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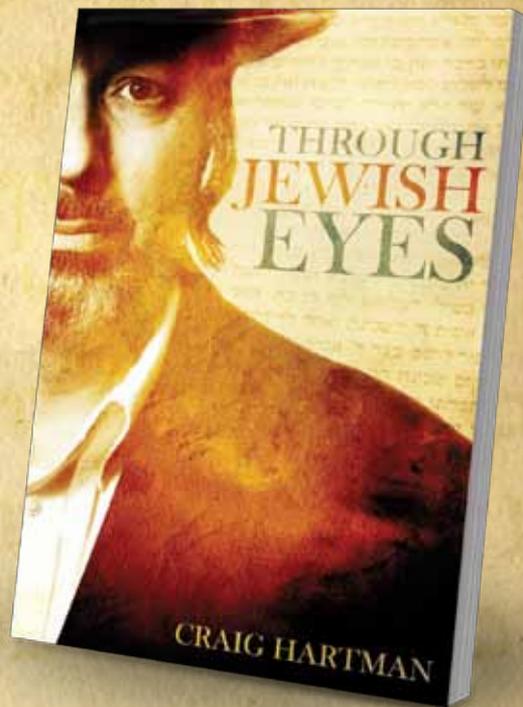


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Craig Hartman is the director of Shalom Ministries Inc., a Jewish outreach ministry in Brooklyn, New York.

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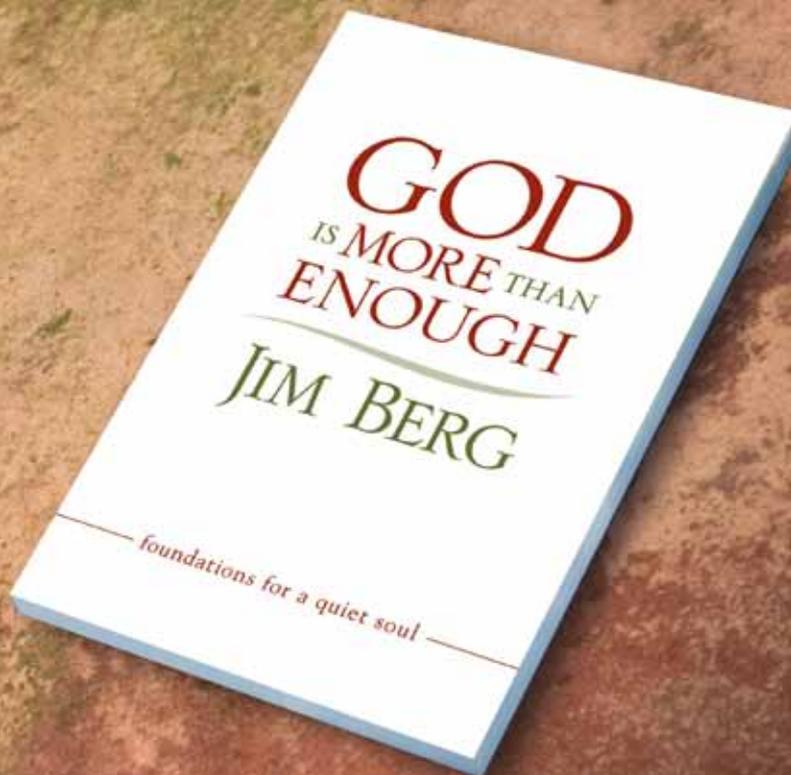


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You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.

With great interest I read your article "The Importance of the Chaplaincy" and its call for two-year internships. I am an Army chaplain candidate completing my sixth year in the program and accessioning this coming summer when my two years of internship are finished. After completing my MDiv at BJU (2008), I ran into many dead ends seeking an internship at a Fundamental Baptist church. Then the Lord led me across the internship program at Merrimack Valley Baptist Church in Merrimack, NH, where Larry Clouse is pastor. The church maintains two full-time internships with salary, housing, and benefits for young men seeking one-to-three years of ministry experience. This program has provided invaluable ministry experience in preaching, teaching, counseling, hospital visitation, funeral participation that will immensely strengthen the ministry of future military chaplains. I would encourage other chaplain candidates to contact Pastor Clouse at 603.595.0955.

Jonathan Newell  
1LT, SS  
Chaplain Candidate  
Londonderry, NH

I am a member of the FBFI and have personally benefited from the use of the membership directory and *FrontLine* magazine over the past several years. I appreciate the time and effort that goes into the production of such wonderfully helpful resources. It seems that every issue of *FrontLine* has an article or two that speak directly to an area of personal need.

As the pastor of Crossroad Baptist Church in Buckeye, Arizona, my wife and I are striving to see this infant work grow to a self-supportive ministry in our far western suburb of Phoenix. We are in a spiritual (and physical) desert where mature, spiritually minded, Biblically educated men and women are few and far between. In spite of that fact God has consistently sent us just the right people to fill our ministry needs at just the right time. However, we would like some information about advertising in *FrontLine* magazine to maximize our exposure to our brothers and sisters in Christ across this country that might be considering a job transfer to sunny Arizona.

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Buckeye, AZ

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## Occupy Till I Come

John C. Vaughn

**T**his issue of *FrontLine* is to be followed by the May/June issue on the theme “The Blessed Hope.” The Church of the End Times tells the story of the apostasy and deception that we see and which are the reality in which we labor to fulfill our Great Commission. We hope you will read these articles as they are intended. We make no argument that the things we see around us are evidence of the imminent rapture of the Church; we have all the evidence of that reality in the promise of the Bible. But as we see the readiness of the World for Antichrist, we can take refuge in the knowledge that Christ will return in power and glory at the end of the Tribulation to establish His millennial Kingdom on earth. We would do well to remember our Lord’s words in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:12 and following: “Occupy till I come.”

As this issue is going to press, Dr. Craig Hartman (see *Behind the Lines*) and I are departing for Israel with twenty FBFI pastors and their wives. In light of that, I am dedicating the rest of this space to one of the most encouraging things I have read recently, an article written by my wife, Brenda—an excerpt from a book in progress on how the Lord has sustained her hope through difficult and dark days, keeping her focus on the Blessed Hope. It reminds us that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:18, 19).

### Loving the Lord’s Return in His Land

Brenda Vaughn

**A**s they drove away, I shed a few tears with the realization that, indeed, I would not be going this time. Our first trip to the Holy Land had been life changing. We learned more than we could ever have imagined, deepened old friendships, and started new ones. The people, the land, the lessons learned in a lifetime of Bible study coming alive as we read them anew in the morning air of Israel—anyone who has been blessed to be there will understand. While we were there my husband and I were listing the names of those we might be able to convince to come with us again.

Our second trip had brought its own new lessons with the added blessing of having so many of our friends from church seeing everything for the first time. We smiled in love as we heard them say just what we had said: “I’ll never be able to read the Bible the same way again.” Then our next trip had to be cancelled due to a nationwide scare concerning the accidental explosion of an airliner. After a few years a dear lady from our second tour gave our son Daniel, then eighteen, the priceless gift of three weeks in Israel, touring the land and ministering to children in Palestinian refugee camps.



He came home with renewed vision for serving the Lord, only to receive the shocking news that test results had confirmed that he did, indeed, have the same life-threatening virus that I did. My husband brought him from the airport to the hospital where I was having a liver biopsy. So began our journey with the knowledge of a shared disease. I got it from the blood of a donor who saved my life, and Daniel got it from my blood when I gave him life. But the virus did not have the time to take him—he lost his life in an accident at age twenty-eight.

I cannot tell you the comfort it has given me to know he had the memories of the Holy Land when I see what he had underlined in his Bible during his many struggles in his twenties. In times of quiet thankfulness I smile to think of Dan’s excitement when his younger brother Joe was able to go with us on our third trip. But then on the day I watched the car winding down the drive, I was too ill to go. My husband was leading the tour, but this time it would be different. This time, Becky, our daughter who nearly lost her life in “our house fire” was going. It was an ambitious endeavor for both of them. Somehow they made it. Now I have the joy of listening in love as Becky tells others of the life-changing experience of seeing the Garden Tomb and resting in all the hope it gives.

Continued on page 26

# The Lie:

Robert Congdon

As a child, I remember being fascinated by the whirlpool around the bathtub drain as the water rushed away. This phenomenon intrigued me as I watched anything left in the tub drawn toward the vortex and the drain. There is a spiritual whirlpool of apostasy in our world today of gigantic proportions that is drawing many unsuspecting individuals and churches toward its vortex, pulling them down into the cesspool of Satan's final, worldwide religion. It is based upon Satan's lie—that man can save himself and bring in a utopian kingdom through human effort and cooperation. To their shame, many solid Christians and Bible-teaching churches are being drawn toward this compelling deception. Satan's attack is ruthless yet subtle, for at the same time that he is directing a spiritual coup in the world at large through ecumenical movements, he is deceiving many sincere Christians within the church with the Emergent and Purpose-Driven movements and the teachings of New Calvinism, causing the church to fail in three prime tasks—evangelism, intercession, and contending for the faith. Lacking discernment, believers are unknowingly becoming weak and ineffective and, therefore, are aiding rather than resisting the powerful pull toward apostasy. Satan's "whirlpool" is opening the way for the Supra-Religion of the Tribulation that was written of by the apostle John and prophets such as Daniel.

## "A Form of Godliness"

"Supra-Religion" is an all-inclusive term for Satan's ultimate worldwide religion and the religious movements promoting its formation. As steps toward unification, these movements are drawing all religions into a single, cohesive, and powerful religious body that will join with the global government described by Daniel (Dan. 2, 7). John's apocalyptic vision portrays this powerful religion as a "great whore that sitteth upon many waters" and "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:1, 5).

Paul linked this religion with the Antichrist, the one who "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4). While recognizing that the Antichrist and his false religion will not be made manifest until after the Rapture of the church, it is imperative that believers heed Paul's warning to Timothy concerning the apostasy that precedes this Supra-Religion: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall . . . [have] a form of godliness, but [deny] the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:1, 2, 5).

Paul warned that this peril will arise from within the church in the last days of the Church Age. This "form of godliness" (a counterfeit of Christianity) is the forerunner of the abominable religion described by John. If churches and individual Christians are to contend for the faith and avoid being drawn into this end-time apostasy, it is essential that they understand Satan's manifesto for a global government and religion.

## Satan's Manifesto

Satan declared his rebellious intentions in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah. While Bible scholars disagree as to whether this chapter refers to the Babylonian Empire of the past or to a future Babylon, many see verses 12 through 14 as indicating an inseparable connection between Satan and Babylon. Satan first attempted to unite humanity and rule earth's kingdom at Babel (Gen. 10:10), and he will continue his quest until humanity's last kingdom is destroyed (Dan. 2, 34, 35, 44). The Antichrist's goal (2 Thess. 2:4) and Satan's manifesto are linked by their mutual desire to be worshiped and exalted as God:

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of



6



# The Coming End-Time Supra-Religion

the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isa. 14:13, 14).

Satan employs mimicry to attain his goal, replacing true faith with a form of godliness that appears to be genuine. It is a form, however, that denies the power of God—the gospel of salvation that gives eternal life, changes lives, and seals believers with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13).

God is calling out a people who will reign with Christ in His earthly Kingdom for one thousand years. Christ's Kingdom is God's ultimate goal for this present earth's history. Satan's manifesto reveals his two desires:

- To rule and govern the earthly kingdom.
- To receive worship from all of its subjects.

By imitating God's plan for earth's history and by seeking to thwart God's goal of an earthly kingdom for His Son, Satan hopes to achieve his desire to be "like the Most High."

Satan's manifesto declares his first aspiration—for a "throne" (government and rule) that is above the "stars." In the Scriptures stars represent heavenly principalities or angelic powers (Dan. 8:10; Job 38:7; Rev. 12:4).<sup>1</sup> Thus these words indicate that Satan wants to rule over the angelic realm. Angelic subjects alone, however, do not satisfy Satan's quest to be "like the Most High"; he desires human subjects as well. Satan will imitate Jesus Christ's rule over His earthly kingdom when he places the Antichrist as head of the global government.

Satan's boast, to "sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north," reveals his second aspiration—to be worshiped. The idiomatic phrase "the sides of the north" appears only three times in our Bible. Psalm 48:2 tells us what it means: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." The psalmist is speaking of Jesus Christ's future earthly kingdom, which will be centered in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. This will be the location of David's throne (Luke 1:32) and the millennial Temple

(Ezek. 40:1–42:20). Satan's words challenge God's promise to King David in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:8–16; Isa. 9:7). In this covenant God promises that His throne in Jerusalem ("on the sides of the north") will continue forever. Jesus Christ, David's descendant, will reign from this throne throughout the Millennium and on into eternity in the new Heaven and earth.

Challenging God a third time, Satan proclaims, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds." The Hebrew text literally says "the cloud," alluding to the cloudy pillar that led the nation of Israel during the Exodus (Exod. 13:21, 22). Students of the Bible recognize that this "cloud" was a manifestation of the Shekinah Glory—the finite manifestation of the infinite God upon earth. The cloud's presence demonstrated to all observers that God was dwelling or residing with His people, leading them, and blessing them.<sup>2</sup>

God received Israel's worship each year on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies where the Glory resided. He entered with blood to atone for the sins of the nation. This day marked the height of worship as well as recognition of the worshipers' dependence on God. Satan's declaration challenged God's earthly manifestation of Himself as "the cloud," having the right to rule, lead, and be worshiped by His people. Satan's ultimate challenge to "the cloud" will take place in the future when he seats his counterfeit Christ, the Antichrist, in the Temple (2 Thess. 2:4). In reality the Antichrist never can replace God, being only a satanically empowered man; but this act reflects Satan's desire to "make myself [himself] like," or "to act like"<sup>3</sup> the Most High (the literal Hebrew use of the phrase).

## Unwittingly Aiding Satan's Purpose

Since the Garden of Eden, Satan has challenged God's Person and Word as he persistently strives to be like God. Believing his lies, deceptions, imitations, and misapplications of Scripture, many unwittingly are aiding his purposes.



Some are seeking to do away with boundaries that separate people politically and religiously. In each realm Satan uses man's quest for peace as the incentive for unification. "Toleration" of differences is aggressively promoted while those who resist are condemned as reactionary and dangerous—but Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

As Christians, we must "not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:6). A discerning look at events around us should reveal the "spirals" in the geopolitical and religious realms, drawing the world's nations and religions toward unity. Satan's lie—that man can save himself and the world through human effort and cooperation—denies God's Word, which exposes man's depravity and inability to redeem himself or bring lasting peace on earth. The counterfeit Supra-Religion of the Antichrist will come to fruition as the Bible foretells (Rev. 13:11–16); sadly, many believers will come to realize that they unwittingly contributed to Satan's plan and did not contend for the faith because they lacked discernment and did not rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Dr. Robert Congdon, author of *The European Union and the Supra-Religion: Setting the Stage for the Final Act?* and *An Appointment with God: The Feasts of the Lord*, has an international Bible conference and teaching ministry through Congdon Ministries International. He served as a missionary in the United Kingdom, has pastored, and is a weekly national radio commentator in the areas of the European Union, the Emergent Church, and other current theological issues. He and his wife, Pam, reside in Greer, South Carolina.

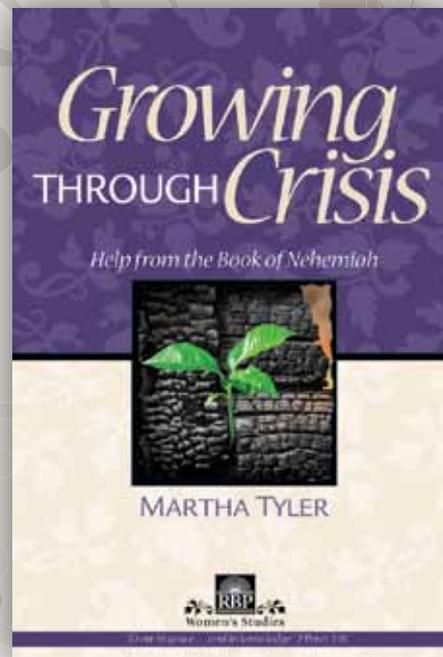
<sup>1</sup> "Daniel 8:10," Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary. CD-ROM. Online Bible Edition version 2.00, 19 Jan 2005. Winterbourne, Ontario: Online Bible, 1992–2005.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Shekinah Glory" is not found in the Scriptures, but it is used by later Jews and

Christians to designate the divine presence of God. In the Aramaic and late Hebrew, it means residence or dwelling of God. "Shekinah," *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1960), pp. 1008–9.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph A. Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah, 2 Volumes in 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992), 298.

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# Understanding the Supra-Religion

The Lord revealed to the apostle John that a global religion will arise during the seven-year period known as the Great Tribulation. Initially, this religion will align itself with and direct the global government. In Revelation 17 this union is represented by a woman riding a beast (v. 3). Although the Church will not be present on earth during this time, it is not unreasonable to suggest that discerning believers should be able to recognize actions and events foreshadowing this satanically inspired union prior to the Church's removal. It is difficult to imagine how the world's many diverse and often conflicting religions could unite peacefully. The concept of a "Supra-Religion," or an overruling, controlling entity, provides a possible solution, for it would bring about the peaceful unification of diverse religions through a deceptive and enticing personality. This "personality" has been leading the peoples and nations of the world into many false and detestable worship systems since Babel. We know her as "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5). This false worship system or Supra-Religion has two prime characteristics: first, it will be all-inclusive, uniting the world's religions (Rev. 17:1, 9); second, it will work in tandem with the global government to oppose God and His people, helping Satan to achieve his manifesto—to "be like the Most High" (Isa. 14:14).<sup>1</sup>

## The All-Inclusive Supra-Religion

According to Revelation 17, this religious system will be embraced by all "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (v. 15), for it "sitteth [lit., "dwells"]<sup>2</sup> upon many waters" (v. 1). As "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," it does not represent genuine faith and is full of hateful things (abominations) (vv. 4, 5). Through this deceitful religion Satan will "make war with the Lamb" (Jesus Christ) (v. 14) by enticing men away from true faith in Him, just as a harlot entices men to fornication or unfaithfulness in marriage. He will accomplish this by counterfeiting genuine faith, a deceptive ploy Satan first used in ancient Babylon (today's Iraq).

Babylon is where Satan first attempted to establish a pagan religion and unite humanity in opposition to God (Gen. 11). It later grew into the magnificent kingdom Daniel wrote of. There is debate, however, as to whether the "Babylon" of Revelation 17 and 18 should be taken in a literal or figurative sense. We should not be too hasty to dis-

miss "Babylon" as being literal, for Isaiah 13 indicates that a day is coming when Babylon will experience destruction of such magnitude that it will become permanently uninhabitable (v. 20). Isaiah identifies the time of this total devastation as the "day of the LORD" (v. 6), a term often applied to the Tribulation. This prophecy has never been fulfilled, for various people groups have continually occupied this site since Isaiah's day. Also, the destruction described in Isaiah 13 is strikingly similar to that of Revelation 18. Surely, Babylon's rapid restoration as a great city is feasible today, since the magnificent city of Dubai was built in only three years. If Revelation's Babylon is indeed literal, and together with ancient Babylon forms the "bookends" of pagan history, a comparison could be made between the Supra-Religion and the religion of ancient Babel.

