that, I had an early awareness that I was a sinner. I knew that my sin separated me from God. My parents made sure I understood what I was doing when I told them I wanted to ask Jesus to save me from my sin. They helped me pray to God for forgiveness, and they taught me how to let Jesus be in charge in my life.

God was good to give me their wise teaching, for He used that teaching to give me trust in Him that caused me to never doubt that He had saved me. I know He loves me, and I love Him. I have also known His leading in my life over the years, and I have desired to serve Him with my life. It has been more than forty years since the Lord saved me, and I have read my Bible during that time; however, I am sad to say, there have been times when I haven't read my Bible very faithfully. Even now, although I like to sit and soak in the Word, I am not a marathon reader. Instead, I have learned to aim for consistency and paying attention.

So when I opened my Bible to Leviticus 10 that September morning, I was eager to see what God would teach me, because I had seen Him work in my heart and life during the year leading up to that time. He had helped me to change in three very specific areas—three big areas that pertained to my attitude and actions. The third of the three changes is important to explain a little.

*It came one Sunday morning in church, as Pastor closed the invitation. I do not remember Pastor's exact words, but he encouraged those in the congregation to let go of that thing that was hindering their fellowship with God. I was not surprised at what came to my mind, for the Holy Spirit had spoken to me about it many times before, and each time I had done the same thing I did that morning—I justified my attitude and actions, told myself that I was okay, and that this was not the Holy Spirit speaking to me. Pastor's next words might just as well have*

*been God's. Pastor asked us to consider what it would take, what God would need to do to get our attention. In my heart, God's question came: "What if this thing I ask you to change—this thing you think does not affect anyone—what if it somehow affects your youngest son's ability to see his need of salvation?"*

*That cut straight to my heart. Not my son! Not my little man whose hearing limitations make him work so hard to understand everything already. This was serious. This prompting I had ignored for so long was God's Holy Spirit. I knew it in that moment, because in my own selfish thinking, I had certainly never considered that my son's salvation could be at stake. My immediate heart response then, after years of receiving those prompts, was to tell God with all sincerity that I would make that change. I could not take the chance that some attitude or action of mine would keep my own child from realizing his need of a Savior.*

*I knew that as one of God's children the case had just been made plain that I had to make that change. However, my relief at knowing I would at last make that change, and my immediate peace of heart about it, were not the end of the matter. God further showed me the depths of my selfishness, in that still, small voice that I had ignored for so long and so well. In that instant, I saw my Savior hanging on the cross in shame for my sins. God's voice, in my thankless heart, said, "You would make that change for your own son's sake, but you wouldn't make that change for My Son's sake?" A wave of shame washed over me as I realized just how much I had imposed on God's grace and goodness by ignoring His prompting in this matter.*

*I had been willing to let sin stay in my life by pretending it wasn't there and glossing over the seriousness of doing so. I had been almost prideful in my admissions to others that I had a long way to go to be what God wanted me to be, when all the while I wasn't really trying to be what God wanted me to be in the areas in which He was speaking to me. That day, by God's grace, I sought His forgiveness for my selfishness and pride, and He helped me to follow through on that particular change.*

In addition to the changes God had been making in my heart and life, there was another reason that morning that I was eager to see what God would teach me. The year leading up to that point had been full of crises, one falling on top of the other. As has been said by others countless times before, God uses those times of crisis

to make our hearts more tender to Him and His leading. Well, that was my heart that morning. I was sincerely seeking to know why God was allowing certain things in my life. However, as I looked at Leviticus 10, in the back of my mind was the thought that it was going to be a dry old read. Even though I know that God can speak to our hearts from any part of His Word, I wasn't sure if there was much in that passage that God could use in my heart that day. Nonetheless, I was determined to at least read. I decided I would leave it to God to give me that special message that would help me for the day.

So there I sat in my rose-pink armchair, Bible in lap, reading the story of Nadab and Abihu offering "strange fire" in their incense offering before the Lord. I hit verse 5 and realized I had lost my focus, so I headed back to verse 1. (Thanks, Mom, for teaching me to do that. Thanks to all of the other teachers and preachers who also reminded me to do that.) I put the day's responsibilities—the laundry, the notes to write, the floors to clean—out of my mind and started again. When I hit verse 5 this time, I had lost my focus again, but at least I had kept it through verse 2. Okay, do-over at verse 2.

There was a third do-over, also at verse 2. "Lord," I prayed, "I am reading how You destroyed Aaron's sons because they disobeyed You. I know now that there is something You want to teach me here today. Please help me to see it."

Finally, on the fourth time of starting back where I had lost my focus, I really read verse 3. Moses was reminding Aaron how God had said: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." I nodded to myself. "What words of comfort," I thought. However, after reading it three times and missing it, I thought I should read it three times paying attention to it. It was then that the Lord presented a different emphasis: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me . . ." "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me . . ." The Lord was giving me the emphasis on the "WILL" in a way that meant He fully intended to be sanctified in me. He would do whatever it took to be sanctified in me. That startled me a little.

I knew that "sanctify" means to consecrate or set apart. "I WILL be set apart in them that come nigh me . . ." How did that apply to me? Was I not setting God apart? God directed me to Exodus 30 to see more about the importance of the incense offering. It was to be offered on the incense altar. God had said it was the place "where I will meet with thee."

Now, I know that God does not require us to burn

incense on an altar anymore. But the "where I will meet with thee" meant something. Where does God meet with me? Was God showing me something about my worship of Him when I go to church? Wait! For those who have drawn nigh to God in salvation, for Christians, God's indwelling Spirit meets with us every moment of the day in our hearts. Was God showing me that I was not setting apart His Spirit's "meeting" with me? After God's work in my heart of earlier weeks and months, was I still trifling with God's Holy Spirit?

God directed me to James 4:8: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

"What words of comfort," I thought again, and I almost stopped there.

