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Cover photo by John Pierce. Charles Watson Jr. teaches the values and principles of religious liberty to a new generation. **Page 4**

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Respect & responsibility

Charles Watson Jr. shares well-learned lessons on liberty

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Charles Watson Jr., learned a lot about respect and responsibility as a college football player, military officer and seminarian. But those experiences just reinforced what his now-95-year-old grandmother taught him while growing up in rural Georgia.

Whenever his grandmother gave him her disapproving look during his youth, Charles would ask: “What did I do?”

And she would respond, “It’s not what you did, son, but what you didn’t do.”

LASTING VALUES

As the education and outreach specialist for the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill, Watson’s life is vastly different than when growing up in the small town of Millen, Ga.

Yet his grandmother’s constant call to do what’s right — and do more of it — sticks with him.

“Even though my grandmother had to stop school in third grade to go to work, she has taught me lessons through her life experiences,” said Watson. “One of the most important lessons was the significance of treating everyone with respect.”

After graduating from The Citadel and entering the military, Watson said he met persons of various backgrounds and religious beliefs who shared the same firm commitment to the defense of freedom.

“My military service defended freedom, and that freedom involves the right for others to practice their faith tradition or not have one at all,” he said. “The lessons learned from my grandmother and my military service continue to influence the respect I have for others and my work at the BJC.”

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The BJC’s expanded and renovated office space on Maryland Ave., near the U.S. Supreme Court, provides the perfect setting for Watson to carry out his latest assignment.

“My work is focused on informing people, particularly the younger generations, about the importance of religious liberty,” he said.

“Our educational efforts are essential because religious liberty is always one generation from extinction.”

Watson welcomes visiting groups into the Baugh-Walker Conference Suite, dedicated in 2012 and offering state-of-the-art technology and an impressive view of the U.S. Capitol’s dome. He shares about the long heritage of Baptists advocating for religious freedom and the ways the BJC continues that needed work.

“One of the most important ways we get younger generations to think about religious liberty is through our annual Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest, which challenges high school juniors and seniors to research and evaluate a specific religious liberty issue,” said Watson. “Now in its ninth year, the essay

contest has reached thousands of students in the United States and overseas.”

The outreach part of Watson’s work allows him to reach beyond the Baptist circle and foster new relationships with congregations, seminaries, colleges, law schools and other organizations that share commitments to unfettered religious liberty or need a reminder of the importance of such freedom.

“I coordinate visits for myself or other staff members to speak with those interested in religious liberty,” he noted. “With the opening of our Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill, our capabilities for religious liberty education increased dramatically. In our own state-of-the-art facility we can host groups visiting Washington, D.C., and reach groups who are unable to visit the area.”



Executive director Brent Walker (left) says Charles Watson Jr. brings unique gifts to the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

SHARING THE VISION

“Charles adds a lot to the BJC’s work,” said Brent Walker, the Baptist Joint Committee’s executive director. “He is in charge of all of our education and outreach efforts, through the Center for Religious Liberty and beyond.”

Walker said his young colleague brings a unique blend of gifts and experiences to his work.

“Charles is a decorated veteran of the United States Air Force and a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship-endorsed chaplain,” said Walker. “His theological acumen and organizational skills come together to place our new Center and educational outreach to various groups, including youth, in good hands.”

Walker, a University of Florida graduate and devotee of the local Washington Nationals baseball team, jokingly added: “He is also the product of the BJC’s affirmative action program — allowing Atlanta Braves and Georgia Bulldogs fans to join the staff.”

Watson said he is inspired in his work by those who advocate for freedom.

“Those who fight for or defend the rights of others have always been role models for me,” he said. “I believe that religious liberty is a social justice issue, and ... working at the BJC allows me to combine my passion for justice with my theological interests.”

Opinions about religious liberty issues vary, he noted. Therefore, respectful dialogue and the freedom and openness to hear others share their perspectives are essential.

“I have gained so much from talking to others and discussing the sometimes complex issues that surround religious liberty,” he said. “The importance of every person’s voice is a part of our Baptist heritage; making sure those voices are never silenced is a driving force of our work at the BJC.”

EARLIER EXPERIENCES

Watson said his education and life experiences — including a focus on pastoral care while attending Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology — helped prepare him for the work he is doing today.

“Working as a chaplain intern at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta exposed me to families of many different faiths — where I witnessed how important faith was to each family, and I also was blessed to help them express their faith freely,” he recalled. “As I have reflected on those moments with parents and their children, I realized how fortunate I am to live in a country where this liberty is protected. That experience has made the work that we do at the BJC personal to me.”