Semiramis, Nimrod's wife and a former harlot, introduced Satan's first counterfeit religion at Babel. Filled with harlotry, this religion centered about a goddess and her child. According to legend, a god disguised as a bull carries off a beautiful woman who then bears his son. The child later dies and is restored to life. Clearly, this was Satan's attempt to imitate God's promise to deliver humanity through the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). Will Durant considered this pagan religion to be the "satanic anticipation of the Resurrection of Christ."<sup>3</sup> Loraine Boettner called this "motherly goddess" the "model and original of every goddess and female cult figure in the ancient and modern worlds (either directly or by derivation)."<sup>4</sup>

This satanically inspired goddess, the Magna Mater, has appeared throughout history in many guises: the Great Mother, Nina, Isis, Ishtar, Diana, Athena, Aphrodite, Venus, Europa, the unbiblical corruption of the Virgin Mary, and others. Ancient Israel succumbed to this Mother Goddess and her son, Tammuz (also Adonis, Osiris) (Ezek. 8:14). Today the European Union uses Europa as its symbol: a sculpture of her on a bull stands before the EU's office building in Strasbourg. In Brussels a modernistic sculpture of a madonna and child is at the entrance to their unique parliament, which was designed to look like the tower of Babel.

Those rejecting a literal Babylon cite the "seven heads [that] are seven mountains" of Revelation 17:9 as representing Rome. Reflecting the majority usage of the Greek word,<sup>5</sup> the translators of the Authorized Version rejected "hills" and chose "mountains." Rome is situated upon seven hills, not mountains. As this is the primary argument

for a figurative Babylon, it appears that a literal Babylon is more appropriate. Furthermore, Isaiah prophesied that Babylon one day would be destroyed and rendered permanently uninhabitable (Isa. 13:20). Since this has not happened as yet, it would appear that the prophecies of Isaiah and Revelation are referring to the same event.

### **The Alignment of the Supra-Religion with the Global Government**

Revelation 17 links “that great city,” Babylon (v. 18), with the “woman” described earlier in the chapter. She is pictured as sitting “upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (v. 3). The syntactical grammar of verse 5 suggests that the woman’s full name is “Babylon the Great.”<sup>6</sup> As an abomination and spiritual harlot, she first appeared at Babel and is now revealed. “The woman represents the false religion that gives spiritual cohesion to the system”<sup>7</sup> of the beast, the Antichrist. This system includes financial, political, and religious elements (Rev. 13; 14:8, 9; 18:2–19). Her position upon the beast suggests that she directs this system until her desolation at the midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev. 17:16–18).

### **The Feasibility of a Supra-Religion**

Daniel also wrote of this kingdom: “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces” (Dan. 7:23).

Few students of prophecy would deny that the fourth kingdom is the restored Roman Empire that will re-emerge prior to Christ’s return. The concept of an overruling religious entity or Supra-Religion suggests a possible scenario leading to the union of a global government and religion. This possibility is furthered by the word “diverse” in Daniel 7:23.

The word “diverse” (different, unique) indicates that the fourth kingdom will be unique in history.<sup>8</sup> The European Union’s supranational government is unique, for its form of government has no historical precedent. It is composed of twenty-seven individual nations that yield up their individual sovereignties to the dictates of an unelected higher authority that supposedly legislates impartially for the benefit of the whole.

In a similar way, a supra-religious ruling authority would allow the world’s religions to continue their distinctive modes of worship as long as they obey the independent higher authority’s dictates. For example, toleration of other faiths would be enforced, and statements of exclusivity and proselytizing would be prohibited. The Supra-Religion, however, must appeal to the many world religions in order to draw them willingly under its authority. There must be a unifying factor, a charismatic personality, to unite them, and it must imitate the true faith.

### **A Unifying Factor**

Appealing to humanity’s universal desire for peace between governments and religions, Satan again will use the Magna Mater goddess who has been present in many guises since Babel. She may appear as a counterfeit of the Virgin Mary and extend motherly comfort to troubled

humanity. Regarding Mary as his co-redeemer, the late Pope John Paul II offered her as a unifying factor when he said, “Under the patronage of Mary, the human family will be drawn ever more closely into fraternal unity and peaceful coexistence.”<sup>9</sup> Through demonic apparitions, “Mary” has spoken to people of all religions, offering peace and affirming that they may remain in their faiths while following her guidance.<sup>10</sup> An article in *Newsweek* stated, “In many ways, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has belonged to Mary. From almost every continent, visionaries have reported more than 400 ‘apparitions’ of the virgin. . . . These visions point to what the Marian Movement believes is the millennial ‘Age of Mary.’”<sup>11</sup> Most people are unaware that both Muslims and Hindus recognize Mary: a chapter in the Qur’an honors her, and Hindus observe a yearly feast to her. All things considered, it is quite possible that this “Global” Mary<sup>12</sup> who in reality is Satan’s Magna Mater and counterfeit of the Virgin Mary, will become the unifying factor and higher authority of the Supra-Religion and will eventually introduce her son, the Antichrist. While the Church will not be present on earth at her “unveiling,” it is imperative that believers recognize her approach and avoid being drawn into movements that are leading to this great apostasy.

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<sup>1</sup> See “The Lie: The Coming End-Time Supra-Religion” in this issue of *FrontLine*.

<sup>2</sup> “Sitteth”: Gk. *kathemai*, Strong’s #2521.

<sup>3</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Part 1—Our Oriental Heritage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 120.

<sup>4</sup> Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism* (New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publ., 1962), 142.

<sup>5</sup> “Mountain”: Gk. *orov*, Strong’s #3735.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Thomas, *Revelation: An Exegetical Commentary, Vol. 2* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 289.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, 286.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Congdon, *The European Union and the Supra-Religion: Setting the Stage for the Final Act?* (n.l.: Xulon Publisher, 2007), 177.

<sup>9</sup> Adrian Hilton, *The Principality and Power of Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Rickmansworth, UK: Dorchester House Publ., 2000), 36; quoting *Gibraltar Chronicle*, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Dave Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publ., 1994), 454, 458.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth L. Woodward, “Hail, Mary.” *Newsweek*, Aug. 25, 1997. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/960531/7/10>.

<sup>12</sup> A complete discussion of how “Mary” is crossing religious boundaries, appearances, and multifaith conferences may be found in my book *The European Union and the Supra-Religion: Setting the Stage for the Final Act?* (n.l.: Xulon Press, 2007).



# IRAN and the BIBLE

Someone has well said, “We may read the newspaper and find out what is happening, but we must read the Bible to find out what is going on.” Much is happening today in Iran, but what is really going on?

Elwood McQuaid wrote, “Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denies the historicity of the Holocaust that sent 6 million Jewish victims to the gas chambers in Europe, yet he salivates over his dream of creating a holocaust of his own. Ironically, 6 million Jews now live in Israel. . . . What the Nazis began, the Iranians aspire to consummate.”

President Ahmadinejad told the “World without Zionism” conference (Oct. 26, 2005) that “Israel must be wiped off the map.”

The Associated Press reported on Saturday, April 15, 2006, that “the president of Iran again lashed out at Israel and said it was ‘heading toward annihilation.’ . . . President Ahmadinejad called Israel a ‘permanent threat’ to the Middle East that will ‘soon’ be liberated. . . . ‘Like it or not, the Zionist Regime is heading toward annihilation, the Zionist Regime is a rotten, dried tree that will be eliminated by one storm.’”

I find it interesting that President Ahmadinejad used the

word “storm,” for that is the word in Ezekiel 38:9: “Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm.” The question is—what great force will come like a storm?

The leader of this force is revealed in verse 2 of this chapter: “Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.”

Gog is a reference to a person while Magog is the country over which he rules. Most Bible commentaries state that the land of Magog is a reference to the modern nation of Russia. This is born out in the expression “the chief prince.” Our English word “chief” is a translation of the Hebrew word “rosh.” What we have here is “The Rosh Prince” or “the Prince of Rosh.” Further identification is found in the reference to Meshech and Tubal. The Scofield footnote of Ezekiel 38:2 states, “That the primary reference is to Russia, all agree. ‘Gog’ is the prince, ‘Magog,’ his land. The reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification.”

Russia will be the leader of a great military force that will someday “come like a storm.” The other nations in this coali-

tion are found in verses 5 and 6. We will return to the first nation, Persia, shortly, but please notice the other nations:

■ **Ethiopia**—I agree with Dr. Louis Bauman: “It is not the Ethiopia of Africa, but a country . . . somewhere contiguous to Persia.”\* Since the Bible is its own commentary, I suggest a brief look at Genesis 2:10–14 would be helpful, for there we discover that the Garden of Eden was in the area where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet. It was called Ethiopia then. Today it is Iraq. It is my conviction that the “Ethiopia” of Ezekiel 38:5 is Iraq.

■ **Libya**—It is the land of Put—probably one of the Emirate states.

■ **Gomer**—The descendants of Gomer established themselves in parts of Germany.

■ **Togarmah**—No doubt a reference to modern Turkey.

I have entitled this article “Iran and the Bible.” How does Iran fit the prophetic puzzle of Ezekiel 38? Notice, the first nation mentioned that will join Russia in a great force that will come like a storm is Persia.

Years ago I was in a church near Chicago for a week of meetings. A brother in Christ approached me following a service and introduced himself as a Persian. He said he came to America in the 1920s from his native land—Persia. Even today he

wants to be called a Persian, but in 1935 the name of his country was changed to Iran. (Perhaps it is worth mentioning that the original home of the Persian rug is Iran.)

Why will Russia and the armies of the countries listed in verses 5 and 6 rise up and “come like a storm”? Ezekiel tells us in verses 8 and 16. “In the latter years thou shalt come into the land . . . against the mountains of Israel . . . and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel.”

Of course, God will not permit any coalition of military might to destroy the nation of Israel. Ezekiel, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, continues with God’s response. It’s found in verses 18 through 22.

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down,

and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.

As the result of the most powerful earthquake in history, confused soldiers killing one another, hailstones, fire, and brimstone, 83% of the army will be dead (Ezek. 39:2). Some may read this passage and say, “My, Mother Nature will be at work.” No, my friend, Father God will be at work.

Another piece of this prophetic puzzle is found in verse 11: “And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.”

Israel is certainly not a nation at peace today, but someday when Antichrist signs his peace accord guaranteeing the peace of Israel for seven years (Dan. 9:27), the Jews

## WHY WILL RUSSIA AND THE ARMIES OF THE COUNTRIES LISTED IN VERSES 5 AND 6 RISE UP AND “COME LIKE A STORM”? EZEKIEL TELLS US IN VERSES 8 AND 16. “IN THE LATTER YEARS THOU SHALT COME INTO THE LAND . . . AGAINST THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL . . . AND THOU SHALT COME UP AGAINST MY PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.”

will let down their guard. Israel will become the land of unwallled villages.

In conclusion please notice that the invading army will not come against Israel until Israel is dwelling safely, without walls, bars, or gates. Israel will not be dwelling safely until Antichrist signs his covenant guaranteeing the peace of Israel. Antichrist will not sign that peace accord until he is revealed, and he will not be revealed until the Church is raptured.

Though no sign must be fulfilled before the Rapture, there are some interesting developments taking place that would indicate we must be near that moment when our Lord will receive His bride unto Himself. To that I say with John, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

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\* Bauman, Louis, “Russian Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy” (Philadelphia: The Balkiston Co., 1942), 31.

# The Manhattan Declaration

## Is This Another Step Toward the Supra-Religion?

In November 2009 the Manhattan Declaration, a highly publicized ecumenical movement, was introduced to the national press. The Manhattan Declaration (MD) was drafted by Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship and Dean Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School. According to George, "The Manhattan Declaration is a statement of Christian conscience, a confession of religious conviction supported by followers of Jesus Christ from the Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical families of faith. . . . It cuts across political as well as denominational lines"<sup>1</sup> Signatories to the MD include nine Roman Catholic archbishops; the primate of the Orthodox Church in America; African Anglican Archbishop Peter Akinola; R. Albert Mohler, President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Mark L. Bailey, President, Dallas Theological Seminary; and J. Ligon Duncan, Senior Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi.

Predecessors of the Manhattan Declaration include the following.

■ **The Moral Majority**, founded by Jerry Falwell in 1979. Falwell insisted the leadership include Catholics and Jews.

■ **Promise Keepers**, founded in 1990 by Bill McCartney. Promise #6 raised the greatest concern: "A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity."

■ **Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) I and II (1994, 1997)**, both documents authored by Charles Colson and Fr. Richard John Neuhaus. Commenting on ECT, Timothy George wrote, "There is enough commonality that evangelicals and Catholics with a living faith can recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ with a common Lord and common grace that brought them together."<sup>2</sup> The ecumenism that George defines is given momentum and legitimacy when so-called conservative Evangelicals affix their

names to movements such as ECT and its first cousin, the Manhattan Declaration.

The intent of "conservative" Evangelical signatories to the MD may not have been to "concede doctrinal ground," but the result is tacit recognition of Roman Catholicism as an authentic form of Biblical Christianity. Consequently, critical lines of distinction over the gospel have been blurred. The gospel has been compromised!

In the past true evangelicals were always great defenders of the Gospel, never selling out to error, no matter what the gains. If these stalwarts of the past were to reappear among us today, they would be appalled at the compromises of many evangelical leaders and teachers.<sup>3</sup>

Christians do not go to bed one night committed to the Biblical principles of separation from unbelievers and apostate denominations and wake up the next morning ready to embrace them. Over time, through small, incremental steps, they move to a different position as "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). From there it becomes much easier to embrace a full-blown ecumenism, leading to the coming supra-religion revealed in Revelation 17 and 18.

### What Is the Biblical Answer to Ecumenism?

Dr. Roland McCune, in his scholarly assessment of the plight of today's New Evangelical movement, said,

Alva J. McClain, my mentor in theology in seminary, had it exactly right when he commented on the rapprochement and dialogue with unbelieving scholars taking place in early new evangelicalism: Hobnobbing too closely with the enemy has always cost the cause of Christianity much more that [sic] it ever gained. I understand the desirability of an acquaintance with the program and ideas of our opponents, *but we must never for one instant forget that they are deadly enemies with whom there can be neither truce nor compromise.*<sup>4</sup>

Our responsibility, according to 2 John 6–11, is to avoid offering so much as a welcome to, to shun showing encouragement toward, and to refrain from entering into any cooperative effort with unbelievers and apostate denominations. Otherwise credibility is given to deadly “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). Evangelical signatories to the Manhattan Declaration entered into a cooperative effort expressly forbidden by—and therefore in disobedience to—the mandates of 2 John 9–11, 2 Corinthians 6:14–17, and Ephesians 5:11.

Second Thessalonians 3:6–15 tells us to avoid those who do not walk in an orderly way by “working not at all.” If we are to avoid people who simply do not work, we certainly ought to “withdraw” from those who are far more dangerous to the cause of Christ through ecumenical compromise. In Romans 16:17 we are commanded to “mark” and “avoid” those who have adopted a theology and/or taken on practices that are “contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.”

David Beale warned against those who bear the label fundamentalist but whose personal philosophy is essentially New Evangelical. “Unlike present-day Fundamentalists, they refuse to regard the militant defense of the faith and the full doctrine and practice of holiness as intrinsically fundamental.” (*In Pursuit of Purity*, pp. 261–ff.) In other words, there are fundamentalists who are either becoming or already are New Evangelicals. Some are actually adopting New Evangelical philosophies while still proclaiming that they are not New Evangelicals. The basic problem is this: Many fundamentalists, when speaking of the New Evangelicalism, are referring to the original positions and writings of the early founders of New Evangelicalism such as Carl Henry and Harold Ockenga. They repudiate heartily the thoughts of these earlier leaders, but either in ignorance or willingly they fail to recognize the updated version, the “new” New Evangelicalism. It is always safer to berate the teachings of those historically farther removed than of those who are currently afflicting the church.<sup>5</sup>

Evangelical signatories failed to recognize the MD as the updated “‘new’ New Evangelicalism” and are thereby “afflicting the church.” Sadly, “conservative” Evangelical leaders Albert Mohler and J. Ligon Duncan chose to unite forces in the political arena for a common cause with those who deny the Scriptures. Our response to ecumenism and believers who forge ecumenical fellowships must be according to the Biblical mandates.

### **What Is the Biblical Response to Ecumenism?**

In an article published in the spring of 1995 Dr. David Doran rightly observed,

The Fundamentalists’ compelling belief that separation was a thoroughly biblical command, coupled with a deep understanding of the sinister nature of unbelief, led to a militant commitment to separation from those who disobeyed God’s command to break with religious apostates. . . . It seems to me that those who want to rid contemporary Fundamentalism of its alleged belligerence should watch the pathway carefully. The last group of people to take that path found it to be a winding road which ends up in a theological wasteland.<sup>6</sup>

Fundamentalists are known for and defined by our militancy; it is our heritage. We have been militant in defense of the Scriptures, the gospel in particular, and have separated from all those who deny or lend support and/or Christian recognition to those who deny the Scriptures. If we relax our sense of militancy in separation, we lower our God-given defense against the allurements of ecumenism.

The MD has drawn together men who deny and/or disobey the Scriptures. Christians are commanded to “withdraw yourselves from . . . have no company with” the disobedient. This necessarily includes those “who disobeyed God’s command to break with religious apostates,” who furthermore rejected the admonishment of friends and refusing to repent of their forging ecumenical relationships through the MD. Faithfulness to God begins with fidelity to His Word (Isa. 8:20). Biblical mandates are not open to selective interpretation or application.

### **What Is the Application of the Biblical Response to Ecumenism?**

What is a practical application of the Biblical response to the current Evangelical ecumenical movement? One application would be to refrain from sharing a platform with, endorsing, or attending the conferences, coalitions, and fellowships sponsored by conservative Evangelicals who have made the decision for ecumenical relationships with unbelievers and apostate denominations. Attending and encouraging others to sit under the platform teaching ministry of known ecumenicists, such as Al Mohler and J. Ligon Duncan, signals tacit endorsement of their ecumenism. While that may not be the intent it is, however, the result. Fundamentalist pastors and teachers must determine to set the right example (Phil. 3:17) for the next generation. Will tolerating and/or allowing for the trend toward ecumenism among conservative Evangelicals, which Fundamentalists would never allow for or tolerate in their own ministries, set the best example for the next generation?

Could an ecumenism, which seems so abhorrent and unlikely to Fundamentalists today, ever become a reality for Fundamentalism’s next generation? It can if Fundamentalists in this generation relax and lose their sense of militancy.

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy George, *From the Dean*, Beeson Divinity School official website, Dec. 4, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy George, cited in *Not All Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, *Christianity Today*, online article, Oct. 29, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Peter Masters, *Stand for Truth* (formerly *Separation & Obedience*, 1996), Sword & Trowel, 2009, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Rolland McCune, excerpt from A. McClain, *Is Theology Changing in the Evangelical Camp? The Brethren Missionary Herald*, Feb. 23, 1957; *Promises Unfulfilled*, p. 69. Emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Ernest Pickering, *The Tragedy of Compromise*, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. David Doran, *In Defense of Militancy*, *Sentinel* 11:2, Spring 1995.