God's Spirit prompted me on through the last part of James 4:8. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

As is so often the case, it was about that time in my studies that I heard my seven-year-old rousing from sleep. Soon he would demand my attention. I stopped my pondering and finished the chapter. My prayer that day was from a heart still tender from so much that God was teaching me. I earnestly asked God to

**help me listen to His Spirit, and to not be flippant in response to His leading.**

The Lord wasn't finished with me that day, even though I had to get on with the business of the day. Throughout the day, it seemed that at every turn, God was showing me some other area in which I was either cavalier or complacent. **I did a better job of recognizing His Spirit's prompting that day, after the plain talk God had given me that Sunday morning when there was a change I needed to make.** Now God was free to clean out the old barn and show me even more changes He wanted me to make.

I have often told my boys that the stretch of Wade Hampton Boulevard from Greer to Greenville is God's school of patience for their mom. If you had seen me that day on the way to pick up my oldest son from school, you might have wondered why I was crying. As God worked in my heart throughout that day, the tears came. He examined me in my attitudes that flowed into every action I made in a day's time. He shone the light of His truth on what I was hearing, where I was going, what I was seeing, what I was doing, and what I was saying. Where I thought I was tender to Him and His will, He showed me I was callous. Where I thought I was trusting the work of His Son, He showed me that I was self-

Continued on next page

*When I realized the state of my Christian walk, I was amazed that He was able to get through to me at all, because there is none so blind as she who will not see.*

## Ladies' Circle (Continued)

sufficient. Where I thought I was teachable in the way of His Spirit, He showed me I was unyielding. In so many areas, He showed me that I was imposing not only on His grace and goodness, but also on His mercy. I was reminded over and over again that "it is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22).

I was humbled that day to think that God would even bother to get through to me. When I realized the state of my Christian walk, I was amazed that He was able to get through to me at all, because there is none so blind as she who will not see. As I think about it, I have a funny mental image of an angel announcing on the heavenly intercom, "Angels, rejoice. There has been a breakthrough in a tough area of Christianity. Angels, rejoice. There has been a breakthrough down on Gap Creek Road."

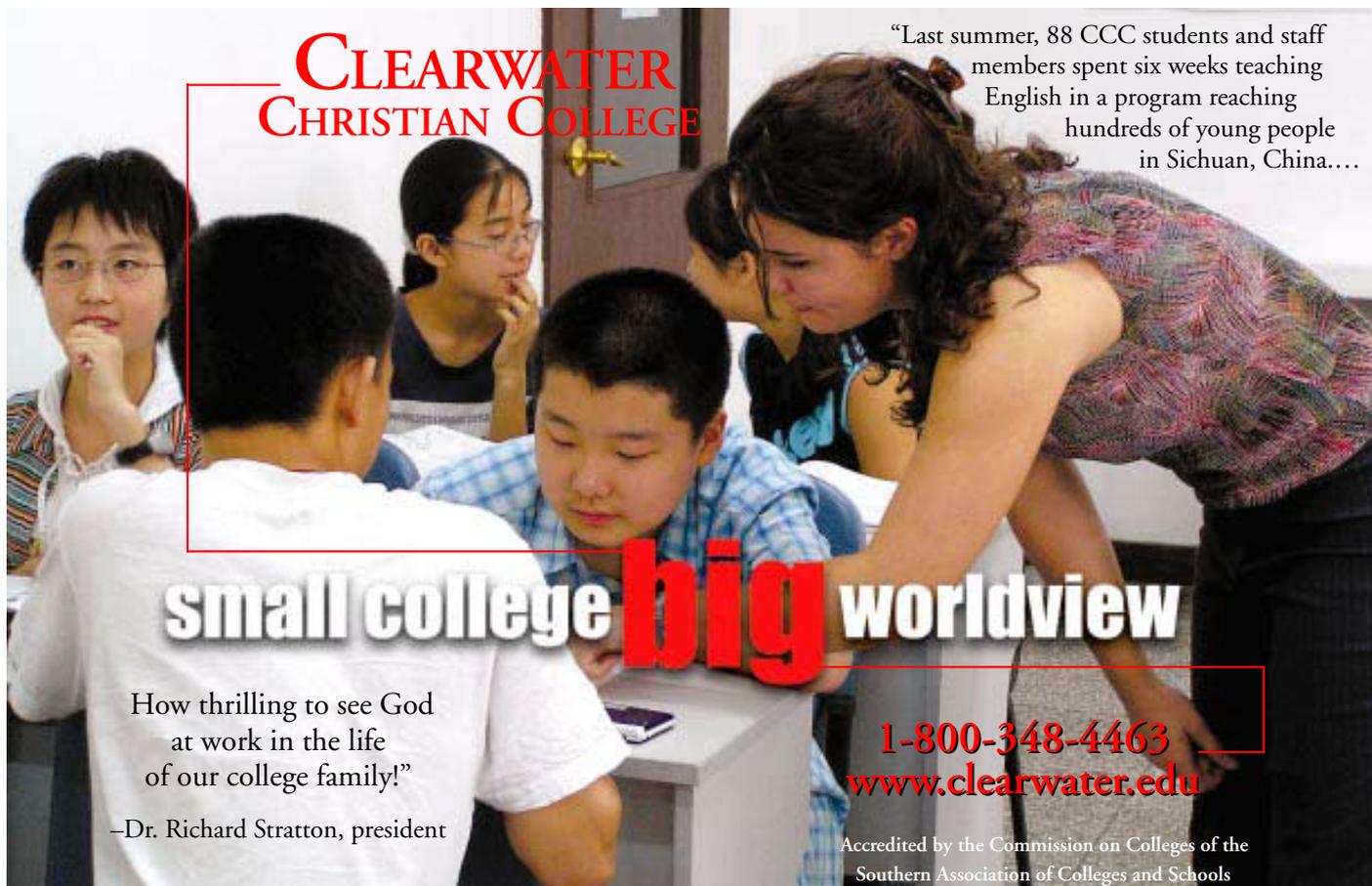
I had started the day sincerely seeking to know why God was allowing certain things in my life. That He

took the time to gently and earnestly show me what He wanted me to see has become very precious to me. He showed me, with such tenderness, that when I have a hard time trusting Him about things that are important to me, it is because I am not first willing to trust Him about things that are important to Him. His work in me revived my heart in a way that renewed my faith. I realized that He was allowing certain things in my life to get my attention on Him. I used to say I knew that, but that day, I truly knew that. I had lived my Christian life saying I have drawn nigh to Him, yet at some point in my Christian walk I had stopped setting Him apart the way I should. And if I draw nigh to Him, whether it be in salvation, in surrender, or in service, He fully intends to be sanctified in me. I cannot blithely say I draw nigh to Him and then not allow Him to do His work. He wills to be sanctified in this one who draws nigh to Him. He will be sanctified, and whatever it takes for Him to do that will bring glory to Him. He will be glorified.

I thank my Heavenly Father that He patiently worked on me until I was willing to get rid of the big roadblocks that hindered my fellowship with and service for Him—roadblocks rooted in callousness and complacency. I thank Him for so carefully impressing on me the seriousness of His Spirit's leading in my heart and life. I thank Him for His compassions that fail not. I also thank Him for the following words from the hymn "O Jesus, I Have Promised" by John E. Bode. I will close with them, for they speak with such clarity of my own need to hear His Spirit, and to listen, and do.

O let me hear Thee speaking in accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of selfwill.  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control!  
O speak, and make me listen,  
Thou Guardian of my soul.

Priscilla Marsceau and husband, Dan, live in Greer, South Carolina. They have 2 sons, Nicolas and Nathanael.



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## I Have Finished My Course (Part Two)

**Jerry Sivnksty**

In our last issue we addressed the statement of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight." I stated in the last article that the key to fighting a good fight for the Lord is dedication. Now I want to state that the key to finishing the course for the Lord is endurance.

When I was in high school I played baseball for three years as an outfielder. One day during my junior year, the baseball coach made a bet with the track coach that I could outrun the entire track team. I was fast, but only in the hundred-yard dash. The track coach said to the baseball coach and me, "Well, if Sivnksty is so fast, let's see how fast he is in the four-forty."

I turned to my coach and said, "What's the four-forty?" He told me that it was a fourth of a mile and asked if it would be a problem for me. I foolishly replied, "No problem!" I lined up against the entire track team and took off running full speed like I was running the hundred-yard dash. Everything was fine until I came to the last stretch of the race. All of a sudden, my legs felt like fifty-gallon drums, and my feet felt like inner tubes. When I crossed the finish line, I passed out. I was revived after a while, and when I opened my eyes, all I saw were heads spinning in a circle. Then I got the dry heaves—I thought I was going to die! I had pushed my body beyond what it could handle because I didn't have the endurance to run that distance.

It has been my observation in the ministry that many individuals are not going to finish the course because of a lack of endurance. At first the ministry seems exciting and glamorous with all kinds of blessings in store. But when difficulties come and the gray clouds of persecution loom overhead, many just give up because they can't handle the pressure of trials. Proverbs 24:10 says, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." It has grieved my heart to know of many people who were once on fire for the Lord, had great knowledge of the Scriptures, and were gifted in their ministry but are no longer serving the Lord. They faced some temptation or trial and said, "It is just not worth it! I'm through with the ministry."

James 1:2 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." The word "divers" means "many"; the word "temptations" means "testings." Every one of us goes through many testings. The Lord doesn't send these to destroy us but to develop us; He doesn't allow these trials in our lives to make us bitter but to make us better for His

service. The winds of adversity are directed by the omnipotent hands of God. In 2 Timothy 2:3 Paul said, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." A soldier's endurance is developed through hard discipline; likewise, a Christian's endurance is developed through various trials and testings.

Several years ago I saw a longtime friend of mine, Brent Brondyke, when I held meetings in his church. I was shocked to see how much weight he'd lost; he told me that he'd begun running and had just completed a marathon. Well, that inspired me to try to run a marathon—which, by the way, is 26.2 miles. I have been running for more than thirty-five years, but not long distances. In preparation for running a marathon, a person needs to build up his body by running three or four times a week. Usually he'll do three short-distance runs and then a long-distance run of ten-to-fourteen miles at the end of the week.

A good friend of mine, Dr. Ken Hay of the Wilds, was talking with me at a luncheon and inquired whether I'd run a marathon yet. I told him I hadn't but had run a half-marathon. Then he said to me, "Well, Jerry, you will never run a marathon." Now, he may have said that as a joke or as a challenge; whichever the case, his words burned in my soul and made me even more determined to run a marathon. As I continued my training, many times I would get tired and want to stop. Then Dr. Hay's words would ring in my mind, and I would push myself harder—I would run faster and longer. I also cut out certain foods I knew would hinder me. Then on August 26, 2006, in the state of Michigan, I ran 26.2 miles! What a celebration! What an incredible feeling to accomplish such a huge goal, and only those who have run a marathon can relate. I'm thankful for what Dr. Hay said to me; it spurred me on to reach my goal.

How much more should the Scriptures inspire us to finish the course for our Lord! Paul said in Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If you are discouraged and want to quit the Christian race, I challenge you to allow the Lord to build up the spiritual endurance you need to serve Him. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

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## NEHEMIAH, PART 2:

**O**pposition and delays in the work of God are always frustrating. It is easy to overemphasize our timetables and overestimate our importance to the work of God. We are short on time and are frustrated by delay and opposition; God is not.

The opposition and delays in rebuilding the temple and city of Jerusalem were essential for accomplishing God's purposes. Read that sentence again. A century before God's people faced the exasperating antagonism of their enemies and all the plots and ploys designed to hamper their efforts to build a work for God, the Lord had already issued a startling prophecy that took all those impediments and interruptions into account. It was a messianic prophecy of mammoth proportions and intimate implications, "that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Dan. 9:25).