# “On Earth as It Is in Heaven”

## Kingdom Now Theology: The Pluralistic Propulsion behind Post-modern Missiology

David Landon

Nowhere is Kingdom Now<sup>1</sup> theology found more dominant as a driving force behind an all-inclusive pluralism than in post-modern missiology.<sup>2</sup> As Mark Scandrette states, “We are developing a more global awareness of needs and opportunities for compassion, justice, and resource sharing. . . . The mandate to ‘seek first the kingdom’ propels us to take an engaged and experimental approach . . . inviting us to collaborate with our Maker in the fulfillment of God’s reign on earth.”<sup>3</sup>

Post-moderns’ eclectic interpretation of Kingdom Now theology has not only transfigured the face of missions but has also altered the very essence of what it means. At the heart of conservative, orthodox evangelical missions is faith alone in the propitiatory death and resurrection of Christ on the cross. Central to the Kingdom’s gospel is Christ, and His coming earthly reign. Concerning missiology today, mankind’s salvation is not found in Christ but in redeeming the earth. Only a collective humanitarian achievement, to build Heaven on earth, will secure earth’s salvation. One of the strongest supports of this redemptive earth theology is the Emergent Church.<sup>4</sup> As Emergent advocates Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger explain,

Rooted in the work of N. T. Wright, emerging churches embrace the gospel of the kingdom as revealed in Mark 1:15–16. At the outset of the Gospel narrative, the good news was not that Jesus was to die on the cross to forgive sins but that God had returned and all were invited to participate with him in this new way of life, in this redemption of the world. . . . The good news is not that he died but that the kingdom has come.<sup>5</sup>

### A Participatory Role

The gospel of the Kingdom for Emergent/post-modern missiologists focuses upon a participatory role, with man and God working together to bring about a worldwide transformation. No aspect of creation is beyond reclamation for the Kingdom. Gibbs and Bolger conclude, “In Jesus they [Emergents] discovered a long-forgotten gospel, the idea that we have an invitation to participate with God in

the redemption of the world.”<sup>6</sup> Conservation, expressed through “ecology theology,” is an essential doctrine for missiologists concerned with a global regeneration. A new Heaven on earth can be achieved only by a gamut of transformations—a new political system, a new economy, a new way of doing church, a new standing social order of tolerance, mutual respect, and dialogue. The catalyst driving this transformation: a new method of missions and a new definition of the gospel of the Kingdom. As post-modernists contend, “reforming” missions into a new method of evangelization allows a plurality of faiths to “disenfranchise” Christianity for all to participate. Cardinal to this new missiology is the idea that an effective mission is found only in “engaging” one’s culture. However, hidden within the terminology to “engage” is the real meaning: to “embrace.”

Embracing a method of missions that homogenizes a secular/pagan culture with Biblical Christianity is contrary to 2 Corinthians 6:17: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” A popular argument for this new method of missions is found in Mark Driscoll’s book *The Radical Reformation: Reaching Out without Selling Out*. This new methodology has extended Christian diversity far beyond just multicultural distinctions; it has spread to a toleration of diversity in doctrine and orthodoxy.

### A Scriptural Global Outlook

Missions has always had a global outlook, for that is integral to the Great Commission—“Go ye into all the world. . . .” However, this Biblical outlook has always been centered in Christ’s transformational work of redemption, not man’s collaborated efforts of reinvention. Donald Miller’s conclusion that “if Christianity is going to survive, it must continually reinvent itself,”<sup>7</sup> is completely antithetical to Scriptural objective truth: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). This Biblical command has long been neglected as a missional strategy for sharing the gospel. Post-modernites have rejected the sufficiency of Scripture as authoritative and have rejected

the notion that the effectiveness of Scripture is not determined by how relevant it is to the culture. Because of this philosophy, missiologists have reduced the Kingdom gospel to a humanitarian sociological gospel.

What cannot be understated is that postmodern Kingdom Now theology is the driving force behind a global ecumenical mission to bring in the Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven.” Hosting five thousand participants in 1997, the Global Consultation of World Evangelization (GCOWE) included five hundred business executives who collectively issued a declaration to “stimulate cooperation” in order to help fulfill the Great Commission. What were the results of the declaration? In 2001 David Befus, president of Latin America Mission, published his book *Kingdom Business: The Ministry of Promoting Economic Activity*. The following year a book *On Kingdom Business: Transforming Missions through Entrepreneurial Strategies* was produced.<sup>8</sup> Clearly evident is the fact that globalism, with a pluralistic philosophy and a sociological agenda, is bringing together religious, social, and economic groups in an unprecedented way.

A missional, global network is drawing together a kaleidoscope of faiths. One of the goals for the centennial World Missionary Conference of 2010 is to see that “networks will be mobilized and alliances formed so as to develop greater strategic collaboration and greater synergy in fulfilling the mission mandate.”<sup>9</sup> Individualism has been replaced with community. Identity for post-moderns is found within the context of building a worldwide, religiously diverse community. As Robert E. Webber states, “The younger evangelical rejects the modern notion of individualism and embraces community. And to be postmodern in a Christian way is ‘to embrace the kingdom of God.’”<sup>10</sup> For this Kingdom to be established, Webber envisions a profusion of faiths working together.

Roger Oakland in his book *Faith Undone* cites Emergent Will Sampson. “Contextual theology is rooted in the notion that God’s kingdom is vast and diverse, and it is our task as followers of Jesus to understand the diversity of

God’s work in the world and join that effort.”<sup>11</sup> Oakland also cites Webber:

A goal for evangelicals in the postmodern world is to accept diversity as a historical reality, but to seek unity in the midst of it. This perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church—all based on apostolic teaching and authority, finding common ground in the faith expressed by classical Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

Post-modern/emergent missiologists have willfully rejected their insufficiency to procure salvation and have refused to acknowledge the inability of man to secure paradise. Mankind cannot redeem creation. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mark 13:31). Man cannot even redeem himself, for only the supernatural work of Christ can sufficiently secure salvation. To alter the very message of the gospel of the Kingdom is anathema. Paul states that if any bring another gospel, “let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8, 9). Nowhere in Scripture are Christians mandated to help bring in the Kingdom. We are, however, commanded to share the gospel and to pray that Christ’s Kingdom will come (Matt. 6:10). Only when the King returns at His Father’s good pleasure will the full ramifications of the Kingdom come to fruition. Yes, as Christians we have an immense responsibility in stewardship to care for creation, but the motivation for this stewardship is vain if one is to presuppose that a man-centered missiology of the dominion mandate will hasten the return of Christ.

### Imminence and Its Implications

No greater impetus drives missiology than the future implications of the Kingdom. If Christ’s return is imminent, then what better motivation is there for Christians than to share the gospel now! Ironically, when it comes to the eschatology of the Kingdom, emergent/postmodern missiologists are either vague in their terminology or they minimize the sovereign coming reign of Christ. Mark Scandrette confesses, “The term

kingdom of God has become so popular, and its usage so varied, that it is difficult to know if we are even talking about the same thing.”<sup>13</sup> C. Peter Wagner writes, “Eschatological issues, once high on the agendas of many conservative church leaders, do not seem to be that important today. Robert Schuller’s advice to young church leaders would seem to apply to new apostolic Christians: ‘Don’t let eschatology stifle your long-term thinking.’”<sup>14</sup>

As a challenge to conservative Christians who may view eschatology as a “marginal” doctrine or honestly admit their unfamiliarity with the importance of such a topic, having a better understanding of eschatology will not only help Christians to see the correlation of Kingdom theology to missions but will also help fellow believers to understand where post-modern missiologists foreshadow prophetic events leading toward the Supra-Religion (Rev. 13:7–9).

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graduation and marriage in May 2010 he will begin deputation with the goal of returning to minister in Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> "Kingdom Now is the designation of a religious movement that teaches that Christians do not need to wait for the Return of Christ to the Earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom—they can expect a powerful manifestation of that Kingdom right now. . . . Kingdom Now proponents believe that Christians will soon come, through the power of God, to have dominion over earthly society, and only then will Jesus return. This dominion will not be limited to spiritual influence, but actual social, political, and economic control." "Kingdom Now," Biblestudy online. (<http://www.biblestudy.org/beginner/definition-of-christian-terms/kingdom-now.html> [accessed Dec. 29, 2009]). In this article Kingdom Now is an all-inclusive term that includes groups who speak of the Kingdom of God as contemporary as opposed to a future earthly kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> "Missiology is the area of practical theology which studies the mandate, message and work of the Christian missionary. It is a multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural reflection on all aspects of the spread of Christian faith, embracing theology, anthropology, history, geography, theories and methods of communication, comparative religion, Christian apologetics, methodology, and inter-denominational relations." "Missiology," <http://www.theopedia.com/Missology> (accessed Dec. 23, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds., *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 29–30.

<sup>4</sup> "The emerging church (sometimes referred to as the emergent movement) is a Christian movement of the late 20th and early 21st century that crosses a number of theological boundaries: participants can be described as evangelical, post-evangelical, liberal, post-liberal, charismatic, neocharismatic and post-charismatic. Participants seek to live their faith in what they believe to be a 'postmodern' society. Proponents of this movement call it a 'conversation' to emphasize its developing and decentralized nature, its vast range of standpoints and its commitment to dialogue. What those involved in the conversation mostly agree on is their disillusionment with the organized and institutional church and their support for the deconstruction of modern Christian worship, modern evangelism, and the nature of modern Christian community." "Emerging Church," [http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:X97LLdT-v9IJ:en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging\\_church+emergent+church&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari](http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:X97LLdT-v9IJ:en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerging_church+emergent+church&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari) (accessed Jan. 4, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Wagner, *Churchquake!* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 218–19.

<sup>9</sup> [www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org) (accessed Dec. 29, 2009)

<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company), 47.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone* (Silverton, OR: Lighthouse Trails Publishing), 48.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>13</sup> Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones, eds., *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 29.

<sup>14</sup> Wagner, 70–71.



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# THE BLESSED HOPE

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# Cause-Based Religious Alliances

Robert Congdon

The success of the Allies in World War II was due in part to the alliance between Great Britain, the USSR, and the United States. Setting aside significant ideological differences, they worked together to battle for their common cause. As Satan strives for global rule and worship, he is using the ploy of common causes to unite ideologically diverse governments and religions—particularly causes relating to the world’s social ills, economy, and ecology. Many religious leaders are being drawn into these deceptions and are setting aside doctrinal differences in a united effort to solve perceived global crises. It is essential that believers recognize the unseen spiritual battle being waged so that they may avoid being “taken in” by Satan’s deception: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

## Ecology-Based Interfaith and Governmental Alliances

If asked, most people would not consider environmentalism to be a religion. Yet recently a British court ruled that one’s belief in environmentalism and manmade climate change is protected by religion or belief regulations that were passed in 2003. According to this document, “‘strong beliefs’ which influence one’s opinions and which affect a whole lifestyle may be considered a religion.”<sup>1</sup>

In 2008 the Swedish church invited one thousand delegates to an Interfaith Climate Summit in Uppsala, Sweden. Citing the danger to the world if climate change goes unchecked, this conference was designed to involve the religions of the world in solving this problem. The Archbishop of Sweden stated that climate change “is not an issue best left only to politics, natural science or the market.”<sup>2</sup> This conference was notable in the “breadth of cultures and backgrounds represented”:<sup>3</sup> a Taiwanese Buddhist worked with American Indians as Palestinian Christians “chatted with a Muslim from Wales.”<sup>4</sup> Margo Wallstrom of the European Commission (arguably the second most powerful position in the European Union) noted that the conference would “bring another perspective to the climate change debate, an ethical and moral perspective, and a debate that many politicians might not be willing to engage in.”<sup>5</sup> Planet Green, a website, sees “nothing inherently contradictory about the metaphysical beliefs espoused by any of the world’s major religions and caring for the environment.”<sup>6</sup>

A recent article in the *Economist* noted a link between faith and “greenery” when it said, “Acquaintances are being struck that transcend many ethnic, ideological and theological obstacles.”<sup>7</sup> UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke to an interfaith group at a “faith-and-ecology celebration” at Windsor Castle, one of the residences of the British royal family, just prior to the Copenhagen conference.<sup>8</sup> This group

included Bahais, Buddhists, Christians, Daoists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Shintos, and Sikhs.

On a secular level, at the recent environmental conference in Copenhagen an “Accord” was reached that was endorsed by only five out of the 193 countries represented and that lacks any binding action on the nations of the world. Michael Levi of the Council of Foreign Relations called the “complexity of engineering 193 countries to discuss not just reducing emissions, but also leveraging financing, technology and a range of other issues, ‘forbidding.’”<sup>9</sup> British Prime Minister Gordon Brown believes that the consensual method of negotiation breaks down such attempts to solve global issues.<sup>10</sup> Anticipating the nearly insurmountable challenges involved in coming to a consensus when many nations are included in policymaking, global-warming advocate Al Gore called for “global governance” in July of 2009.<sup>11</sup> The failure of the Copenhagen conference has convinced many that representative organizations such as the United Nations are too bulky and inefficient to solve global problems.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of the uncertainty as to whether climate change is man-generated or merely a function of forces beyond humanity’s control, people are beginning to believe there is an urgent need to “save the world” even if it means surrendering personal freedoms and turning over the sovereignties of individual nations to a supreme ruling authority. As it becomes increasingly apparent that consensus among governments is elusive, calls for a supranational authority are being heard. The definitive example of this unique form of government is the European Union.

The European Union is the first supranational government in history. It is led by an appointed, rather than elected, group of twenty-seven men and women who make legislative decisions for the overall good of the twenty-seven nations in the Union. As “political entrepreneurs,” independent of the nations they govern,<sup>13</sup> they are expected to “rise above” personal preferences and favoritism as they strive to save the planet and establish peace and prosperity for all. A fundamental characteristic of this form of government is that it increasingly grows in power and size while national sovereignties diminish.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, a supranational government must seek and achieve global dominance. Regrettably, many who call themselves Christian are contributing to this satanically inspired effort.

## Ecology-Based Christian Alliances

The recent Manhattan Declaration (discussed elsewhere in this edition of *FrontLine*) is just one example of a cause-based Christian alliance. This alliance “of advocacy groups and ministries cut[s] across Christian traditions” in order to deal with political/social issues.<sup>15</sup> Another example is the Evangelical Climate Initiative, an alliance that includes many young adults who view climate change as a major issue as well as many Emergent and nonemergent

# Allies of the Supra-Religion

Emergent leaders<sup>16</sup> to whom this group looks for guidance.<sup>17</sup> Alliances such as these appeal to impressionable, cause-seeking young adults in many churches, for they thrive on interaction and group relationships as evidenced by Twitter, Facebook, and other social websites. They find social acceptance in alliances that encourage them to get involved in solving the world's problems—to be “doing something” about issues they have been hearing about all of their lives through the media, educational system, and textbooks. Because they view the older generation as complacent, content to be saved for eternity but uninvolved in the world outside of the church, they are easy prey for many false teachers such as Emergent spokesman Brian McLaren. According to McLaren, an “atonement-centered understanding of the gospel . . . creates vampire Christians who want Jesus for His blood and little else.”<sup>18</sup>

## A Biblical Perspective

Following after deceptive leaders, many sincere individuals are being pulled toward a humanitarian gospel of dead works that denies the life-changing power of the true gospel of salvation that not only gives eternal life but enables individuals to know the mind of Christ and actively serve Him now and in eternity. Perhaps many are genuinely saved but never have grown in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ or been fully grounded in all the doctrines of the faith, including those relating to eschatology. Because the church is failing in its task to proclaim the true gospel of salvation and equip believers, many lack discernment in these last days of the church. In 2 Timothy 3 and 4, Paul's last words to his protégé, Timothy, were to preach the Word, teach doctrine, avoid those who teach contrary to God's Word, and look for the coming of the Lord for His Church. As believers we are to behave compassionately toward the lost and downtrodden (Gal. 6:10), but our focus in doing these things should be to lead them out of darkness into God's light through the gospel of salvation.

How should Christians view causes such as climate change and the movements to unite global governments and religions? We should exercise our God-given stewardship over creation (Gen. 1:28) in a responsible manner while remembering God's promise: “While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22). God's revealed plan for earth's history informs us that there will be a seven-year Tribulation followed by Christ's millennial reign on earth (Rev. 20:4); therefore, there are at least 1007 years remaining for this present earth, and worry about an impending end of our world is needless.

Believers must be vigilant during these final days of the church, as events that the prophets foretold appear to be drawing toward fruition. Satan is using the causes and movements promoting the unification of governments

and religions to attain his ends, but our confidence is in our soon-coming Lord. Let us heed Paul's words to the Thessalonians: “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thess. 5:4–6).

<sup>1</sup> “Cranmer: Environmentalism Is the New Religion of Peace,” Archbishop Cranmer Blogspot, Nov. 3, 2009. <http://archbishop-cranmer.blogspot.com/2009/11/environmental-is-new-religion-of.html> (accessed Nov. 3, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Landau, “Faith Leaders Urge Climate Curbs,” BBC News Online, Nov. 28, 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7753784.stm> (accessed Dec. 29, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Matt McDermott, “Let's Help Push Climate Change Up Religion's Agenda.” Planet Green—a Discovery Company website. <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/work-connect/climate-change-religious-issue.html> (accessed Dec. 29, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> “Sounding the Trumpet,” *The Economist* Newspaper and Economist.com World International, Nov. 5, 2009. [http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=14807115](http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14807115) (accessed Dec. 29, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Lisa Friedman, “Some Climate Experts Seek Alternative to U.N. Process,” New York Times online, Dec. 21, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2009/12/21/21climatewire-some-climate-experts-seek-alternative-to-un-p-5632.html> (accessed Dec. 22, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Marc Morano, “Gore: U.S. Climate Bill Will Help Bring About ‘Global Governance,’” Climate Depot website, July 10, 2009. [http://www.climatedepot.com/a/1893/Gore-US-Climate\\_Bill\\_Will\\_help-Bring-About-Global-Goverance.html](http://www.climatedepot.com/a/1893/Gore-US-Climate_Bill_Will_help-Bring-About-Global-Goverance.html) (accessed July 12, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Friedman.

<sup>13</sup> Michelle Cini, ed., *European Union Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 87.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>15</sup> Tobin Grant, “What Does the Manhattan Declaration Really Mean?” Christianity Today online, Nov. 24, 2009, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/novemberweb-only/147-21.0.html> (accessed Dec. 31, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> A nonemergent Emergent is one who holds to Emergent ideas and philosophies but denies being Emergent.

<sup>17</sup> “A Christian Call to Action on Climate Change,” The Evangelical Climate Initiative website, <http://christianandclimate.org> (accessed Dec. 31, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Brian McLaren, *Theory of Atonement*, [www.brianmclaren.net/archives/000149.html](http://www.brianmclaren.net/archives/000149.html) (accessed April 29, 2008).

# On the Home Front

FBFI NEWS AND EVENTS

## 2010 Meetings

### April 2010

#### South Regional Fellowship

Due to the close scheduling of other nearby conferences, the South Regional Fellowship has been postponed pending discussion of a recurring annual date that is open for more participants.