From the command to rebuild the city until Messiah the Prince, 483 Jewish years (476 solar years) were to elapse. They did—from Artaxerxes' commissioning of Nehemiah in 445 BC to rebuild the city (Neh. 2:5–8) until the culmination of Messiah's earthly ministry in AD 30, after which He was executed ("cut off," Dan. 9:26). This prophecy came to Daniel from Gabriel (Dan. 9:21) in 539 BC (Dan. 9:1). Decades before the difficulties encountered in rebuilding the temple and the city, God had already determined a timetable that factored in those delays. God kept everything on His schedule.

The Book of Nehemiah divides into two main sections: (1) the physical restoration of Jerusalem (chapters 1–7), followed by (2) the spiritual reformation of God's people (chapters 8–13). This column explores the second division of Nehemiah.

### Word and Worship (8)

The security of the finished walls and the settlement of the people in their ancestral locations (7:73) frees the community to concentrate on the most important thing for their individual and corporate survival—the words of God. Judah gathers on her civil New Year's Day (Rosh Hashanah), but not for feasting or fireworks. The people petition Ezra (8:1) to bring the Book of the Law of Moses and to read it to the community of men, women, and

children gathered to give it an eager and earnest hearing (8:2–8). This was appropriate, since God had commanded that the Law be read on this day every seventh year (Deut. 31:10–13). In fact, from the exodus in 1446 to this very day in 445 was 1001 years—a multiple of seven years.

When they wept under the Law's conviction of their sin, the leaders reminded them that this was to be a festive occasion (8:9–12). Grief and sorrow can lead to a despair that paralyzes good resolve; what *strengthens* God's people to obey is not grief over their sins but "the joy of the LORD" over His goodness to them (8:10). So they made it a festive occasion. Why they celebrated is exemplary and convicting to God's people of every age: "because they had understood [God's] words that were declared unto them" (8:12).

As the Law continued to be read the next day (8:13), they discovered the details of the Feast of Tabernacles (8:14–16) and took immediate and enthusiastic steps to renew their obedience to this important observance (8:17, 18). These were essential times of revival for the people; and the need for revival quickly became apparent.

### Dedication to the Covenant (9–12a)

Two days after the completion of the Feast of Tabernacles, the community was called again (9:1). This time it was a solemn assembly to confess their sin and to listen for several hours to more of God's Law (9:2, 3). A Levite-led communal prayer rehearsed God's faithfulness to them throughout their history in contrast to their habitual unfaithfulness (9:4–30) and expressed gratitude for His goodness in bringing them back into the land (9:31–37). The ultimate "purpose" of the prayer comes at the conclusion: a rededicatory covenant to be loyal to their God (9:38).

Chapter 10 records those who signed the covenant reaffirmation, along with an oath, a curse, and the terms of the covenant itself. Specifically, they agreed to (1) avoid intermarriage with pagans (10:30); (2) observe the Sabbath (10:31); (3) pay a self-imposed temple tax (10:32); (4) tithe their firstfruits (10:35); (5) observe the law of the firstborn (10:36); and (6) support the ministers of the temple (10:37). Ten percent of Judah's population was relocated by lot into Jerusalem (11:1–24), outlying villages are identified (11:25–36), and the names of the Levites underscore the continuity of the priestly line and ministry (12:1–26).

# REFORMING MESSIAH'S PEOPLE

## Dedication of the Wall (12b-13a)

The official dedication of the wall of Jerusalem is described (12:27-43). In conjunction with that celebration, supervisors were appointed over the storerooms built into the walls to house the offerings to sustain the priests and ministers (12:44-47). On that day as well the Book of Moses was read again and its call to separation immediately applied (13:1-3). Why that was such a crucial issue becomes immediately apparent in the "flashback" that follows (13:4ff.).

A "central emphasis" of both Ezra and Nehemiah "is the insistence that the people of God [must be] the people of the book. Ezra was sent precisely because he had the law of God in his hand and had made it his purpose to teach this law in Israel (Ezra 7:6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 21, 25)." God's Word is given an even more conspicuous place in Nehemiah (8:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 18; 9:3, 26, 29, 34; 10:28, 29, 34, 36; 12:44; 13:1, 3). The first public act in Nehemiah's city is that the people gather to hear the great reading of Scripture," and it "is the center of all that is done" (J. A. Motyer, *EBC*, I:281).

## The Nonnegotiability of Separation (13b)

Things deteriorate rapidly in the absence of strong and consistent leadership. In 432 BC, after twelve years as governor, Nehemiah left Jerusalem to report to King Artaxerxes back in Susa (13:6; cf. 1:14 and 5:6). Meanwhile, Judah revealed that she was full of the same old people with the same old sinful proclivities.

Now "before this" dedication ceremony described in chapter 12, Eliashib the priest, who was related to the infamous Tobiah by marriage, used his authority over the temple storerooms to furnish a residence for this enemy of God's people right within the very temple precincts (13:4, 5). Remember Tobiah? Reread 2:10, 19, and 4:3, 7, 8. Tobiah had wormed his way into Jerusalem after all, for he "was related by marriage to some of Jerusalem's leading citizens (Neh. 6:17-18) and . . . managed to take advantage of those connections" (Merrill). Eliashib was a good man (3:1), but good men do evil (13:7) when they compromise the well-being of God's people for popularity or personal reasons. Such compromise infects future generations as well (13:28).

Nehemiah explains that all this came about in his absence (13:6). But upon his return, Nehemiah's response

was rigorous, immediate, and unambiguous (13:7-9). Talk about a militant separatist! This would be the equivalent of a preacher returning from an absence to his home church, only to discover that the assistant pastor had invited his Mormon brother-in-law (who also happened to be related to a couple of the deacons as well) to sit on the platform and participate in the service—and then literally throwing the Mormon off the platform, chair and all. How rude and ungentlemanly! How embarrassing and unpopular! How tactless, tasteless, and un-Christian! (Read John 2:13-16 and Mark 11:15-18.) For Nehemiah, discreet diplomacy was not an option. Too much was at stake.

The problems that developed in Nehemiah's absence went deeper than Tobiah's infiltration. Nehemiah also discovered upon his return that the Levites had been neglected (13:10-14), the Sabbath was being violated (13:15-22), and intermarriage quickly became a serious and ongoing problem (13:23-30). His readiness to "contend" (13:11, 17, 25) and warn (13:15, 21) and enforce (13:13, 19, 22) and worse (13:25, 28) underscore his sober and single-minded fixation on serving and pleasing his holy God (13:14, 22, 29, 30). Like its heightened emphasis on God's Law, the Book of Nehemiah strikes an even more emphatic posture than Ezra on the separation issue.

The problems Nehemiah confronts in chapter 13 testify that everything Judah swore that they would never do again (ch. 10) began showing up all over again before barely a decade had passed. The failure of God's people yet again to keep their covenant commitments to God in spite of the solemnest of vows is a failure woven into the warp and woof of their entire history and rehearsed throughout the prayer of confession in chapter 9. That failure is part of the preparatory message of the whole Old Testament—from the Pentateuch to the Prophets to Ezra-Nehemiah. This "old covenant" will never work—not because it is defective, but because man is radically and hopelessly flawed (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 8:8). Man needs more than external restoration if he is to keep God's requirements and measure up to the *imago Dei* in which he was created. He requires internal restoration, and only a *new* covenant can effect that inward restoration (Heb. 8-10).

## Conclusion

The Old Testament is the story of the Old Covenant. Focusing on the theme of restoration, Ezra-Nehemiah con-

Continued on next page

**At a Glance Continued**

cludes the chronology of the history of God's Old Covenant people with a sigh. The historical end of the Hebrew Old Testament is disappointing by design; it makes us yearn for something better and surer. As Ezra-Nehemiah concludes the chronology of Old Covenant history, Malachi (Nehemiah's contemporary) concludes the message of Old Covenant prophecy. Malachi is similarly disappointing, but simultaneously anticipatory. Nehemiah concludes on a note of severity, mixed with melancholy and apprehension. Malachi, too, is severe in his condemnation of Judah's sins. But Malachi mixes ominous warnings with divine promises, including the arrival of the Messenger of a New Covenant (Mal. 3:1-6)! In the meantime, despite the sins and shortcomings of His people, God will always retain a remnant (Mal. 4:1-6). So the record of the Old Covenant ends at once with a stark contrast between man's same old dismal failure and God's changeless goodness to His people and unswerving loyalty to His covenant. He will unfailingly accomplish His sovereign purposes, and He will do it through a new covenant.



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*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee..." (Isa. 26:3)*

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## To Die for Allah

In a televised kindergarten graduation from Gaza, the children displayed their learned values. The girls were dressed in white. Some were wearing butterfly wings. The boys were dressed in camouflage with black masks and toy guns.

The boys shout, "Allah Akbar [Allah is great]."

"Who is your role model?" the boys are asked.

"The Prophet," they respond.

"What is your path?"

"Jihad," they shout.

"What is your most lofty aspiration?"

"Death for the sake of Allah."

Find this article at <http://www.crosswalk.com/news/11542844/>.

## When Religion and Hollywood Mix

Ever since Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, it seems that Hollywood has been catering more and more to "Christian audiences." Walden Media joined with Walt Disney in producing *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, holding private screenings for church groups in 2005. Now, however, what Hollywood includes in the "Christian" genre is enough to make those who love Jesus Christ grimace.

The Fox Corporation has created Fox Faith; its purpose is to make movies with religious themes.

Among the newest releases is a movie called *Evan Almighty*, which touts the evils of global warming and the necessity of doing good for your neighbor.

A website named Ark Almighty has been launched on which people with needs can write, and others can sign up online to help with their needs.

The more secularized we become as Christians, the more profane our entertainment becomes. God deliver Christianity from such vanity.

Find this article at [www.nytimes.com/2007/05/28/business/media/28evan.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/28/business/media/28evan.html).

## United Methodists Seek a New Ruling

A member of the United Methodist clergy in Baltimore is seeking reinstatement to a Methodist congregation in the Baltimore area. The problem with the reinstatement? The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church has asked for a review of church law regarding legitimacy of transgendered pastors. The council will meet this October, and the decisions will be final. Mark Tooley, a member of the UMA Action stated, "I think instinctively most church people would say there are some theological problems with gender change, but they don't know how to articulate

the arguments and expect the church to offer teaching on this subject."

Find this article at [www.washingtontimes.com/metro/20070527-103641-9013r.htm](http://www.washingtontimes.com/metro/20070527-103641-9013r.htm).

## CCM Magazine Redefines Christian Music

CCM Magazine is well-known for its role in defining the Christian contemporary music industry. Its May 2007 issue is described by its own editors as "a historical step." CCM music will now no longer be labeled as a genre of music that focuses on Jesus; rather, it can be any style of music as long as the person claims to be a person of faith.

Initially CCM embraced just the sounds of the world; now it is embracing the lyrics and philosophies of secular music. The only requirement is that the music must be "faith-filled." What determines that, we are left to see later. Find Article at [www.ccmagazine.com/news/headlines/11539642/](http://www.ccmagazine.com/news/headlines/11539642/).

## Maranatha Chooses a New President

Dr. Chuck Phelps, FBFI board member, has been appointed president of Maranatha Baptist Bible College. Dr. Phelps plans to arrive on campus by mid-summer. His inauguration is planned for September 7 of this year. Dr. Phelps is the fourth president to serve at Maranatha. He is

replacing Dr. Dave Jaspers, who retired at the end of the 2006 school year.

Find this article at <http://www.mbbc.edu/page.aspx?m=2336>.

## The Gift of Tongues and the SBC

A recent Lifeway Research poll suggested that half of Southern Baptist pastors believe in a private prayer language (PPL). When asked "Do you believe that the Holy Spirit gives some people the gift of a special language to pray to God privately?" half of SBC pastors said "yes" and 43 percent said "no," while the rest responded "Don't know."

Alan Cross, an SBC pastor from Georgia, writes, "PPL is not the big deal. The big deal is this: Are we going to be a convention of churches that focuses on Jesus Christ and the participation of all of His saints in proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth, or are we only going to create a convention of theological elites who get to participate in God's mission, leaving all of those who see things a bit differently on side issues behind?"