### April 19–20, 2010

#### Three Rivers Regional Fellowship

Faith Baptist Church  
809 Greenbag Road  
Morgantown, WV 26508  
304.292.9872

### May 3–4, 2010

#### New England Regional Fellowship

Cornerstone Baptist Church  
415 US Route 1  
Scarborough, ME 04074  
207.885.5123  
cbcscarborough.org

### June 14–18, 2010

#### Annual Chaplain Training

Tri-City Baptist Church  
6953 West 92nd Lane  
Westminster, CO 80021  
303.424.2287

### June 15–17, 2010

#### 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Fellowship

Tri-City Baptist Church  
6953 W 92nd Lane  
Westminster, CO 80021  
303.424.2287

### July 26–28, 2010

#### Alaska Regional Fellowship

Immanuel Baptist Church  
855 South Trunk Road  
Palmer, AK 99645  
907.746.0402  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~akbeb/akfbf.html>  
akfbf@earthlink.net

### October 18–19, 2010

#### Central Region (North)

Abilene Bible Baptist Church  
409 NE Van Buren  
Abilene, KS 67410

### October 21–22, 2010

#### Central Region (South)

Westside Baptist Church  
3883 Lakes of Bridgewater Drive  
Katy, TX 77449

### November 2, 2010

#### NYC Regional Fellowship

Grace Baptist Church  
798 Hempstead Turnpike  
Franklin Square, NY 11010-4321  
516.564.1038

### November 8–9, 2010

#### Southern California

Camp Ironwood  
49191 Cherokee Road  
Newberry Springs, CA 92365  
760.272.1350 (Ron Smith)

### November 18–19, 2010

#### Northern California

Cornerstone Baptist Church  
363 Civic Drive, Suite 100  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523  
cornerstone4life@gmail.com

## 2011 Meetings

### June 21–23, 2011

#### Pacific Rim Regional Fellowship

Harvest Baptist Church  
PO Box 23189  
Barrigada, GU 96921  
GUAM  
671.477.6341

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# SOUND WORDS

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

## First Partaker

### DOING AND KNOWING

Over the Christmas holiday I read a precious book I'd stumbled upon only a week or two earlier. How I failed to know of it all these years amazes me. I've admired its author ever since I was in college. He was the South African pastor and prolific writer Andrew Murray, and this particular title of his is *The Inner Chamber and the Inner Life*.

#### A Quest for Holiness

I first became acquainted with Andrew Murray (1828–1917) through his classic *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. To be honest, that particular work of Murray's has never really captured me, though I've begun it three or four times (and never made it through). But there was a spirituality to it that provoked my interest in Murray himself. Many years ago that led to my reading W. M. Douglas's fine biography, *Andrew Murray and His Message: One of God's Choice Saints*. Now that book was a heartwarming spiritual inspiration. Just one anecdote: Andrew Murray's father, a minister himself, set aside every Friday evening to praying for revival in his parched land. He kept at it for thirty years! Finally, God gloriously answered, and the chosen instrument in 1853 was the elder Murray's own son, Andrew. I read that, and my mind leaped up with the words, *Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Hallelujah!*

Andrew Murray was militantly orthodox. He was an equally fervent evangelist, scouring for souls during his first pastoral charge, a territory of over 50,000 square miles. But he became best loved by tens of thousands of readers for his deeply devotional literature,

books such as *Abide in Christ*, *Absolute Surrender*, *God's Will: Our Dwelling Place*, *The Deeper Christian Life*, and other such titles. Those books flowed passionately out of his own fervent pursuit of holiness. It began while he was still a teenager. *I have been led to surrender myself wholly to Christ*, he wrote to his father in his seventeenth year.

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

Later, after being inducted into his first ministerial charge, he laid bare his blood-earnest passion to belong to Christ alone. *Oh! I have thought could His name be stamped with burning irons on me to remind me more that I am His property—I would willingly bear it—could the mark of His right to me be cut in the living flesh, I would not shrink from the agony, to be but more impressed with the conviction that I am not my own.*

Murray came to believe that there are two distinct stages to the Christian life, the second occurring in a unique moment of crisis baptism with the Holy Spirit. But no one can fault his distillation of both desire and possibility when he exclaimed, *I must be filled; it is absolutely necessary. I may be filled; God has made it blessedly possible. I would be filled; it is eminently desirable. I will be filled; it is so blessedly certain.*

#### The Whole Point of the Morning Watch

Driven by such convictions, Andrew Murray pushed relentlessly for his readers to develop a vital habit of observing the "morning watch." *It is the key*, he wrote, *to the position in which the surrender to Christ and the Holy Spirit can be unceasingly and fully maintained.*

But he warned of the possibility that even in prayer and Bible study one could miss the beatific objective of it all. *There is a terrible danger to which you stand exposed in your inner chamber. You are in danger of substituting Prayer and Bible Study for living fellowship with God, the living interchange of giving Him your love, your heart, and your life, and receiving from Him his love, His life, and His Spirit.*

The answer to this, Murray taught, was to feel at

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once that my success for the day will depend upon the clearness of the strength and faith that seeks and finds and holds HIM in the closet. Meditation and prayer and the word will all be used as subordinate and auxiliary to this: the link for the day between Christ and me must be renewed and firmly fastened in the morning hour.

It was in order to instruct believers in how to do this that Murray wrote the book that has so challenged my heart this last month. What I've found most helpful about it are Murray's insightful answers to very common problems in actually experiencing the daily renewal of this precious sense of communion with the Lord Himself as we read and pray. Among them is one to which Murray gives three chapters. They're entitled "Knowing and Doing," "The Blessedness of the Doer," and "Keeping Christ's Commandments." I think you get the drift of the difficulty he's addressing.

I wish all pastors and preachers would purchase *The Inner Chamber and the Inner Life* and read the entire text of these three chapters. But for those who would like some immediate exposure to Murray's teaching on this critical aspect of daily Bible reading, I've condensed and lightly edited them in the excerpts that follow. May the Lord impress upon our hearts that the right approach is not *Knowing and Doing*, but *Doing and Knowing*.

**"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know."—John vii. 17.**

Some time ago I received a letter from one who was evidently an earnest Christian. He asked me for some hints to help him in Bible study. My first thought was to answer that there are so many addresses and booklets

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*There is a terrible danger to which you stand exposed in your inner chamber. You are in danger of substituting Prayer and Bible Study for living fellowship with God, the living interchange of giving Him your love, your heart, and your life, and receiving from Him his love, His life, and His Spirit.*

on the subject, that he would find all I could say, better said already. But after a little while, certain experiences in my own immediate circle made me feel that instruction was needed on this all-important subject, so I take up my pen with the earnest prayer and hope that what I write may be from God, the fountain of Light and Life, to help His children to see how they may draw from His precious Word all that Divine instruction and nourishment, all that

abundant joy and strength which He has there laid up for them.

The very first thing I have to say, the thing that comes before all else is this. In your Bible study everything will depend upon the spirit in which you come to it, upon the Object or End you propose to yourself. If your aim be simply to know the Bible well, you will be disappointed. If you think that the thorough knowledge of the Bible will necessarily be a blessing, you are mistaken. To some it is a curse. To others it is powerless, it does not make them either holy or happy. To some it is a burden, it depresses them instead of quickening them or lifting them up.

What ought then to be the Aim or End, the real disposition of the Bible student? God's word is food, bread from heaven. The first need for Bible study is A Great Hunger After Righteousness,—a great desire To Do All God's Will. *Blessed are they that hear the word of God And Keep It.* There is no blessedness in hearing or knowing God's word apart from Keeping It. The word is nothing if it be not kept, obeyed, done. *If any man willeth To Do His Will, he shall Know.*

According to this saying of our Lord, all true knowledge of God's word depends upon there being first The Will To Do It. God will refuse to unlock the real meaning and blessing of His word to any but those whose will is Definitely Set ON Doing It. I must read my Bible with one purpose—*Whatsoever He saith unto you, Do It.*

The truth and the worth of what God promises consist in this, that He Does It. His word of promise is meant to be done. This is no less true of His word of command, of things which He means Us To Do. If we do not do them, if we seek to know them, if we admire their beauty and praise their wisdom, but do not Do Them, we delude ourselves. They are meant To Be Done. It is only as we do them, that their real meaning and blessing can be unfolded to us. It is only as we do them, that we really can grow in the Divine life. *Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit unto Every Good Work (this first, then) and increasing In The Knowledge Of God.* It is only when we approach God's words with the same object which God had in view, That They Should Be Done, that we can have any hope of blessing.

This was the mark of the saints of old. *So Abram went, as the Lord had spoken to him. As the Lord had commanded Moses, so did he,* is the description of the man who as a servant was faithful in all his house. And of David we read, *I have found a man after mine own heart, who shall do all my will.* In Psalm 119 we hear him speaking with God about His word, and praying for Divine light and teaching, but ever accompanied by the vow of obedience, or some other expression of love and delight.

It is the doing of God's will, that even with God's own Son, is the one secret of entrance into the favour and the mind of God.

I have just been reading Mr. Moody's new book, *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study*. I doubt not but many will avail themselves of the suggestions it contains. They will think rightly, "What has helped a man like Mr. Moody, can help me too." And yet they may be disappointed. They must be, unless they bring to the Bible what Mr. Moody brought, *An Honest Desire To Do Whatever He Saw God Wanted Him To Do*. Christian! I beseech you by the mercies of God, when you ask God to lead you into the treasures of His word, into the palace where Christ dwells, do it as one who presents himself a living sacrifice, *Ready To Do Whatever God Shall Speak*. Do not think this a matter of course. It is of deeper importance than you know. This is more frequently absent from Bible study than you think. Seek for it with deep humility. The first need for enjoying your food is hunger. The first requirement for the Bible study is *A Simple, Determined Longing To Find Out What God Wants You To Do, And A Dead-in-earnest Resolve To Do It*. *If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching*—to him the word of God will be opened up.

## The Blessedness of the Doer

What a terrible delusion to be content with, to delight in hearing the word, and yet not to do it. And how terribly common, the sight of multitudes of Christians listening to the word of God most regularly and earnestly, and yet not doing it. If their own servant were to do so, hearing but not doing, how summary the judgment would be. And yet, so complete is the delusion, they never know that they are not living good Christian lives. What can it be that thus deludes us? There is more than one thing.

One is that people mistake the pleasure they have in hearing, for religion and worship. The mind delights in having the truth put clearly before it; the imagination is gratified by its illustration; the feelings are stirred by its application. To an active mind knowledge gives pleasure. A man may study some branch of science—say electricity—for the enjoyment the knowledge gives him, without the least intention of applying it practically. And so people go to church, and enjoy the preaching, And Yet Do Not Do What God Asks. The unconverted and the converted man alike remain content to go on in doing and confessing, and still doing the things which they ought not to do.

Another cause of this delusion is the terrible perversion of the doctrine of our impotence to good. The grace of Christ to enable us to obey, to keep from sin-

ning and really to make us holy, is so little believed, that men practically think that there is a necessity of sinning. God cannot expect an exact obedience of them, for He knows they cannot render it. This error cuts away the very root of a determined purpose to do all God has said. It closes the heart to any earnest desire to believe and experience all God's grace can do in us, and keeps men self-contented in the midst of sin. Hearing and not doing—what terrible self-delusion.

There is a third reason for it, having special reference to private Bible reading. The hearing or reading is regarded as a duty, the performance of which is considered to be a religious service. We have spent our five or ten minutes in the morning reading. We have read thoughtfully and attentively. We have tried to take in what was read. A duty faithfully performed eases the conscience, and gives a sense of satisfaction. And there is hardly any conception of the worthlessness, and more than that, of the hardening influence of a duty performed or of knowledge acquired, unless we go out with our whole heart set upon Literally Doing and Being What God's Word says He Would Have Us Be And Can Make Us. Terrible delusion! *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves*.

It is in the closet, in the morning watch, that this delusion must be fought and conquered. We may find that it will disturb our regular Bible reading, and make us fall behind in our portions. It need not do this. But far better it should, than that this point remain doubtful and unsettled. Everything Depends on this. Our Lord Jesus said: "If any man willeth To Do His Will, he shall Know Of The Teaching whether it be of God." It is only the heart that delights in God's law, and Has Set Its Will Determinedly On Doing It, that can receive the divine illumination and which spiritually knows the teaching of Christ in its Divine origin and power. Without this will to do, our knowledge will not profit. It is mere head knowledge.

In life, in science and art, in business, the only way of truly knowing, is doing. What a man cannot do he does not thoroughly know. The Only Way To Know God, To taste His Blessedness, Is Through The Doing Of His Will. That proves whether it is a God of my own sentiment and imagination that I confess, or the true and living God who rules and works all. It is only in doing His will that I prove I love it and accept it, and make myself one with it. And there is no possible way under heaven of being united to God but by being united to His will in the doing of it. It is in the quiet of the inner chamber, in the spirit in which I do my private Bible reading, in the determination with which I seek to have this point absolutely and finally settled, *I am going to do whatever God says*, that

the awful self-delusion of hearing and not doing must be conquered.

It may help us if we take some portion of God's Word and see how we are to deal with it. Suppose it to be the Sermon on the Mount. I begin with the first Beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit*. I ask—*What does this mean? Am I obeying this injunction? Am I at least thoroughly in earnest in seeking day by day to maintain this disposition?*

## Keeping Christ's Commandments

It is only as we realize the prominence Christ and Scripture give to this truth, that we shall learn to give it the same prominence in our life. It will become to us one of the keys to true Bible study. The man who reads his Bible with the longing and determined purpose To Search Out And To Obey Every Commandment Of God And Of Christ, is on the right track to receiving all the blessing the Word was ever meant to bring. He will specially learn two things. (1) How he needs to wait for the teaching of the Holy Spirit to lead him into all God's will. And (2) what blessedness there is in performing daily duties, not only because they are right, or he delights in them, but because they are the will of God. He will find how all daily life is elevated, when he says as Christ did: *This commandment received I of My Father*. The Word will become the light and guide by which all his steps are ordered. And his life will become the training school in which the sanctifying power of the Word is proved, and the mind ever prepared anew for its teaching and encouragement. And so the keeping of the commandments will be the key to every spiritual blessing.

Make a determined effort to grasp what this life of full obedience means. Take some of Christ's clearest commands:—*Love one another even as I have loved you; ye ought to wash one another's feet; ye should do as I have done to you:* and accept a Christlike love and humility as the law of the supernatural life you are to live.

So far from the sense of failure or impotence leading you to despair, or to rest contented in what you think attainable, let it only encourage you to put your hope more entirely on Him, who by His Spirit will work in you both to will and to do. Once again, our one aim must be perfect harmony between conscience and conduct. Every conviction must be carried out into action. Christ's commands were meant to be obeyed. If this be not done, the accumulation of Scripture knowledge only darkens and hardens, and works that satisfaction with the pleasure which the acquisition of knowledge brings, which unfits us for the Spirit's teaching.

I pray you, do not weary of my repeating so often the blessed, solemn message. In your inner chamber the question is to be decided whether you will through the day keep the commandments of Christ. And there too will be decided whether in future life you are to bear the character of a man wholly given up to know and do the will of God. 

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***Make a determined effort to grasp what this life of full obedience means. Take some of Christ's clearest commands:—Love one another even as I have loved you; ye ought to wash one another's feet; ye should do as I have done to you: and accept a Christlike love and humility as the law of the supernatural life you are to live.***

As I feel how far my proud, self-confident nature is from it, am I willing to wait, and plead with Christ, and believe that He can work it in me? Am I going to do this—to be poor in spirit? Or shall I again be a hearer and not a doer?

And so I may go through the Beatitudes, and through the whole Sermon, with its teaching on meekness and mercy, on love and righteousness, on doing everything as unto the Father, and in everything trusting Him, on doing His will and Christ's words, and verse by verse ask—*Do I know what this means? Am I living it out? Am I doing it? Am I what He speaks?* And as ever again, the answer comes—*I fear not, nay, I see no possibility of living thus, and doing what He says*, I shall be led to feel the need of an entire revision of both my creed and conduct. And I shall ask whether the vow, *Whatever He Says, I Am Going To Do*, has ever taken the place either in my Bible reading or my life which He demands that it should have.

Ere I know, such questionings may begin to work in me a poverty of spirit I never knew, and lead me to an entirely new insight into my need of a Christ who will breathe in me His own life, And Work In Me All He Speaks. I will get courage in faith to say, *I Can Do all things in Him who strengthened me. Whatsoever He saith in His Word, I will do.*

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# Bring . . . the Books

*Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World*

I have spent my entire adult life in vocational ministry. I have been privileged to serve on the faculty of two wonderful Christian universities and on several pastoral staffs. I have worked hard to “do all the stuff” that righteous guys in ministry are supposed to do as part of their calling and service to Christ and His church. I read my Bible regularly, work hard to cultivate a private devotional prayer life, and strive to live in ways that reflect my desire for moral purity and ethical uprightness. I was pretty convinced that, though worldliness is always a danger to be resisted, I was winning the battle . . . until I read the first chapter of *Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World*.

When I first encountered the book, I was unimpressed by what I had heard from others who had read it. It seems today that many in Fundamentalism are in love with all things Evangelical, especially its writers. I was skeptical. Furthermore, although straight on the gospel, the editor, C. J. Mahaney, holds a few theological positions which differ from what I understand the Scriptures to teach. So the book sat on my stack of to-read books for many months.

Some readers may be at a place spiritually where they do not need a book like this. I would certainly caution each to read discerningly. However, readers of *Sound Words* should possess enough discernment to recognize that an author with a divergent theological view in one area can make valuable contributions in other areas and can be read profitably by discerning readers. I believe this to be the case with this work and that there is much benefit in the powerful spiritual impact of the book’s content.

The chapters, written by different men, are arranged around two major themes: how not to love the world, and how to love the world Biblically. The first chapter makes the case that most contemporary believers have been seduced by the world to the point that we are more like the world than like Christ. The chapter has a short but penetrating definition of the world—“the organized system of human civilization that is actively hostile toward God and alienated from God.” We who live in this world are making daily choices “between love for a world that opposes God and love for the risen Christ.” These choices often reveal the profound impact that worldliness has on us. Worldliness “is loving the values and pursuits of the world that stand opposed to God. . . . It rejects God’s rule and replaces it with our own. . . . It exalts our opinions above God’s truth. It elevates our sinful desires for the things of this fallen world above God’s commands and promises.”

So far so good. Though I was a pleasantly surprised to read this from an Evangelical writer, I thought to myself, “Basically, this is what we have been saying all along.” Then I encountered a citation from Iain Murray that pierced my self-contented mindset. I saw that worldliness was not just a danger that “they” faced but

one that is alive and well in my own heart!

Worldliness is departing from God. It is a man-centered way of thinking; it proposes objectives which demand no radical breach with man’s fallen nature; it judges the importance of things by the present and material results; it weighs success by numbers; it covets human esteem and wants no unpopularity; it knows no truth for which it is worth suffering; it declines to be a fool for “Christ’s sake.” Worldliness is the mind-set of the unregenerate. It adopts idols and is at war with God.

I know it sounds ridiculous. I should have grasped these concepts much sooner—and in my head, perhaps I did. Though I understood that outer actions are produced by heart values, in practice I had pretty much identified worldliness almost exclusively by outer actions rather than heart values. I believe this is the primary way many of us in Fundamentalism perceive worldliness. But I looked at the things that often drive me and realized that they were the same things that drive unregenerate people. I had to admit that I was infected with worldliness—except mine looked spiritually respectable.