"I pray that we will quickly embrace a perspective that says it matters far more what kind of person you are and how much you love Jesus than whether or not you completely agree with every jot and tittle of every side doctrine in the Bible as advocated by those

who happen to be in power at the time.”

Find this article at [www.christianpost.com/article/20070604/27782\\_Tongues\\_Survey\\_Fuels\\_Baptist\\_Debate.htm](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070604/27782_Tongues_Survey_Fuels_Baptist_Debate.htm).

### **Biola University Hires Ecumenical President**

Biola University has hired Dr. Barry H. Corey, who was Vice President for Education/Chief Academic Officer and Academic Dean at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Dr. Corey's ecumenical background includes his ordination as an Assemblies of God minister, his launching a program for the ordination of Episcopal priests, and his serving as pastor of the Greek Evangelical Church of Boston.

In 2005 Dr. Corey commented, “Evangelicals are not defined by a political party, by their views on when life begins or by their justification for the war in Iraq. Evangelicals are Democrats, Republicans and independents; they are conservatives, liberals and moderates; Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Christians; members of churches large and small.” (*Orlando Sentinel*, July 9, 2005)  
Find this article at <http://rightreason.ektos.com/archives/2007/05/biola-universit.html>. See also <http://www.biola.edu/news/articles/070510-announcement.cfm>.

### **A Right to Die**

In the wake of Jack Kevorkian's release from prison for second-degree murder (he poisoned a patient who had Lou Gehrig's disease), American pollsters are scrambling to provide data regarding a patient's right to die. A new AP-Ipsos poll indicates that 53% of Americans do not believe Kevorkian should have been jailed for his crimes. Only 40% supported his imprisonment. This same poll showed

## **NOTABLE QUOTES**

**T**here is a common worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and they think they have enough—a cheap Christianity which offends nobody, and requires no sacrifice—which costs nothing, and is worth nothing. —J. C. Ryle

**I** am not what I ought to be. I am not what I wish to be. I am not what I hope to be. Yet I can truly say I am not what I once was. By the grace of God I am what I am. —John Newton

**W**e hear continually of the thousand million heathens and Mohammedans living in midnight darkness, perishing for lack of the bread of life. We hear of five hundred millions of nominal Christians, the great majority of them almost as ignorant and indifferent as the heathen. We see millions in the Christian church, not ignorant or indifferent, yet knowing little of a walk in the light of God or of the power of a life fed by bread from heaven. —Andrew Murray

**T**he power of the Church for the preaching of the gospel to the heathen is paralysed by the scarcity of money and men; and all owing to the lack of effectual prayer which brings the Holy Spirit in power, first on ministers and believers, then on missionaries and the heathen. —Andrew Murray

**O**ur world has gone urban. In 1800, not one city in the Western world had over a million people. Only 3 percent of the world's population lived in a city larger than five thousand. By 1900, 14 percent lived in urban areas and this number jumped to 40 percent by 1980. By 2050 approximately 79 percent of the world's population will live in urban centers, with much of the growth coming from the urban explosion in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. —Matthew Recker

**W**e want things and we aren't sure that God will give them to us, so we put our trust in other gods. This is THE problem of the human heart—misplaced trust. We value, trust and love something in creation more than the Creator, and since there is nothing in creation that is intended to bear the weight of our trust, we are bound to live in fear. —Edward Welch

“**I** am the vine . . . ye are the branches.” By this statement He explains why He is so urgent that His disciples should be fruitful. The reason is, that they are the media through which He Himself brings forth fruit, serving the same purpose to Him that the branches serve to the vine. His own personal work had been to chose and train them,—to fill them, so to speak, with the sap of divine truth; and their work was now to turn that sap into grapes. —F. F. Bruce

that two-thirds of Americans believe there are situations in which a patient should be permitted to die, although the data is divided over whether or not a doctor should be permitted to assist the death process. Thirty-five percent of Americans believe suicide would be a legitimate option in a medical crisis.

Find this article at [www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/nation/4845793.html](http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/nation/4845793.html).

### **The New Baptist Covenant**

In order to present a more appealing tone to the world, some Baptists are preparing to present a new voice. There is little doubt that there are liberal theological and political motives within this group.

Bill Underwood, president of Mercer University in Atlanta and one of the main organizers of the covenant, said that “North America desperately needs a true Baptist witness” at the January announcement of the New Baptist Covenant. Why? In order to counter the judgmental image that many Americans have of Baptists.

The list of speakers at the New Baptist Covenant convocation, scheduled for January of 2008, includes former presidents Jimmy Carter (who initiated the movement) and Bill Clinton, former vice president Al Gore, and Children's Defense Fund founder Marian Wright Edelman.

Find this article at [http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070531/27723\\_New\\_Baptist\\_Covenant\\_Still\\_Criticized\\_as\\_Political%2C\\_Liberal.htm](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20070531/27723_New_Baptist_Covenant_Still_Criticized_as_Political%2C_Liberal.htm).

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

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

## Africa

**Rob Howell**

When we talk about Africa, we are really talking about two different Africas, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. The fourteen independent countries in North Africa are religiously and culturally Islamic. They lie within the so-called 10/40 Window and are largely unevangelized. Entering these countries as Christian missionaries is difficult and dangerous, as it is with many countries within the 10/40 Window.

South of the Sahara Desert lies the part of Africa that is more familiar to most people; it's also the region that generally comes to mind when referencing Africa. This is sub-Saharan Africa, forty-plus nations of various religious and cultural backgrounds. The historical religions of sub-Saharan Africa are commonly referred to as African Traditional Religions (ATR). Beliefs vary from tribe to tribe, but generally include acknowledgment of a high god and lesser deities, belief in good and evil spirits, confidence in the "witch doctor" as power broker and medium between the visible and invisible worlds, veneration of deceased ancestors, and spiritual causation of illness and calamity. Many Africans openly embrace ATR, while others implicitly do so as part of their cultural worldview. Christian missions has a long history in sub-Saharan Africa and, historical accuracy notwithstanding, is often viewed by Africans as intertwined with the colonial legacy.

Having lived in sub-Saharan Africa for seven years, I'd like to highlight a few trends that are pertinent to the missionary task of establishing indigenous assemblies of mature believers in this region of the world.

### **Growth of Cities**

While Africa still lags behind the world in general urbanization, her cities are growing rapidly. According to the UN, only 15% of Africans lived in cities in 1950, with that number jumping to 38% in 2000.<sup>1</sup> The number is projected to increase even further to 55% by 2030. But this is not Western city dwelling with the infrastructure necessary for sustaining the swelling numbers. These are unplanned settlements with massive numbers of people crammed into ramshackle and makeshift accommodations. This is open sewer ditches running alongside a maze of narrow pathways through such settlements. This is high and heinous crime spurred on by outrageous unemployment rates. Dreams of a better life in the big city rarely materialize. And in the process, the stability and social restraints of the village community are often replaced with the transience and debauchery of the city.

### **High Concentration of Youth**

Another trend across Africa is the high concentration

of young people. In Tanzania, for example, an astounding 45% of the population is under the age of fifteen. The median age is 17.7 years old.<sup>2</sup> Compare this to 20% under fifteen and a median age of 36.6 for the United States.<sup>3</sup> One reason for this is simply that African women bear more children than do women in the rest of the world. Another reason is the short life expectancy in Africa, ranging from the mid to upper forties. Whatever the cause, such a large population of young people presents a wonderful opportunity for gospel witness and, eventually, the establishment of strong Christian homes. This is key in a continent where lack of premarital purity fuels the devastating AIDS problem.

### **Entrenchment of Poverty**

Everybody knows that Africa is a poor continent. A simple Internet search reveals countless statistics that consistently rank eight-to-ten sub-Saharan countries among the top ten poorest, most underdeveloped, and least nourished nations on the planet. What does this mean for church planting in Africa, specifically the "self-supporting" plank of many missionary philosophies? I believe that, among other things, African churches can and should be self-supporting. But is it legitimate and loving to demand such without at least a consideration of the economic factors that undergird a self-supporting church in a particular area? For example, a few years back the Lord enabled me to assist a couple of local Bible Institute students in establishing a new church in a rural area. During the process we purchased a nearby farm and taught the young believers how to manage it. It's not a large or fancy farm, just a small plot of land that they use as means for supporting their pastor, which they have done now for two years. Not only that, they are preparing to use the proceeds from their farm to support a church-planting missionary sent out from their church. We need to think Biblically *and* creatively in using our God-given resources to accomplish a God-given task for the long haul.

Much more can be said about missions in Africa. May God be pleased to send more laborers into both the sub-Saharan and North African harvests!

Rob Howell is a missionary from Inter-City Baptist Church in Allen Park, Michigan, to Tanzania, East Africa. For questions or comments, email him at [rob@gbmtz.org](mailto:rob@gbmtz.org), or check out his website at [www.gbmtz.org](http://www.gbmtz.org).

<sup>1</sup><http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol15no1/151city.htm#p31graph>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tz.html>

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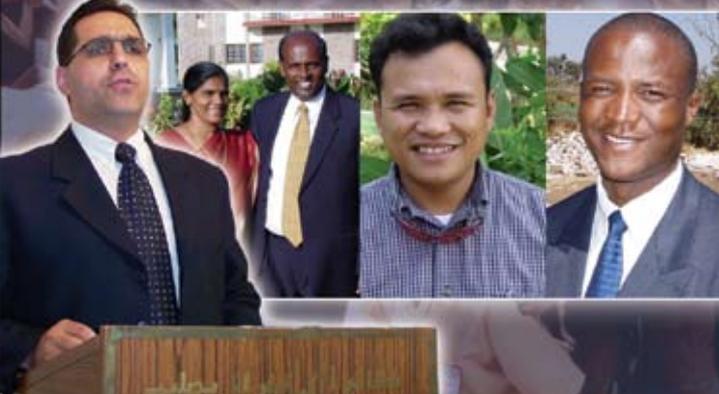


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## The Health Care Chaplaincy

David Cotner, FBFI Hospital Chaplain

I work as a Chaplain Resident at Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Florida, and am completing a one-year training program in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). CPE is designed to give clergy the professional training needed to minister to people of widely diverse religious beliefs and cultures. Baptist Hospital offers three types of CPE: (1) an Extended Unit consists of meeting two days a week for twenty weeks; (2) a Summer Unit is full time for eleven weeks; and (3) a Residency year, which is four units, is full time for one year. Four units of CPE are generally required in order to work as a chaplain in a health care setting.

My typical day at Baptist Hospital involves seminars and peer group sessions in the mornings and ministry to patients and hospital staff in the afternoons. In the seminars chaplains are taught the importance of integrating beliefs with practice and to recognize differences between patients' spiritual and emotional needs and differences from those of the chaplain. The peer group sessions give the chaplains opportunities to discuss their ministry and to fine-tune their gifts and abilities in pastoral care.

I have ministered to patients and staff in crisis situations such as automobile crashes, construction accidents, heart attacks, strokes, shootings, knife wounds, and suicide attempts. I have also had opportunities to minister to the chronically ill in the oncology ward, intensive care and cardiac units, and in the pre- and postoperative care units.

Patients, their families, and hospital staff experience a range of spiritual and emotional stressors during times of illness and injury. This provides opportunities to share the love and grace of God to people who would not otherwise be open to a minister. God often uses these times in people's lives to draw them closer to Himself and to present them with the opportunity to receive Him.

On a recent visit that lasted approximately three hours, the patient was a fifty-three-year-old male, a former police officer who had never spoken to anyone about the pain and loss he had experienced. Although he was admitted

for chest pain, he also suffered from severe facial seizures. These made him look insane and, at first, made me very uncomfortable.

When I entered the room and greeted the patient, he reached out his hand and said, "Hi, I'm Jeff." (I have changed his name to protect his anonymity.) At that moment he had a seizure. At first he could say only four or five words, and then he would have another seizure. These seizures seemed to really wear him out; when I asked, he said they did and that they caused severe pain to his neck and jaw.