Each chapter develops the theme in particular directions and suggests key applications for believers who want to live in ways distinct from the world. The chapters on materialism, dress, and modesty are particularly pointed. The appendix on modest wedding attire is worth the price of the book. While some will wish that the applications in the chapters on media and music were more specific, most will find the principles laid out in those chapters to be a helpful starting point for specific applications to their own congregation or family.

The final chapter, particularly powerful, forces the reader to see the world through the lens of the cross:

The cross was the crucial factor defining Paul’s relationship to the world. On the one hand, the world was crucified to him. It held no sway over Paul, nor was he dependent on it for anything. He didn’t crave its approval, embrace its values, or covet its rewards. On the other hand, Paul had been crucified to the world (Galatians 2:20).

So must we be, as we live between two eternal realities—the cross of Christ and His glorious coming. This book helped me in this struggle, and I trust it will do the same for you. ☞☞

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

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The Bible provides only a brief summary of Isaac’s twin sons’ growth to maturity: “And the boys grew.” We are then given a glimpse of their character. Esau is described in terms that our culture considers admirable—“a cunning hunter, a man of the field.” Jacob is described in terms usually interpreted to mean something our culture treats scornfully—“a plain man, dwelling in tents.” These statements are generally taken to mean that Esau was a rugged outdoorsman, while Jacob was an unremarkable “sissy” who stayed inside. These images are reinforced when we find Jacob cooking as Esau comes in from the field. We tend to visualize Esau as rugged and tough and Jacob as weak, even effeminate. Esau’s daddy loved him, so he must have been a “man’s man.” Jacob’s mommy loved him, so he must have been a “momma’s boy.” But is that what the text means?

First, we should note that no one in Scripture is ever praised for being a “cunning hunter.” While there is nothing wrong with hunting, only two men in Scripture are identified as “hunters,” and both are described as being skilled at it—Esau and Nimrod. Nimrod is called a “mighty hunter” in the context of being identified as a rebel against God (Gen. 10:9), who claimed for himself an authority not authorized by God. Esau is probably described this way to prepare us for his willing participation in Isaac’s scheme to confer the blessing of Abraham on Esau when God had ordained Jacob to be the next patriarch. We should understand the narrator to intend this as a critical evaluation of Esau, not praise.

Later, the text implies that Esau hunted because his father preferred venison. However, we find that Isaac couldn’t tell venison from goat meat when it was properly prepared. Apparently, the real reason Esau became a cunning hunter was for the sport of it, and it consumed him to the neglect of everything else. Hunting was not just a hobby for Esau—it was his life. Esau shouldn’t be viewed as a rugged outdoorsman but as a self-absorbed goof-off, unconcerned about the family, the business, or God. The fact that Isaac loved him for it says more about Isaac than it says about Jacob.

What about Jacob? He’s called a “plain man, dwelling in tents.” Of all the times the word *‘is tam/tamim* appears in the Hebrew text, it is translated “plain” only here. The word is usually translated “perfect” and signifies wholeness or maturity in the sense of moral uprightness. Besides Jacob, it is used to describe the character of two other individuals: Noah (Gen. 6:9) and Job (Job 1:1, 8). In Genesis 17:1 it’s applied to a third individual, stated as a command describing the character God

expected Abram to develop or display. In each of these passages, it is translated “perfect.”

Having been used to describe the character of Noah, Abraham, and Job as men of unimpeachable integrity, we also find that David uses it to describe himself as “upright” when kept from “presumptuous sin” (Ps. 19:13). Further, the word describes God’s words and works as “perfect” (Deut. 32:4; 2 Sam. 22:31; etc.), man’s responsibility to live righteously before God and be “perfect” (Deut. 18:13; etc.), and the physical perfection of animals acceptable for sacrifice (Exod. 12:5; Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1, 6; 22:21; etc.). To substitute the word “plain” or “quiet” in any of these contexts would grossly distort the meaning of the texts. Further, Jacob’s possession of this “blamelessness” or “integrity” is stated as an accomplished fact, as in the cases of Noah and Job, rather than as a goal, as in Abram’s case. Jacob is not *commanded* to be blameless—rather, we are told from the start that he is blameless. “The translators have done Jacob a disservice by calling him a ‘plain’ man, or a ‘quiet’ man” (Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976], 415).

We must also consider the significance of Jacob’s being described as “dwelling in tents.” In contrast to Esau’s being a “man of the field,” Jacob is presented as staying with the family and assisting in the livestock business, while Esau irresponsibly neglects home and business and goes his own way for fun. More importantly, Jacob is compared favorably with two other tent-dwellers—his grandfather Abraham and his father, Isaac—as an indication of his faith in God’s promise: “By faith [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:9, 10). The writer of Hebrews links Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as “tent dwellers” and ties this to their faith in God’s promises of redemption.

For Jacob to be identified as a “plain man” and a “tent dweller” when he is introduced is not an accident. God intends us to realize that Jacob was a righteous man who trusted God’s promises, while Esau was a godless man who cared nothing for God and His promises. Understanding this foundational point profoundly influences our interpretation of the lives of these two men. From their very introduction, we see that we should strive to be less like Esau and more like Jacob: blameless in our lives as we anticipate our eternal inheritance with the Lord. 

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

Dr. Paul Downey pastors Temple Baptist Church in Athens, Georgia. This column is adapted from the author’s book *Trusting God When Life Is Hard: A Fresh Look at the Life of Jacob* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2009), 8–12. Used with permission from BJU Press.

With the United States facing an economic downturn many churches are taking a long hard look at their church budget. While a slowing economy is not a bad thing for a materialistic, “gotta-have-more” nation, it does challenge pastors to assess not only their budgets but also their teaching and preaching to their congregations in the area of financial stewardship.

There’s not a segment of a church congregation that, from time to time, does not need their thinking Biblically challenged in the area of financial stewardship. Giving and tithing are intrinsic to believers’ walking by faith and are essential to their Christian growth. Young couples, newly married, need to be challenged to live by faith in this spiritual discipline. New believers need patient teaching regarding their part in supporting the local body that they have joined. Those who have been believers for some time need their spiritual values confronted to gauge whether their financial giving matches their verbal commitment to Christ and His church. My pastor states from time to time, “The most visible expression of a believer walking by faith is his weekly tithe.” It really is true that “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21). The preaching and teaching on the issue of Biblical stewardship is not simply a matter of meeting the budget. Rather, it is an area where a wise, caring shepherd will teach and exhort those under his spiritual care to greater faith in the area of finances.

### Financial Stewardship Demonstrates Our Loyalty to God

Some withhold their giving as a way of expressing their disapproval for what is going on in the church. Recently I heard a preacher say that we vote for what’s going on in the church to the extent that we are involved financially.

Jeremy Benton was a wealthy man from London, England. He set up large trust funds for many hospitals in London, worth millions and millions of dollars. The money was given under one stipulation: Benton’s cremated remains had to “attend” every board meeting. So they took his ashes and placed them in an urn. History records that for over one hundred years those ashes sat at the end of the table; the record books stated over and over again, “Jeremy Benton, present, but not voting.”

We would expect that from a dead man, but not a man who is living. What a shame it would be if it were said of us that we were present but not voting.

In 1916 Protestants were giving 2.9% of their incomes to their churches. In 1933, the depth of the Great Depression, they were giving 3.2%. In

1955, just after affluence began spreading through our culture, it was still 3.2%. By 2000, when Americans were over 450% richer (after taxes and inflation) than in the Great Depression, Protestants were giving 2.6% of their incomes to their churches. If members of historically Christian churches in the United States had been giving an average of ten percent in 2000, there would have been an additional \$139 billion a year going through church channels (John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life*, 172).

In 1950 a person was considered wealthy if he had a household income of \$17,000. One in 50,000 homes were rich. In 1990 one was considered rich with a household income of \$100,000, but by then one in every twenty-five households fit that description. In 2000 a person was considered rich with an income of \$135,000, and one in every seventeen households could boast that kind of income.

If you’ve ever heard someone vow, “If I were rich, I’d give away most of my money,” don’t bank on it. The statistics show that people with higher incomes give away a smaller percentage of their wealth.

INCOME	% GIVEN AWAY
Under \$10,000	3.6%
\$10–19,999	3.4%
\$20–29,999	2.5%
\$30–39,999	1.8%
\$40–49,999	2.3%
\$50–74,999	2.0%
\$75–99,999	1.9%
\$100,000 and above	2.5%

(Ron Blue, *Storm Shelter*, quoted in *New Man*, March/April 1995, p. 16)

### Financial Stewardship Discloses Our Love for God

Martyn Lloyd-Jones told a story about a farmer who went into the house one day to tell his wife and family some good news. “The cow just gave birth to twin calves, one red and one white,” he said. “We must dedicate one of these calves to the Lord. We will bring them up together, and when the time comes, we will sell one and keep the proceeds, and we will sell the other and give the proceeds to the Lord’s work.” His wife asked him which he was going to dedicate to the Lord. “There’s no need to bother about that now,”

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

he replied, "we'll treat them both in the same way, and when the time comes, we'll do as I say."

A few days later, he entered the kitchen looking unhappy. "What happened?" his wife asked. "I have bad news," he replied. "The Lord's calf is dead." "Wait," said his wife, "you didn't decide which calf was to be the Lord's." "Yes," he said, "I decided it was the white one, and the white one died. The Lord's calf is dead."

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***In 1916 Protestants were giving 2.9% of their incomes to their churches. In 1933, the depth of the Great Depression, they were giving 3.2%. In 1955, just after affluence began spreading through our culture, it was still 3.2%. By 2000, when Americans were over 450% richer (after taxes and inflation) than in the Great Depression, Protestants were giving 2.6% of their incomes to their churches.***

A missions publication told a story about Sadie Sieker, who served for many years as a house-parent for missionary children in the Philippines. Sadie loved books. Though she gladly loaned out some, others she treasured in a footlocker under her bed. Once in the quiet of the night Sadie heard a faint gnawing sound. After searching all around her room, she discovered that the noise was coming from her footlocker. When she opened it, she found nothing but an enormous pile of dust. All the books she had kept to herself had been lost to termites. What we give away, we keep. What we hoard, we lose.

A story is told of a man who loved old books. He met an acquaintance who had just thrown away a Bible that had been stored in the attic of his ancestral home for generations. "I couldn't read it," the friend explained. "Somebody named Guten-something had printed it." "Not Gutenberg!" the book lover exclaimed in horror. "That Bible was one of the first books ever printed. Why, a copy just sold for over two million dollars!" His friend was unimpressed. "Mine wouldn't have brought a dollar. Some fellow named Martin Luther had scribbled all over it in German."

How often are we like this man who couldn't see the value of what he possessed? Each one of us possesses things of great value. Rich, poor, gifted, or not—we have all been given valuable possessions that God desires us to steward for Him.

One sunny Sunday morning, a shrewd minister who desperately needed funds for his struggling church stood up in his pulpit and announced, "Brothers and sisters, I have before me this morning three sermons: a one-thousand-dollar sermon that lasts five minutes, a five-hundred-dollar sermon that lasts one hour, and a two-hundred-dollar sermon that lasts two hours. We shall now take up the offering, and the amount received will determine the sermon preached!" Needless to say, the church is no longer struggling!

## **Financial Stewardship Decries Our Lust**

John G. Wendel and his sisters were some of the most miserly people of all time. Although they had received a huge inheritance from their parents, they spent very little of it and did all they could to keep their wealth for themselves. John was able to influence five of his six sisters never to marry, and they lived in the same house in New York City for fifty years. When the last sister died in 1931, her estate was valued at more than \$100 million. Her only dress was one that she had made herself, and she had worn it for twenty-five years. Even though they had wealth many people only dreamed of, the Wendels chose to store their money and never use it. While saving money is good, investing and being a wise steward of money is how God desires us to handle our finances.

Pastor W. A. Criswell tells of an ambitious young man who told his pastor he had promised God a tithe of his income. They prayed for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40.00 per week and tithing \$4.00. In a few years his income increased, and he was tithing \$500.00 per week. He called on the pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise; it was too costly now. The pastor replied, "I don't see how you can be released from your promise, but we can ask God to reduce your income to \$40.00 a week; then you'd have no problem tithing \$4.00."

A minister approached a rich member in his congregation for a contribution to the church. He stated the urgent need and compelling case, and called for his support.

"I understand why you think I can give \$5000," said the rich man. "I am the managing director of my own three businesses, it is true, and I have all the signs of wealth. But there are some things you don't know. Did you know that my mother is in an expensive nursing home?"

"Well, no, I didn't know," said the minister.

"Did you know that my brother died with no insurance, and left a family of five?"

"No, I didn't," came the reply.

"Did you know my son is deeply religious, has gone into social work, and makes less than the national poverty level to meet the needs of his family?"

"No, I hadn't realized," said the minister.

"Well, then," said the rich man, "if I don't give a cent to any of them, why do you think I'll give anything to you?" ☞

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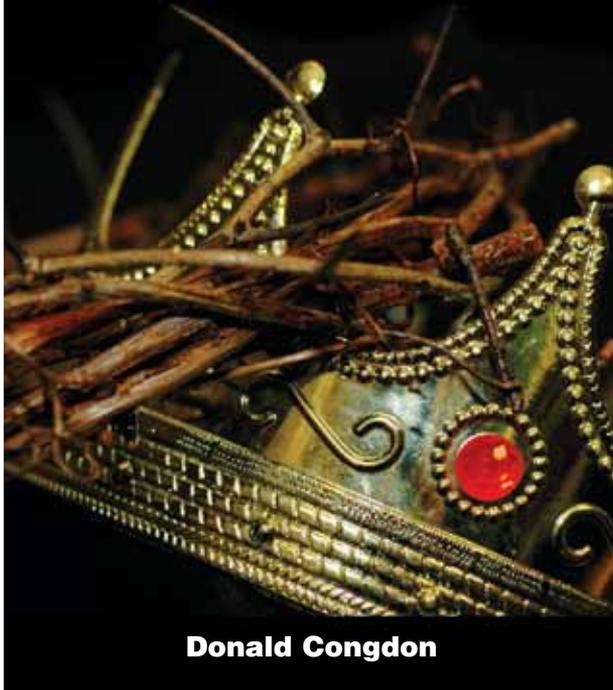
**N**ot too long ago we enjoyed the Christmas season. Very soon we will celebrate the resurrection. For believers these two events hold a special place as major milestones on the path of history that stretches from the Creation to the passing away of the present heavens and earth. Such milestones punctuate the long, uneventful spans of history, reminding us that behind the unfolding of human events lies a divine Plan, one that acts with precise timing and irresistible purpose.

When asked to identify the goal and consummating event of history, many select the atonement as best fitting this description. And this position certainly has merit. Without the crucifixion and the resurrection, humanity could play no role in God's plan for history beyond that of an unhappy example of divine justice. We certainly cannot undervalue the importance of the atonement. But to stop with the atonement and look no farther down the road of history is like giving up on a book in the middle chapter. Worst of all, to look no farther causes us to miss the true consummating event of history, the moment when Jesus Christ assumes the throne of the earth and inaugurates His thousand-year reign as the last and greatest of kings.

For the true purpose of history, ordained from eternity past, is the creation of an earthly kingdom with Jesus Christ as its King. Unfortunately, during the last fifteen hundred years of church history Christianity has largely lost sight of this crucial truth. An allegorical, spiritualized view of Scripture has caused even sincere Bible-believers to see the Kingdom as solely spiritual, existing only in Heaven and in the hearts of true believers. Yet a literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of the Scripture fails to support this position, which distorts the glory of God's true plan for history.

This issue of *FrontLine* emphasizes prophecy and final events. In keeping with this theme, we will explore the role of the Person towards whom all history moves. We will examine our Lord's life on earth and see that to many of those around Him He was never anything but a king. Many speak of the "scarlet thread of redemption" that runs through the Bible. Without doubt this thread does indeed exist. But there also exists a purple cord of royalty running throughout the entirety of Scripture, one

# Never Anything but King



**Donald Congdon**

that points to Jesus Christ, the Redeemer *and* King.

The Old Testament emphasizes kingship from Genesis through Malachi. The Pentateuch lays the groundwork for God's relationship to His special people, Israel. The historical books reveal the need for a perfect King as Israel and its kings repeatedly fail to obey God's commands. The coming Kingdom and its King are the theme of the Prophets. And the Psalms, though not placed among the prophetic books, are actually strongly prophetic, with at least one-third of the psalms addressing some facet of the Kingdom.

For the Jewish people the idea of the Messiah has never been disassociated from a literal king, ruling and reigning over the earth from Jerusalem. A solely spiritual king never entered the Jewish mindset. The idea of the Messiah is a complex one, however. When the angel spoke to Joseph in a dream, he emphasized that "he [Jesus] shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

But when the angel spoke to Mary, he emphasized that "he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33). Those knowledgeable in the Hebrew Scriptures and eager for the coming of the Messiah understood that the Messiah must atone before He could reign.

Simeon is one such man. He clearly understood the need of an atoning king, for he was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25), a function that has both spiritual and physical aspects. God honored Simeon's devotion by revealing "that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26). Note the use of the word "Christ," which literally means "Messiah" wherever it appears. Simeon expected One who would both redeem and reign.

The Magi are another example of those who understood Him to be a literal king. Scripture tells us relatively little of these men or the degree of their prophetic understanding. We must venture into the realm of speculation here. These men were probably like the officials described in the book of Daniel, members of that intellectual class known as "wise men," who embodied statesmanship, religion,

and science, serving in the inner circle of their government. It takes only a small stretch of the imagination to postulate that these men were the spiritual descendants of Daniel and were in possession of his book as well as another prophecy that has not been preserved in the canon of Scripture, a prophecy foretelling an astronomical event that would herald the arrival of the Messiah. This speculation is not impossible, since Scripture indicates that not all revelation from God has been preserved. At the end of his gospel, for example, John remarks that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (21:25). Indeed, the specificity of the Magi's demand, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matt. 2:2), makes it clear that they journeyed in direct response to an expected, specific prophetic event.

The presence, action, and language of the Magi affirms their understanding of Jesus' kingly office. Busy foreign officials would not make a major journey to greet the infant king of a minor country. The fact that they sought the "King of the Jews" tells us that they recognized Jesus' messianic identity. With directed understanding, they realized that the King of the world had arrived, and they rushed to do Him homage.

Herod's response to the Magi's question also suggests that he too recognized Jesus' royal significance. Many deride Herod's slaughter of the innocents as illogical on the grounds that Jesus, as

a spiritual ruler, posed no threat to Herod's earthly rule. In fact, Herod's actions, brutal and evil though they were, are consistent in light of the man's history and support the idea of Jesus as a literal king, one who will indeed displace all earthly rulers. Herod had already killed four members of his own family to protect his throne. His willingness to kill the infant male children of Bethlehem shows that he did indeed see Jesus as a genuine threat.