I asked him whether I could stay and visit awhile, and he said he would like that. So I pulled up a chair next to his bed and sat down. He told me the doctors had given him many tests but could not figure out what had caused the seizures. He also said he was "an old retired cop" and that cops "keep things to themselves." I told him I understood law enforcement people because I had worked in law enforcement while in Bible college.

After that, he began to pour out his heart. He stated, "My dad died in 1982, and we were real close." Then he cried a little and added, "And I miss him." More tears flowed as we sat in silence for a minute. "My mom died a couple of months ago. It fell on me to make all the arrangements, you know, with the funeral home."

For the next ninety minutes Jeff talked about his mother and father, his sister who died a few months before his mother died, and his wife, who divorced him two months after Hurricane Ivan destroyed their home. He laughed and cried and got angry. He yelled and told funny stories.

He seemed to be sharing twenty-nine years of pain and sorrow and pleasure. He talked of relationships: some were good and some were bad. After about an hour of talking, he asked, "Did you notice it hasn't happened for an hour or so?"

"Yes," I said. "How do you feel?"

"I'm just real glad you stopped in here," he said. "I bet you didn't know what you were



Continued on next page

getting yourself into. My mother used to say I could take all afternoon to answer a 'yes or no' question." He laughed aloud. "Yeah, I feel real good."

He didn't talk for a minute, and then he said, "I don't know, but I'm glad I could get that stuff off my chest. You know what? I bet that twitching I've been doing has to do with keeping things to myself. I might have to find a church. You know, I was raised in church. You think they would have me back?"

"I don't know," I said, "but God will."

He smiled and said, "I hope so, preacher, I hope so. I know you have more people to see. Sorry I took your whole afternoon up."

"That's what I'm here for," I said.

At first, I had been scared to visit this patient. I had had no previous experience with any kind of seizures or facial twitching, and I really did not want to go into his room. I guess what scared me most was a fear of the unknown. I had no idea how to talk to this patient. However, after I realized my fear was probably unfounded, I went into the room anyway.

I learned that this patient was a normal person who just happened to have these weird-looking facial twitches. As it turned out, we had much more in common than I would have imagined. The fact that his twitching went away while we were talking surprised us both. Theologically, this event reminded me that I am learning how to offer pastoral care to more diverse people, people whom I previously felt it was impossible to minister to. I believe this event helped him to come to a point where he realized he needed God and needed to go back to church.

Chaplaincy is a wonderful ministry. It provides ministry opportunities that do not exist in the local church setting. It is a calling and a high privilege to serve God and people in this way. I challenge you to ask God if He would have you serve Him in health care chaplaincy.

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## City of Sin or City of Souls?

Jerry Walker

Christ's Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20 was an order to be fulfilled in the future and would impact the whole world. New York City is certainly a good place to consider that Commission—it's a global melting pot where churches need to be built and souls reached.

Over thirty years have passed since we started out in "Sin City" to establish New Testament churches. Back in 1971 those of us on the first BJU summer mission team spent eight to nine weeks there working in Manhattan out of a Fundamental Baptist Church on Broadway. Several years later three of the five men returned to plant churches in New York City. Over the next three decades other pastors answered the call, as did Paul in Acts 18:10 where the Lord said, "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." God's burden for cities is evident in Scripture; God-called young men can know that it is His will to reach a great metropolis such as New York.

When my wife, son, and I moved to Manhattan in 1974, there certainly was no welcoming committee. We were met by one pastor friend at 3:20 in the morning to help us unload our furniture into our apartment. The enemy was angry, and opposition was soon known.

Although the number of church planters in the city has grown, the

door is still open for fresh blood to enter the good fight of faith. There is a need for reinforcements to step in behind those who will be headed toward retirement in the years ahead.

There have been great trials and testing for every pastor whom I have known over those years. Some have fallen into sin. Some have come with visions of grandeur, failed, and left.

Some came and stayed for several years but then left discouraged. Some left with family problems. One young pastor brought his family with an attitude that he would show us how to build a work; he left within ninety days.

But there are also those who have come and stayed and who

are still there in the fight. I distinctly remember one young preacher who called me to talk about his coming to New York to plant a church. My reply was not unkind, but firm, after seeing those who had come and left. I said, "If you are coming to New York to plant a church, you had better plan to stay here the rest of your life, or don't come at all." He was quiet. The conversation ended shortly afterward. I didn't know what he was thinking. But he came, and he has established several churches and still is doing a good work for God in New York City.

The Fundamental churches in New York are no longer just a beachhead but are part of a foundational and growing offensive movement. Their tone today is, "Speak, LORD,

for thy servant heareth," because the Great Commission orders are still in place. Let us be happy for their accomplishments, guts, and perseverance and be grateful for their labor of love as they face obstacles of educating their children and being a strong influence spiritually in their families' lives, in their churches, and in the community.

The need for outside support will always be in the forefront of keeping Fundamentalism functioning. Pray for finances from outside sources to purchase buildings, which are difficult to obtain for the growing congregations. Some pastors like myself were fortunate to be called into churches already established on good property sites. But there will always be a need for church-planting property as the influx of preachers continues and property costs skyrocket. Beloved, is there not a cause?

I have always thought that God calls all of his preachers to finish, not to quit—quitters never build or accomplish anything in life. The thought of not being a quitter was a motivator that kept me going in the ministry. To serve God in New York City with the second and third generation of preachers was a great pleasure and delight. You just have to learn to put up with the city's nonsense with a good sense of the Lord's joy. Our Lord said, "I have much people in this city." There is still a need for new generations of God-called preachers to go to the city. Are you listening, brothers?

Jerry Walker pastored for twenty-seven years in Brooklyn and three years in Manhattan. Since retiring, he and his wife, Dawn, now live in Greenville, South Carolina.

*The Fundamental churches in New York are no longer just a beachhead but are part of a foundational and growing offensive movement.*

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