Jesus' key disciples never expected any other role from Him than that of the Messiah. Time and time again, they expected Him to take up kingship immediately. Their jockeying for favored positions, described in Matthew 20:20-24, Mark 10:35-41, and Luke 22:24, is consistent with men who believed in a literal kingdom, complete with positions of favor. Significantly, the Lord never denied His Kingdom's literalness nor the existence of favored positions. Instead, He rebuked His disciples for their greed and informed them that the positions of favor were not His to give (Matt. 20:23). Indeed, their focus on the literalness of Jesus' Kingdom blinded them to the need for the Atonement, which had to occur before Jesus could reign. Peter's attempt to divert Jesus from the path of the cross (Matt. 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33) illustrates this blindness. Not until after the resurrection did the disciples begin to understand the entire picture (Luke 24:13-35). Significantly, they never lost their expectation of a literal kingdom (Acts 1:6) but simply developed a more complete understanding of God's plan.

Finally, even the Lord's enemies, the key religious leaders of the day, saw Him as a literal king. A new reli-

gious guru would not have attracted the concentrated effort to discredit, deride, and destroy that these men expended upon Jesus. The events surrounding John 11:47-53 clearly indicate that the inner circle of religious leaders saw Jesus as laying the groundwork for a new order, one in which they would play no role. Their murderous actions, like Herod's decades before, stem from the same cause: the reality of the Messiah's future reign and the fear and hatred that it invokes in those who will not acknowledge Him.

As world events unfold around us and Satan gathers his forces to make a final attempt at world empire, we can trust in God's control of history and look forward to its next major milestone, the rapture of the church, which will herald the great consummating event of history, the inauguration of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Donald Congdon is a member of the faculty of Bob Jones University, having received his BA and MA in English from BJU. He co-authored and presented a paper at the Frontiers of Engineering Education Conference. His wife, Noelle, is a Customer Service Representative for BJU Press.

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# Salvation Is of the Jews

Is Christ Jewish? Does God's plan for the future include the Jewish people? Does Christ have a present interest in His chosen people, or has He moved on to other projects?

Acts 1:8 tells us that the church's mission effort began in Jerusalem: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Paul told the Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). Jesus told His disciples, "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6). Jesus identified Himself with the Jewish people when he told the Samaritan woman, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

Peter was a Jew. Paul was a Jew. James was a Jew. Mark was a Jew. Matthew was a Jew. Even after Paul said, "I will go unto the Gentiles," he still visited the synagogue first in every city he visited.

Peter and Paul represented an authentic Christ in the first century. Christ remains today where He has always been: in His Jewish context. When we read "to the Jew first," what does "first" mean? Are the Jews first in priority, or merely first in order? In Matthew 6:33 Christ commands us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Twelve times in Acts we read that Paul went to the Jew first. In every city he visited, his first stop was the synagogue. This was after the crucifixion, the stoning of Stephen, after the seeming rejection of the Jewish people.\*

Four of these visits were after Paul said, "I will go unto the Gentiles" in the city of Corinth. Thus Paul continued to emphasize taking the gospel to the Jewish people first.

Why did God choose the Jewish people in the first place? We know the answer from Deuteronomy 7:6-8.

For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number

than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

The basis of God's covenant with the Jewish people is not their own merit. God says it is "because the Lord loved you." God's love is unchanging. Paul asks the rhetorical question in Romans 11: "Hath God cast away his people?" He answers with the emphatic negation, "God forbid."

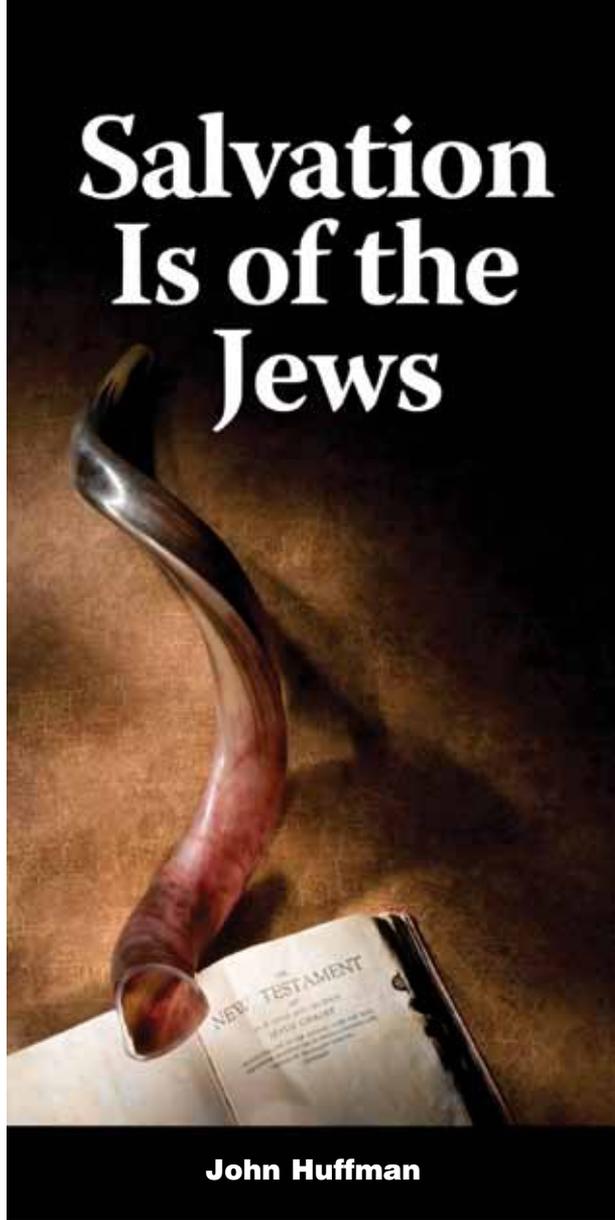
When God called Abraham, He promised, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). This blessing stretches beyond Israel's history into distant future. "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:2). Paul's conviction was rooted in God's promise to Abraham. It was confirmed by His laws to

Moses and emphasized in God's covenant with David, who wrote, "For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance" (Ps. 94:14). Abraham's God is our God too. God's covenant with Abraham was a real, literal, and present blessing—a blessing that extends to the ages.

When Abraham's faith was tested on Mount Moriah where he was to offer his son as a burnt offering to the Lord, Isaac asked his father, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" The Lamb was mentioned in the Scriptures from time to time. He was longed for by David. But the question remained, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" For twenty centuries Isaac's question lingered, unanswered. John the Baptist answered it when he pointed to Christ and declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

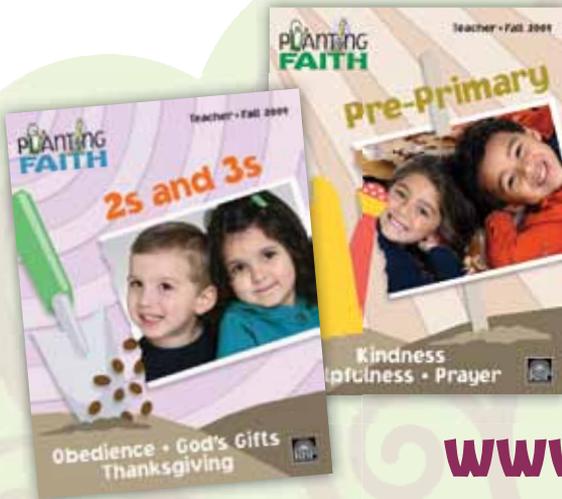
In Revelation 13:8 Christ is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This was His purpose. In His flesh, as a boy, as a teenager, as a man, Christ knew His destiny. He was about His Father's business. Christ knew

Continued on page 32



John Huffman

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## On Church Action

One recently inquired about the church at Antioch (Acts 13), asking about details that may be available about the start of this church, since “it was up and running before Barnabas and Saul began to plant churches. There must have been some concept of organization, structure, and activity (fast, pray, worship).”

The congregation at Antioch appears to have been typical of many that came into existence when believers were dispersed because of persecution (Acts 11:19–21). It was different in that in other places the believers witnessed to resident Jews; at Antioch some believers led Gentiles to the Lord. Hearing of this, the congregation in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to instruct and strengthen the church (Acts 11:22–24), and he located Saul to help (11:25, 26). Saul had been witnessing faithfully in Tarsus.

Dr. Luke makes clear that this was a divine pattern for the spread of the gospel. The procedure had been proclaimed by the Lord Jesus prior to His ascension (Luke 24:45–48). After His departure, His followers were to be empowered (Luke 24:49), continuing as a distinct group (congregation, Luke 24:52, 53). This instruction was also given in Acts 1:4, 5, 8. The first assembly, of 120 in Jerusalem, acted to choose a disciple to replace Judas (Acts 1:15–26). They prayed to Jesus for guidance (Acts 1:24–26); He had chosen the twelve. Then they (the 120) cast “their” lots (votes).

In succeeding days Peter was the public spokesman, but James, one of the apostles, was the pastor (Acts 12:2), and James the half-brother of Jesus of Nazareth became the next pastor there (Acts 12:17). One might conjecture that this group of believers may have acted unguided, or we can accept as much more likely that Jesus would have instructed His disciples through the years about procedures to be employed in the small groups He was about to initiate. Recorded incidents are for our instruction.

There is no indication, for instance, that Jesus appointed Judas as treasurer of His twelve disciples; his choice by election is just as likely and, I think, more in keeping with the patterns throughout the NT. Those who established the church at Antioch were not sent out by the leaders of the church in Jerusalem; they were “laymen” whom God “pushed” forth (Acts 11:19). Help was sent to instruct and assist, not to control.

At Antioch believers were not free to “invent” structure or function; Jesus had instructed and given guidance for all that He wanted to be done in churches, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). Church polity, as we call it, seems to have been very similar in all the several churches that arose from this initial scattering, as well as from deliberate church-founding by those later sent forth to that task. Decisions were not according to what might work or what a certain leader pro-

posed but according to what Jesus would approve. The way a decision was reached was by congregational action.

Barnabas and Saul were sent forth by the congregation and later returned to report to the congregation (Acts 14:26, 27). They were not appointed by human leaders nor did they report back to a few leaders. The “church” at Antioch had four pastor-teachers, and as they (the church, not just the four) ministered to the Lord and “fasted . . . and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:1–3). The two were designated by the Holy Spirit; they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit guiding the local congregation (Acts 13:4).

The “ordination” of elders by Paul, Barnabas, and Titus does not contradict congregational polity. In Titus 1:5 the verb is *kathistemi*, which elsewhere denotes installation after congregational selection (Acts 6:3). In Acts 14:23 the verb is *cheirotoneo*, which has the idea of raising the hand. Lange (a Lutheran), Barnes (a Presbyterian), and Alford (an Anglican) all understand this to mean either that Paul and Barnabas presided in the assemblies while the choice was made or that they ratified the choice of the congregations.

Luke’s emphasis is that the church is the supreme culmination of the earthly task of the Lord Jesus Christ and that He designed it and continued to direct it. Yes, “it was up and running before Paul began to plant churches, so there must have been some concept of organization, structure, and activity (fast, pray, worship).” Not just “some concept” but clear instruction and guidance. The place and function of the local church in God’s plan was taught by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples. It was not first revealed to the apostle Paul in the wilderness. Jesus had personally trained those who directed the first churches. Paul and Barnabas and others fully fit into the patterns introduced by the Lord.

The ongoing expansion of individual congregations was according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ and directly guided by the Holy Spirit. It was not scattered and unrelated. Followers were not just doing whatever they chose to do. One very important verse (Acts 9:31) declares the interrelatedness of the endeavor when it refers to the church (singular in the oldest manuscripts) as having “rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria,” being “edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,” and multiplying. The oneness of the body of Christ was not a new doctrine later with Paul; it continued what Jesus had taught. God directed Luke to trace the early spread and conduct of the churches, making clear that this was not a human endeavor; it was divinely devised and directed.

Warren Vanhetloo, AB, BD, ThM, ThD, DD, is adjunct instructor in and professor emeritus of Systematic Theology at Calvary Baptist Seminary in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. He now resides in Michigan. He can be contacted at [cbsvan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cbsvan@sbcglobal.net).

## Loving the Lord's Return in His Land

Brenda Vaughn

### Continued from page 5

When I said goodbye, my tears were the bittersweet tears of joy for her and the sadness that I wouldn't see her there. I know it was best for me to stay home and rest—I was too fragile to make such a trip ever again. Or so I thought.

For over a year Dr. Craig Hartman and my husband had planned a twenty-one-day tour of Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and Greece. The itinerary included Biblical sites we had only dreamed of seeing in this life. My health deteriorated. A large group from our church was registered to go. Then my husband had to tell them that he would not be able to go because of his responsibilities for my care. So they prayed. The Hartmans prayed. Many of you dear readers prayed. We were resigned that this trip was a dream but would not be a reality. My husband told me he wondered if it was unwise to allow our names to be left on the list. Dr. Hartman insisted our seats would not be cancelled until the plane left without us.

Ten days before departure my husband received calls from three of my doctors. On my many regular visits I had told them what Israel had done for me in the past and what a joy it would be to have the hope of going again. I understood their smiles to be sympathetic agreements that it would never happen. To our great surprise, two specialists and my personal physician initiated calls to my husband to say, essentially, "I think you should take her." Your prayers were answered, and my dream came true. We went, taking one full suitcase of medical supplies, fully expecting to have to turn back at some point and come home. Twenty-one days later (I admit I took some days off to rest in the hotels) I sat on a stone wall near the Parthenon as Dr. Hartman shook my hand with the words, "You made it!"

"Why would you try such a thing?" you may ask. If you ever see it you won't have to ask! It was a tonic for my body and soul. I am surviving on the love and prayers of friends and family, the expert care of my doctors, and the patient persistence of my husband in his new ministry—me—and more than you can know, on the memories of that trip. As I write I am recalling a cascade of mental pictures—gifts of God that flood my mind as I read and reread the Word. I see the beautiful sunset on the Sea of Galilee and imagine the Lord

walking on the peaceful shore, talking to His disciples. I imagine standing on the Mount of Olives looking over the Kidron Valley to the Eastern Gate walled up for centuries. It thrills me to think that Jesus will stand there again and walk through that gate. The promise of His return gives me such hope. I can see it! I can see it and taste it and rejoice in my heart that I will see it again! Yes! Christian friend, we will see it when we come back with Christ!

On that final trip, our guide was a precious Messianic Jewish young lady named Naomi. She is the same age as Becky and has a similarly sweet nature. Naomi loves her country so deeply, and she loved us for coming to see it. We sensed a bond with her that caused us to love her, and now we pray for her as she lives in that small, divided land. Israel survives against impossible human odds, secure in the hand of God for fulfillment of His prophetic promises. Every time our coach has crested the hill and Jerusalem is suddenly spread out before us, my eyes fill with tears of joy. How greatly blessed I have been to stand on the rocky hillside beside the shepherds' fields, looking over at the war-torn city of Bethlehem. To look over the beautiful blue-green waters of the Dead Sea imagining them teeming with life. To remember the history of this ancient land and rest in the promise it holds for the world.

For this world there are dark days ahead, no doubt, days of deception and despair, trouble and tribulation. But for now, every new day is a gift—but even that gift fades away into the darkness of another night. Our hope is not in this life only. Our blessed hope is that the Lord is coming! If we fade into the darkness of death before He comes, we know we will awake into the light of His presence. For us, there is a future beyond a mere "happy ending." To go where He came as a man, to see what He saw as a man, to stand where He stood, to walk where He walked, is the great blessing of the earthly pilgrim and the millennial joy of everyone who comes back with Him to His earthly Kingdom. For me, it was, and will be, like coming home.

Brenda Vaughn is the wife of Dr. John C. Vaughn. For many years she spoke to ladies' groups worldwide and is the co-author of *More Precious than Gold*. Currently she is rejoicing in the care of many faithful helpers as she conducts a ministry of encouragement and writing by e-mail while working on a new book.

Whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, they are members of the Body of Christ. . . . They may not even know the name of Jesus. . . . I think they are saved, and that they are going to be in Heaven with us.  
—Billy Graham

Christ is the Ideal One, for he was Self-Esteem Incarnate.  
—Robert Schuller

Christ did not rise again on the third day to show you what [He] could do, but what *you* can do. Yours is the power. Yours is the glory!  
—Barbara Marx Hubbard

I can foresee the day when all Christians might accept the Pope as Bishop of a World Church.  
—Michael Ramsey

I found God in myself, and I loved her fiercely.  
—Carol Christ

Cosmos is my God; Nature is my God.  
—Mikhail Gorbachev

The way to build peace on earth is through the inclusive, integrated and spiritual approach of the Earth Charter.  
—Steven Rockefeller

The real goal of the Earth Charter is that it will in fact become like the Ten Commandments.—Maurice Strong

The notion that technological progress is the same as ethical progress is “the Great Myth.” —C.S. Lewis

If one word encapsulated all the changes the world was living through, it was the word “globalization.”  
—Kofi Annan

Powerful cardinals in the Vatican have formed an alliance with the leaders of major international humanist organizations. These cardinals and humanist leaders believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the only global structure that is able to act as a stabilizing social force in the world. . . . One can expect that globalism will increasingly pressure groups to unite with the Roman Catholic Church.  
—Malachi Martin and Renald Showers

Religious leaders need to show political leaders how to usher in the peace of the new world order through religious universalism.  
—Bawa Jain

Global regulation is the imperative concept in international affairs.  
—Dan Rather

Upon his election Pope Angelo Roncalli took the name “John XXIII.” His strategy was to win the world on two fronts—the religious [front] by means of syncretism and ecumenism, and the ideological [front] by means of Communism. . . . Roncalli initiated Vatican II. . . . Its key aim was to prepare the [Roman Catholic] church for the leadership of all world religions in an ecumenical church. To make itself more widely acceptable, it used the Council to *appear* to give up offensive beliefs and practices without actually doing so.  
—Bartholomew Brewer

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

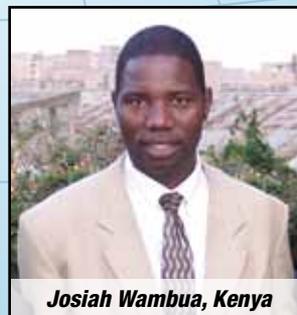
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# Regional Report

Doug Wright

## South Regional Fellowship Canceled

We learned last fall that we faced scheduling conflicts with two other good conferences after we scheduled our 2010 conference for April 12–13 at Boones Creek Baptist Church in Johnson City, Tennessee. Pastor Cunningham, Dr. Vaughn, and Mike Yarborough agreed that the right decision was to let you know about the other two conferences and encourage you to attend the one of your preference. Temple Baptist Church, Crown College, and Faith for the Family are hosting a conference called Independent Baptist Friends International from Monday, April 12, through Friday, April 16, in Knoxville. And the Wilds is hosting a Power in the Pulpit conference April 20–23 with speakers Tom Farrell, Rand Hummel, Jim Schettler, Clarence Sexton, and Scott Wendal. We are grateful for these conferences and speakers and encourage you to find fellowship at the conference of your choice.

The next South Regional FBFI Conference is scheduled for March 7–8, 2011, at the Wilds Camp and Conference Center near Brevard, North Carolina.

## Give Praise to God

Throughout the year several regional meetings take place as part of our effort 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. When

these meetings take place, we want others to know how God has encouraged hearts. The Regional Report page depends on those of you who coordinate and attend the meetings to send us reports and pictures. As soon as possible after the meeting, please let us know the details and results of the meeting.

Regional fellowships offer encouragement to the hearts of our brethren, but sometimes God does something special for one of our FBFI members or churches. Old Testament writers often recounted history to remind people of God's goodness and power. Deuteronomy starts with Israel's history after the Exodus. Moses reminded the second-generation Israelites of God's matchless power as He brought them out of slavery. Paul often reminded his readers of God's marvelous grace to believers. These historical reviews were not academic exercises—they were used as catalysts for further praise of God and trust in His care.

Moses was not retelling the history of his leadership to exalt himself. He was reminding his fellow Israelites of what God can do. *FrontLine* Regional Reports give us the opportunity to do the same thing. Sometimes others will be encouraged and reminded that God is still working when they hear of His blessing upon another ministry.

Regional Reports have chronicled church-planting works and material provisions that God has provided in unique ways. When God does something in your ministry that would be an encouragement to others, please let the FBFI office know.

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"...Unto the Furtherance of the Gospel"  
Philippians 1:12

## A Tribute to a Godly Mother

My mother, Alberta Sivnksty, passed on into glory on September 16, 2009. She was ninety years old and had a tremendous testimony for the Lord. Since I travel full-time in evangelism, my prayer was to be with her before she passed away. Mom was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago and had recently been experiencing some health difficulties. On Saturday, September 12, I preached to 1600 teens at a youth rally in Michigan. I called my mother that evening and told her of the great day we had and that many teens had trusted in Christ as their Savior; she rejoiced with me. On Sunday I started meetings in Tipton, Indiana. We got a phone call on Monday that Mom had taken a turn for the worse. Pastor Mark Ward graciously understood our situation, and we left that afternoon to go to West Virginia.

My prayer was twofold. First, I wanted to be with Mom before she passed away. We arrived there Tuesday evening and I had a great time of fellowship with her. Mom kept telling me, "How great the Lord is! Oh, how great the Lord is." Her mind was as sharp as ever, and her voice never wavered. Second, I wanted to be with her when she passed into eternity. I was holding her hand on Wednesday morning as she took her last breath on earth. How good the Lord is! I asked my mom whom she wanted to preach at her funeral. She said, "Jerry, I want you to preach a strong salvation message." So I obeyed my mom and preached a clear gospel message, and two adults accepted Christ as their Savior. I cannot express the peace that the Lord gave me as I preached the funeral service.

Now I would like to tell you about my mother's amazing life. Let me start by saying that I was not raised in a Christian home. My mother was a good person but wasn't saved until she was forty. My cousin, Forrest Summers, got saved and encouraged me to go to church with him. I was never in a Baptist church in my life since we were raised Roman Catholic. I was so stirred by the message of this Baptist pastor, Douglas Rutherford, that I told my mom, "You've got to go to this Baptist church. He preaches in English, and he preaches the Bible." My mother went because of my urging, and after two weeks she received Christ. When she got saved, her life was transformed by the power of Christ. I saw the reality of 2 Corinthians 5:17 in her life: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." My mother could not get enough of the Bible in her life. We lived the farthest away from church but were always the first ones there. There were three outstanding areas of my mom's life that I pray will be a challenge to those reading this article.

The first area was the matter of serving the Lord. My mom was asked to teach the fourth grade girls' Sunday school class, and she taught that class for forty-five years. Her preparation was remarkable. She would study every day and then write out her lessons. On Saturday she would turn on her tape recorder and teach her lesson to the tape recorder. On Sunday morning, she would stand in front of the mirror and teach her lesson, then go to church and teach her girls. She used the tape recorder in her preparations for more than thirty years! I have met many young ladies who sat under my mother's teaching and greatly loved her. My mother cried when she had to give up her class. Colossians 3:23 was the heartbeat of my mom: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." She counted it a great honor to serve the Lord, and I challenge those of you who teach to never lose sight of the great privilege of impacting lives by teaching God's Word.

The second exemplary area of my mother's life was her prayer life. She had a prayer list that reached across America and around the world. She considered it a privilege to pray for others, and I have not known a more conscientious person than her in this matter of prayer. Once she put someone on her prayer list, she prayed for him or her every day. Many people across the country called me when Mom passed away; the majority of them told me, "We have lost a true prayer warrior." I believe the blessings of our ministry are because of her faithful prayers. Before she died I said, "Mom, I want you to get me a twenty-year prayer advance!" It is my prayer that someone reading this will take up the challenge of becoming a prayer warrior like my mother. Who is going to take this challenge? We need someone to fill this gap.

The third area of my mother's life I want to note was her zeal for winning souls to the Lord. From the first year she was saved until she was ninety she would witness for the Lord and give out gospel tracts. The astounding thing is that she went out every week to tell others about Christ. The only times she didn't go out were when she was sick, which was rare. I can say something that many sons cannot—my mother and I went soulwinning together. I led a lady to Christ with my mom by my side. At the funeral service I had adult ladies walk up to me and tell me that my mother had led them to the Lord. My heart swells with joy when I think of the great, godly mother I had. I want to encourage you mothers to see the impact you can make for the Lord. I trust He will stir you to serve Him as my mother did.

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty may be contacted at PO Box 141, Starr, SC 29684 or via e-mail at [evangjsivn@aol.com](mailto:evangjsivn@aol.com).

Written and Compiled by Dr. Layton Talbert

## THE EPISTLES OF JOHN:

John's epistles are generally dated around AD 90. Within a decade of John's epistles appeared another early church document—about the same length as John's first epistle—called *The Didache* (did-eh-KAY) or *The Teaching of the Apostles*. This excerpt gives a glimpse into the historical context of the first century and confirms the importance of the concern that occupies John in his final two epistles.

Whoever shall come and teach you all these things that have been said before, receive him; but if the teacher himself be perverted and teach a different doctrine . . . hear him not; but if to the increase of righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. . . . Let every apostle when he comes to you be received as the Lord; but he shall not abide more than a single day, or if need be, a second likewise; but if he abide three days he is a false prophet. And when he departs let the apostle receive nothing but enough bread until he finds shelter; but if he asks money, he is a false prophet. . . . From his ways therefore the false prophet and the [true] prophet shall be recognized. . . . And every prophet teaching the truth, if he does not what he teaches, is a false prophet. . . . And whoever shall say in the Spirit, Give me silver or anything else, you shall not listen to him. But let everyone that comes in the name of the Lord be received; and then when you have tested him [cf. 1 John 4:1ff.] you shall know him. . . . If the comer is a traveler, assist him, so far as you are able; but he shall not stay with you more than two or three days, if it be necessary. But if he wishes to settle with you, being a craftsman, let him work for and eat his bread. But if he has no craft according to your wisdom provide how he shall live as a Christian among you, but not in idleness. If he will not do this, he is trafficking upon Christ. Beware of such men (*Didache*, 11–12).

Wherever truth goes error always tags along, and sometimes it gets there first. John warned in his first epistle that antichrists were already populous and busy in his day. Satan was not about to leave the propagation of the liberating and enlightening truth of the gospel unchecked. But his instinctive reflex—the frontal assault seen so frequently in Acts—transitioned in time to a subtler strategy of counterfeit, mixing into a cup of orthodoxy a teaspoon of mendacity. Amid so much peripatetic preaching activity, when itinerants were dependent upon the hospitality of their hosts, it was imperative to season the Christian instinct of brotherly love and fellowship with the salt of discernment.

Though 2 and 3 John are the shortest epistles in the NT (both are several lines shorter than Philemon and considerably briefer than Jude), they are actually typical of the length of the average ancient personal letter that could be confined to a single, standard-sized papyrus sheet, normally just under eight-by-ten inches (Smalley).

These two letters provide an attractive picture of the Apostle John in his dealings with individuals. They are valuable illustrations of a free and intimate correspondence between Christians such as must have been very common in the early church. They are not of crucial doctrinal importance, but they do give us a vivid glimpse into the closing years of the apostolic era with its troubles and triumphs (Hiebert).

Despite their personalized contents, both 2 and 3 John are referenced by several early church writers. These two epistles are, in a sense, case studies of 1 John—specific and personalized applications of principles that John enunciates in his first epistle. Both address and apply these principles in the context of *hospitality*. Second John—a qualification of hospitality—reiterates the warning of 1 John regarding the important issue of orthodoxy (especially with respect to those who deny the incarnation of God in the person of Christ) and the call to orthopraxy (both loving the brethren and walking in truth). Third John reiterates the principles of orthopraxy (both loving the brethren and walking in truth) but within a different set of circumstances—praising Gaius's model hospitality and rebuking Diotrophes' lack of it.

Combined, both epistles furnish complementary guardrails for church protocol. "Heresy and schism are the dangers to which [the church] is perpetually exposed. St. John's [caution against] *heresy* is recorded in the Second Epistle; his condemnation of the spirit of *schism* is written in the Third Epistle" (Alexander).

To be, or not to be, hospitable—and to whom? That is the question addressed in these two epistles. The remainder of this column will explore 2 John.

### Background

Some debate exists over the addressee. Many interpret "the elect lady" as a figurative reference to a local church. Others think "the elect lady" is a literal reference to an individual woman and her family, presumably one who is known as a hostess to traveling Christian preachers. The contents are inconclusive for determining the issue with certainty. Both views can be combined if the "lady"

## 2 John—Truth, Love, and Vigilance

is the owner of a house that hosts a local church in her home, making the issue of hospitality one of corporate testimony as well. The individual view is no stranger than Paul's personal epistle to Philemon, who hosted a church in his house. The objection that John should have written to the pastor of that house church rather than the "lady" may be answered by remembering that as the owner of the home where the church meets, she is the one who would be there around the clock to admit strangers seeking lodging; so the central exhortation regarding hospitality would naturally be directed to her. Some (including Athanasius in the fourth century) have even suggested that the term "lady" (*kuria*, the feminine form of *kurios*, "lord") may be the addressee's proper name, Cyria—a name that appears in other ancient documents, and the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic name "Martha." The conjecture, however, that Martha of Bethany was the addressee is (as one commentator puts it) a theory that rests on little more than thin air.

### Reason for Writing

John sounds a warning about the proliferation of "heretical teachers, posing as Christian missionaries," and the likelihood of their operating "in the Christian community where this Christian lady lived." Hiebert, a proponent of the individual view, goes on to explain that the recipient was apparently "known for her hospitality" and "made it a practice to entertain itinerant preachers visiting the community." So he advises her to be prudent about those to whom she extends her Christian hospitality and, with it, Christian recognition and a platform for their teaching and influence on the church. His concern is to safeguard the doctrinal health, security, and testimony of the community (v. 8).

In his first epistle John warned about false teachers—antichrists, in fact—who had surfaced within the church. A separation was inevitable: "they went out from us, but they were not of us" (1 John 2:19). They had not remained in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). Where would such people be most likely to gravitate? Given the nature of error and the spiritual dimension that energizes it, they would naturally seek to infiltrate and influence other Christian assemblies. In 1 John the apostle describes false teachers from the vantage point of the assembly they have abandoned. In 2 John he warns other assemblies where such false teachers are likely to show up. They are dangerous because they are "insiders" who can talk the talk. But truth, as John is keen to point out, is not only talked but walked (vv. 4, 6).

Second John seems to provide a necessary qualification to the NT exhortations to hospitality. Elders are to be "given to hospitality" but this "elder" (v. 1) clarifies that such hospitality has limits as well as proper and improper objects. Paul, too, earlier cautioned about false teachers working their wiles on gullible women. In 2 Timothy 3:6 Paul warned about "deceptive, religious charlatans who, like many religious frauds, found disproportional success among women"; and his reference to the women's homes indicates "the deceptive nature of the opponents' proselytizing" who "worm their way" into "the well-known homes" of women who were "especially rich" or "influential" (Mounce). This is not to say that John's addressee was gullible like the women Paul describes—only that John may also have seen a similar strategy aimed at infiltrating the church through women. It is a strategy as old as Eden, when Satan swayed mankind into sin through the woman. The failure of men to make discerning leaders will be dealt with as well in 3 John (Diotrephes).

### Key Concepts and Message

*Love* and *truth*—two key ideas in the epistle, each occurring five times in this brief letter—qualify and fence each other; neither negates the other, but each balances and defines the other. Truth governs the expression of love, and love guides the expression of truth (cf. Eph. 4:15). It is as inappropriate to love some things as it is necessary to love others. Truth and love are both to be fleshed out by how we *walk* (2x), indicating that these are practical, not merely philosophical, concepts. Truth is defined by *doctrine* (3x), and those who fail to *abide* (lit., *remain*) (3x) in right doctrine are *deceivers* (2x). The exhortation not even to greet such a person (v. 10) may sound not only unfriendly but unchristian. "Greeting" a false teacher, however, is equivalent to saying, "Welcome" or "Good to see you"—an expression implying approval or well-wishing. When truth is at stake and deceivers are at the door, believers have a higher loyalty than the conventions of courtesy (v. 11).

In short, John warns "against extending indiscriminate hospitality to traveling teachers whose soundness in the Christian faith is justly questionable" and emphasizes "the need to exercise spiritual discernment in manifesting Christian hospitality and love" (Hiebert). John's second epistle crystallizes the essentials of Christianity under the circumstances: "walk in the truth, love one another, and be on guard against false teachers" (Akin).

the death that awaited Him. As Isaiah had described the suffering Messiah in Isaiah 53, he told of the mission of Christ in Isaiah 61. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, must be understood in his Jewish context. He kept Passover with His family and yearly partook of the Passover lamb. He stood in His home synagogue in Nazareth and read from Isaiah 61, proclaiming himself to be the Messiah (Luke 4:21).

In the presence of the ruling religious authorities "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him" (John 8:58, 59a). "I am." There was no mistake about what Jesus was claiming. Christ was claiming to be the friend of Abraham, the One who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, the One who revealed Himself on Mount Sinai. Jesus was telling the Jewish leaders that He was the Jewish Messiah. He had come to the Jewish nation to do a Jewish work in a Jewish way, according to the Jewish Scriptures.

Throughout the New Testament, the gospel is intensely Jewish. Consider how much of the New Testament applies primarily to the Jewish people. Matthew was written to a Jewish audience to prove that Jesus was the King of the Jews. Hebrews was written to explain to Jewish believers how Christ fulfilled every detail of the Old Testament sacrificial system and now completed the need for animal sacrifice, urging them as believers to place their confidence fully in the Lamb of God. Paul ties the New Testament to the Old Testament with his repeated, "according to the scriptures," as in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

Christ told the woman at the well, "Salvation is of the Jews." The Jewish people brought us our Bible and our Savior. Now the question remains, what have we to give the Jewish people today? What attitude should we, as a "wild olive tree," grafted into the vine, have toward the natural branch-

es? An example is given in Luke 7:2-5, in the story of the centurion's servant.

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

He was kind to the Jewish people, and they loved him for it. He outshined the Jewish people around him. In respect, in alms giving, in reputation, and above all in faith he lived an exemplary life. Christ praised his faith as a lesson to the Jews. We should take the lesson from this centurion.

This is exactly what Paul commands us to do in Romans 11:11: "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

We have what our Jewish friends lack: assurance of forgiveness, a cleansed conscience, a more sure word of prophecy, an everlasting covenant, a reward that fadeth not away, a High Priest that ascended into the heavens ever to make intercession for us. That confidence, holiness, faith, and joy should exude from our lives to provoke the Jewish people we know to jealousy. This is the living that will give life to our obedience to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Ps. 122:6).

God does not demand that you become a Jew. But to know Him, you must know Him as a Jew, in His Jewish context. He is the Lamb of the Scripture. He is Jehovah. His second coming will be as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end. He will rule from a Jewish throne in Jerusalem, and we will reign with Him in a Jewish Millennium. At any moment He will come for us, and after the Great Tribulation of the Jews, they will cry in faith "Hosanna" on the

day John describes in Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

He is coming one day in power and great glory as the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. As the angel told Mary, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). Salvation is of the Jews, and until that day, our task is to lovingly take it back to them.

\*Instances of Paul going to the Jewish people first in the book of Acts: Damascus (9:22), Jerusalem (9:28), Salamis (13:5), Antioch (13:14), Iconium (14:1), Thessalonica (17:1), Athens (17:15-17), Corinth (18:1-4), Ephesus (19:8), Asia (19:10), Miletus (20:21), and Rome (28:23, 24).

John Huffman is the pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Florissant, Missouri. This article is abridged from a longer article of the same title. The longer version may be obtained by contacting John at [cbcbelleville@juno.com](mailto:cbcbelleville@juno.com).

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## **Egyptian Islamic Terror**

*World* magazine carried a short article in its February 13 edition highlighting the Muslim-Coptic clash in the Egyptian town of Naga Hamady. Coptics, which represent about ten percent of the Egyptian population, are generally not born-again Christians, but according to Egyptian thinking, those who are not Muslims are Christians. That makes the Coptics a target for Muslim terrorism.

While Coptics were worshipping in Naga Hamady on their equivalent to Christmas Eve, a gunman murdered six worshippers and one security guard in a drive-by shooting. The investigation yielded no information on the assailant.

An estimated 5000 Coptics came for the funeral services; however, the funerals turned to public protests as the mourners armed with stones began pelting both the police and the hospital where the bodies were held prior to burial. Shouts of "No to repression!" came from the crowds. The police used tear gas to break up the protests.

This article can be referenced in *World Magazine*, February 13, 2010, and at [www.presstv.com/classic/detail.aspx?id=115604&sectionid=351020502](http://www.presstv.com/classic/detail.aspx?id=115604&sectionid=351020502).

## **Seminary Merger**

Michigan Theological Seminary (MTS) is now

Moody Theological Seminary-Michigan after having merged with Moody Bible Institute on January 1 of this year. The merger brings together the 400 students already enrolled in Moody's seminary with the 200 enrolled at MTS. Based on the size of its student body, the resulting institution is in the top fifteen percent of seminaries in the United States.

The merger completed a nine-month process of "due diligence" after Moody was approached by MTS about the merger. The plan received the green light from both institutional boards as well as the Higher Learning Commission, which oversees the accreditation of degree-granting colleges and universities in the Midwest.

Dr. Charles Dyer, provost and dean for education at Moody, lauded the school's accomplishment. "We . . . are confident that we are joining two theologically and doctrinally like-minded schools in a way that will give students exceptional educational benefits. It is our goal to use the opportunities this merger provides us to enable students, faculty and staff at both schools to better serve the Lord and his people."

This article can be referenced at [www.christianpost.com/article/20100105/moody-bible-institute-michigan-theological-seminary-complete-merger/index.html](http://www.christianpost.com/article/20100105/moody-bible-institute-michigan-theological-seminary-complete-merger/index.html) as well as on the seminary's website ([www.mts.edu](http://www.mts.edu)).

## **Conservative Political Action Conference**

Liberty University Law School recently announced that it would drop its regular support as a co-sponsor of the Conservative Political Action Conference 2010 (CPAC). The reason for Liberty's disengagement was the inclusion of GOProud, a Republican group that advocates homosexual "marriages" and/or civil unions.

Focus on the Family, on the other hand, has defended its co-sponsorship of CPAC. Tom Minnery, senior vice president of Focus on the Family Action, reasoned that involvement was not problematic for Focus. He insisted that there were many other groups invited that also did not agree with the positions that Focus on the Family has taken on other moral issues. "We think we've got to engage the broader conservative movement and to be salt and light in that environment," he explained. "We believe that social conservatism, biblical Christianity has a lot to say to the political culture—and we want to be where the action is, so that's why we're engaging it."

This article can be referenced at [www.onenewsnow.com/Politics/Default.aspx?id=858726](http://www.onenewsnow.com/Politics/Default.aspx?id=858726).

## **Christians and Hate Speech**

Two city officials in a California town are targets of

persecution under the guise of hate speech infractions.

Councilwoman Sherry Marquez is drawing fire for comments she made on her Facebook page. Marquez commented on New York case where a Muslim man has been charged with second-degree murder for allegedly beheading his wife because she was seeking a divorce. In her comments she stated, "This is what the Muslim religion is all about—the beheading, honor killings are just the beginning of what is to come in the U.S.A."

And in a related incident from January 27 Mayor R. Rex Parris stated, "We are a growing Christian community—and don't let anybody shy away from that." Parris made the statement when speaking to a group of ministers.

Both of these incidents have drawn fire from the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The council has insisted that the mayor's comments were a violation of civil rights. A local human relations task force meeting has been called to determine whether or not either of these statements should be considered hate speech. If so deemed, charges will be filed with the Federal Justice Department.

This article can be referenced at [www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=885854](http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=885854).

## NOTABLE QUOTES

### Religious Restrictions

A study conducted by the Pew Research Center has determined that one-third of the world's countries have "stiff restrictions on religious practice." This determination includes both hostile actions taken by governments as well as hostilities faced because of intolerant individuals or groups. When population centers are considered, that one-third translates into seventy percent of the earth's population.

Countries with the heaviest restrictions are Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, and India. Nations that offer the least restrictions are the United States, Britain, Brazil, Japan, Italy, and South Africa.

This article can be referenced at [www.persecution.com/pdfs/newsroom/193\\_russia.pdf](http://www.persecution.com/pdfs/newsroom/193_russia.pdf).

### Symbolic Discrimination

Airport check-in clerk Nadia Eweida is seeking a ruling from London's High Court regarding what she considers to be a religious discrimination case. Nadia was sent home from her British Airways job for failure to comply with company policy that disallowed employees from wearing visible religious symbols. Nadia wore a crucifix. Eventually British Airways changed its policy and allowed Nadia to return to work. She is presently seeking \$200,000 in damages, lost wages, and an admission from the airline that she was discriminated against for religious convictions.

This article can be referenced at [www.boston.com/business/articles/2010/01/19/airline\\_clerk\\_appeals\\_uk\\_rulings\\_banning\\_crucifix/](http://www.boston.com/business/articles/2010/01/19/airline_clerk_appeals_uk_rulings_banning_crucifix/).

If God hath no need of our learning, he can have still less of your ignorance. In the spiritual temple as well as in the ark of the covenant, there is room not only for those humbler gifts, the skins and hair cloth, but also for the gold and silver of human learning: and even the sciences themselves, daughters as they are of uncreated wisdom, may receive consecration from seraphic piety, and be made priestesses of the Most High, by the very service in which we employ them.—Unknown

Still even he, though he dwell occasionally on every topic which can with propriety be brought into the pulpit, will, like the apostle, "Glory only in the cross of Christ." Resisting the temptations to neglect a plain gospel, and go in quest of airy speculations and unprofitable novelties, his aim will not be to gratify the imaginative by what is tasteful and poetic, the philosophical by what is profound, the metaphysical by what is subtle, or curious by what is strange; but by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.—John Angell James

The gospel prevents us from having a communication model of *independent* strength that assumes that our problems can be solved with the right insights and skills. The gospel forces us to face our inability. The gospel prevents us from having a communication model of *weakness* and *inability* that would cause us to look at God's goals and say, "If only we were able!" In Christ we embrace both inability and ability. . . . The resources of Christ are our only hope that our words will be spoken up to his standard and according to his design. In the Word we find hope when all is hopeless, riches when we feel poor, power when we see our weakness, and rule when everything around us seems out of control.—Paul David Tripp

Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom this day thou art to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease; but then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest; upon whose message thou are sent? Even by the great and mighty God! who is present, and who beholdest all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully.—Hugh Latimer

### Trends in Religion

George Barna has released the results of a 2009 study conducted among pastors. The most prevalent finding was that "Americans are more interested in faith and spirituality than they are Christianity."

Barna explained that "Americans are more interested in feeling like they belong to a community of faith." This he contrasted with belonging to a particular church. "They are more interested in having a faith system that addresses the needs and issues and struggles that they're dealing with than they are necessarily [with] working through a whole body of beliefs, activities, and practices that might be part of a larger faith entity."

Another trend that Barna reported is "that Americans increasingly want to shape their own faith experience."

Barna's own conclusion, posted on his website, is, "What they have done is they have put together a whole series of beliefs and series of religious practices and a series of relationships and connections—all of that that makes sense to them and helps them to feel good about themselves. . . . We are creating the ultimate ecumenical movement, where nothing is deemed wrong, and all ideas, beliefs, and practices are assigned equal validity."

This article can be referenced at [www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=833174](http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=833174). Barna's website on this topic is [www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/325-barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective](http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/325-barna-studies-the-research-offers-a-year-in-review-perspective).

Compiled by Robert Conduct, FBFI 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.

## A Decade of Mobilization in Retrospect

This January our church had the privilege of celebrating the tenth anniversary of Student Global Impact (SGI) while hosting the 2010 National Conference. About 350 young adults gave up a part of their Christmas vacation to come to Detroit and hear from God's Word. These young people are from many of your churches, and we appreciate the opportunity to minister to them in this way. The messages and workshops are available online for free at [www.missionsmandate.org](http://www.missionsmandate.org). In retrospect, we wanted to take the opportunity here in *FrontLine* for you to rejoice with our church in what the Lord has done through this ministry, because it is a ministry to, for, and with other Fundamental Baptist churches.

At the close of the '90s, while many were stockpiling their Y2K cupboards, we were stockpiling sermons, workshops, cots, food, and prayer for a gathering of students for Mission 2000. We were thrilled when over four hundred young adults came together for that conference. We will never forget Steve Pettit standing up for the first general session and being moved to tears over the fact that God was giving so many Fundamental young people a heart for missions. The messages from Steve and pastors Dave Doran, Mark Minnick, and Tim Jordan were significantly used in lives. The fellowship was life-changing as well. A number of individuals from that conference are now on the mission field serving together. Many others are serving as senders in their local churches. A few even met their current spouse at that conference!

The following summer, Ben, son of a missionary to Argentina, came on staff at our church to coordinate the ministry of SGI. The focus of SGI was to mobilize students for missions and to network them together for the furtherance of the Great Commission. Ben spent much of this past decade traveling to college campuses, speaking to mission groups, encouraging and equipping student leaders, developing SGI internships, and coordinating the biannual SGI Conferences. Now he and his family are raising support to go to the field themselves, after having touched many lives through their ministry here.

A little over a year ago Tim Aynes took over the helm. He is also coordinating the broader ministry of Missions Mandate, which is a service of our church to "equip local churches for God-centered missions mobilization." Tim directed this year's conference and has thoroughly enjoyed ministering to your young adults. He looks forward to continuing the ministry of missions mobilization on the campuses and in local churches in the coming years.

What have we observed over the last ten years as ways

God has used SGI to help local churches? We would like to rejoice in five trends we see in Fundamental missions and reflect on how God has used SGI to be a part of those trends.

First, young adults and churches by and large seem to have a renewed passion for missions. We have been used to minister to, equip, and challenge people from your churches through student missions groups, conferences, and online resources. We hope these efforts have been used to fuel that passion.

Second, we have seen a renewed emphasis on churches' having a clear, Biblical philosophy of missions. The Lord has allowed SGI to produce printed materials that have been used in many local churches and colleges. In 2002 we were able to publish the book *For the Sake of His Name*, which reflects on the Student Volunteer Movement and encourages churches to have a Biblical philosophy and theology of missions.

Third, we have seen a clear trend toward missions' being rooted back in local churches rather than in colleges or other parachurch ministries. God has given us wonderful colleges and mission boards who have encouraged and supported this trend. Many of you pastors have taken this responsibility seriously and are equipping those in your church to serve as senders.

Fourth, we have seen Fundamental Baptist missions make great strides in reaching what used to be called "closed" countries. We have come to realize that access may have to be obtained through creative means. We have come to the conviction that no border, government, or culture can or should be allowed to hold back the spread of the gospel! One focus of SGI has been to promote a burden for pioneer missions. This burden has been shared by many and has spread to others.

Finally, there has been a renewed collegiality among colleges, seminaries, churches, and mission boards in the promotion and execution of missions efforts and in the training of missionaries and ministry teams. We have been encouraged to see this spirit continue to grow among Fundamental churches and institutions.

Please join us in rejoicing at what God is doing through young adults and churches for His glory. A new generation of missionaries and church members is rising to the challenge to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. May God be glorified!

Pearson Johnson is the pastor of Missions and Evangelism at Inter-City Baptist Church. You can e-mail him with questions or comments at [pjohnson@intercity.org](mailto:pjohnson@intercity.org).

# Church Directory



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# Chaplain News

Bob Ellis

The FBFI Commission on Chaplains endorses men to serve as Chaplains in several professions. We currently endorse men serving with the city police, fire department, state police, local hospital, VA hospital, and the military.

Kevin Caldwell has recently been appointed head of the Michigan State Police Chaplain Corps. In January Kevin received the Bravery Award from the Michigan State Police for a gunfire incident that happened in the summer of 2009. He was off-duty and leaving from, of all places, seminary when the incident occurred.

The Michigan State Police, Lansing, reported,

On May 22, 2009, Caldwell was off-duty, driving behind a patrol car from the Allen Park Police Department when he heard repetitive shotgun blasts. The Allen Park officer turned his patrol car around and drove in the direction of the gunfire; Caldwell followed.

Immediately after turning onto a residential street, multiple shots were fired at the Allen Park patrol car from one of the homes, severely wounding the Allen Park officer. Risking his own safety, Caldwell left his vehicle to move the wounded officer to a safe position. He then utilized first aid techniques to treat him until another officer arrived to transport him to the hospital.

During this time, the gunman was still barricaded in his residence, firing into the surrounding neighborhood. Fearing the gunman would exit the home and harm an innocent bystander, Caldwell commandeered the wounded officer's rifle and moved closer to the house, where he would be able to intercept the gunman should he emerge.

Additional officers and an emergency response team arrived, eventually resolving the situation after three hours. During this time, the gunman fired over 200 rounds, some hitting only feet away from Caldwell's position.

Upon reviewing this incident, the MSP Board of Awards recognized Caldwell's heroic actions and willingness to ignore his own personal safety and well-being to rescue and provide aid to an officer unknown to him.

Kevin continues:

I have hired seven new Chaplains within this reporting period, and they have been embedded in their respective state police posts throughout the state. I am in the process of hiring additional Chaplains to fill the large need within the department. Interviews and background checks are exhaustive but of great profit to the department members.

I continue to serve as the college/young adult pastor at my local church.

God continues to place FBFI-endorsed Chaplains in strategic places, and they continue to have great opportunities for ministry.

Navy Chaplain LT Rob Johnson writes from Afghanistan,

My brigade has now lost fifty-two Marines and Sailors since May 31 with about ten times that many being injured. More Marines and Sailors are arriving in preparation for further operations in the Helmand Province. I continue to be involved in memorial services and hospital visits.

I was able to expand my chapel facilities (a second tent) to accommodate the large number of personnel attending the ser-

VICES on a regular basis. It has a "real" pulpit, chairs, an altar area, a wooden deck, and a fellowship area in the rear. I designed and submitted plans for a permanent chapel complex (three wooden buildings: one large worship facility that seats 350 and another facility that has two mirrored worship areas that seat 75 each, and one office/morale building) to be located at the very center of the camp expansion area. I'm thankful for my seminary classes in church administration! I had no idea that I would lead a church-building program in the middle of the Afghanistan desert!

Army Chaplain MAJ Gary Fisher wrote just before being deployed in January.

God in His providence has seen fit to allow a change of circumstances that are a bit overwhelming at the moment. The current Division Chaplain (CH LTC David Waters) has recently had an episode with his heart that is going to prevent him from deploying with the division. Because we leave any day, I have been tasked as the Acting Division Chaplain until a suitable replacement is identified and joins us in Iraq. I will deploy with the division, conduct the transfer of authority, and be responsible for all religious support operations from Baghdad south to Kuwait. Please pray for God's wisdom and direction as I seek to honor Him in serving the fine men and women of our military, especially in a deployed status.

FBFI-endorsed Chaplains are available to speak in local churches as their schedules and times permit. Pastors, as you pray for them, consider using them in your ministry.

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## Why We Encourage Bible-Believing Christians to Visit Israel

**Craig Hartman**

It is undeniable that the West is open to religious deception. The Far East is seen by some as holding the key to the future economically. Many seek answers for the great problems facing the world in places that will provide no real direction. The Middle East, however, holds the key to understanding what is really going on in the world. Most educated people know something of the Judeo-Christian worldview that is foundational to Western culture and thought. A few know something of Eastern mysticism. What is surprising, though, is how little professing Christians understand the Middle East, which cannot be understood without knowing the Biblical history of the region or how current events relate to Bible prophecy.

At Shalom Ministries we do not focus on trying to connect newspaper headlines to specific verses of Scripture but rather on promoting an understanding of the Jewishness of the Bible and encouraging Bible believers to love the Jewish people in obedience to God. We seek to do this by teaching the Old Testament foundation of the prophecies concerning Messiah and to help believers see the New Testament “through Jewish eyes.” Preaching and teaching are essential to our mission as is interaction with Jewish people. But a critical element in promoting a deeper love for the Jews is working to get believers to visit Israel.

Why should a Christian go to Israel? How do we know if the modern nation has any relationship to the Israel of the Bible? Isn't it dangerous to go into that volatile region? These and other questions are often asked and deserve to be answered.

In light of accelerating apostasy those who believe the Bible must continue to learn the Bible and have Biblical discernment of the times. Scholars can debate whether modern Jewish people can trace their lineage to specific Jewish tribes, but no one can deny that modern Israel is in the land where Israel has always been—the land of the Bible. The geography, history, and culture are in plain view. Much of what liberals tried to deny in the past has been unearthed for observation. Visiting Israel will help you to know the Bible and see the Bible.

Visiting Israel will also help you to understand world events. Biased news reports, Saudi-funded Muslim studies in American universities, and even the dismissive attitude of postmillennial theologians keep Westerners deceived or in the dark about the Middle East, and, sadly, some Christians have been confused by the propaganda. Make no mistake, those who slander and seek to destroy Israel feel the same way about “Christian” America. But in fact Israel is a freedom-loving, compassionate society with an exemplary work ethic and spirit of sacrifice. When you go there, you will gain an informed sense of respect and a Biblical love for the Jewish people. Ask any Bible believer who has been there. There is no substitute for meeting Jewish people in their homeland to give you a deeper love for the Jews and a greater appreciation for their struggle to survive while surrounded by sworn enemies. Going to Israel will help you understand current events and appreciate the Jewish people better.

Seeing Jerusalem, with its unexpected spiritual peace in the midst of political unrest, will become a meta-

phor of how to live at peace with God in a world that is hurtling toward judgment. It will put into your memory the place of the Lord's victory over sin and death, into your hope in His imminent return a new vigor, and into your devotions a view of His coming Kingdom in the place it will actually happen. Seeing Jerusalem will help you cry “Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!” as never before.

A day at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial, will change your attitude about Jewish people for life. You will think of the unspeakable suffering and horrors of the past and stand in stunned realization that the Great Tribulation is yet to come and it will be far worse! Your heart will cry out for the Jews, whose history is a God-given illustration to all mankind of the world's groaning in agony today, awaiting the redemption to come. Visiting Israel will help you see what is really dangerous—living without the Messiah!

Even if you do not have the opportunity to visit Israel, the Bible still requires you to love the Jewish people, provoke them to be jealous for the salvation you have, and to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. However, if there is any way that you can go, we hope that you will, for doing so will help you to love the Word more and love the Jewish people, the apple of God's eye.

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

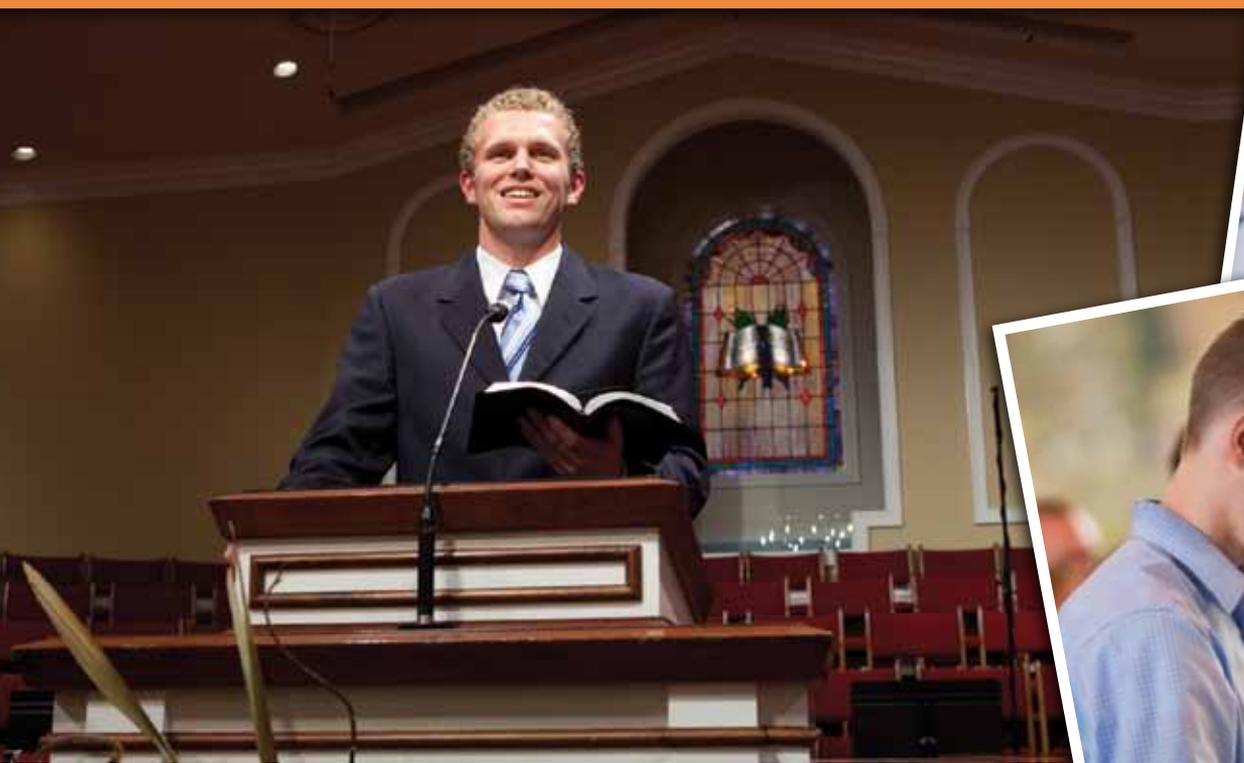
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