Watson’s route from small-town Georgia to the nation’s capital has taken him to many places, thanks to his educational pursuits and military assignments. But the place he now calls home is unique, he said.

“Washington, D.C., is unlike any other place I have lived,” he said. “It is a different world from the four-stop-light town I grew up in. It still amazes me every day as I look out the window at the BJC and see the Supreme Court building. The list of historic events that have taken place in this city is truly astonishing.”

Watson said there never seems to be a dull moment.

“One of the things I enjoy about living in this city is its ethnic and cultural diversity,” he added. “It is not hard to find people who have come from all over the world. This diversity is reflected in religious pluralism. The religious freedom that we enjoy allows us to share our faith with them and to learn more about God from them.” **BT**

—For more on the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, visit BJCOnline.org.



Brent Walker and BJC General Counsel Holly Hollman

New space, expanded mission

WASHINGTON — After searching throughout the Capitol Hill area for a new headquarters, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty leaders decided to dramatically improve their current office space rather than move. The ideal location provides easy access to the U.S. Supreme Court and Capitol buildings.

It was a wise decision said BJC Executive Director Brent Walker.

“Aesthetically, it is so much more pleasurable to come to work with the Center’s open spaces and light-drenched environs,” he said of the enlarged space now referred to as the Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill that was dedicated in 2012. “We are treated every day ... to a breathtaking view of the Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress dome and the historic Sewell-Belmont House across the street.”

“Functionally, we are now able to afford each staffer appropriate office space, and convenient and well-thought-out proximity to others to encourage teamwork and common meeting space,” he said. “Programmatically, it has allowed us to accommodate more and larger groups from churches, colleges, seminars, and other organizations to meet in our conference center to learn about the work of the Baptist Joint Committee and the importance of religious liberty.”

The conference suite is equipped with a 70-inch interactive video screen that is used for teaching visiting groups as well as to communicate with learners at a distance.

“In short, the Baptist Joint Committee is now well equipped to continue its mission to defend and extend religious liberty for all well into the distant future,” said Walker appreciatively. “It has made all the difference in the world.” **BT**



Charles Watson Jr. (left) joins communications staffers Jordan Edwards and Cherilyn Crowe in the Center for Religious Liberty’s Baugh-Walker Conference Suite.

Restored or endangered?

Church-state experts **examine religious liberty** in America today

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A Supreme Court decision in the spring of 1990 didn't get a lot of media attention, but it rattled Oliver "Buzz" Thomas, then general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

The case, *Employment Division v. Smith*, concerned claims by two Native Americans that their free exercise of religion had been violated. They had lost their jobs and were denied unemployment benefits because their religious ceremonies included the use of peyote, an illegal hallucinogenic drug.

Reading the Court's opinion, Thomas was troubled that the ruling was a departure from the long-standing principle that government must demonstrate a "compelling state interest" before interfering in religious exercise. He called other religious liberty experts and found similar concerns.

A broad and diverse coalition, chaired by Thomas, emerged that would lead to President Clinton signing the landmark Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in November 1993, with very strong bipartisan support.

Those who pushed this effort in defense of the First Amendment's guarantee of the free exercise of religion gathered at the Newseum, located on Pennsylvania Ave. between the White

House and the U.S. Capitol, in November to mark the 20th anniversary of RFRA.

"It was kind of like getting the band back together," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director and counsel of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, during a break in the symposium titled "Restored or Endangered? The State of Free Exercise of Religion in America," sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee and six other organizations.

WHOSE BURDEN?

"*Smith* was really bad news for free exercise," said Steve McFarland, vice president and chief legal officer at World Vision, of the 1990 Supreme Court decision that sparked the RFRA initiative.

Mark Chopko, chair of the Nonprofit and Religious Organizations practice group at Stradley Ronon Stevens and Young, said the ruling reversed the long-held understanding that the government bears the burden to prove why it limits rights.

"Before the government steamrolls rights, the government is going to have to come up with a compelling reason to not grant an exemption," said Chopko, of the resulting RFRA.

Thomas, a Baptist minister and attorney who returned to his native Greenville, Tenn.,

to work with a foundation, said the political response from the coalition to the *Smith* decision was about a much more basic concern than the one addressed in this specific case.

"The fundamental question is: Are we going to take the claims of conscience seriously?" he said.

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

The very diverse coalition of more than 60 religious and human rights organizations, whose leaders often disagreed on specific social and political issues, rallied for the passage of RFRA.

Along with the BJC and Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the coalition included the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association of Evangelicals, the American Muslim Council, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in America, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Church of Scientology International, the Home School Legal Defense Association, and the Christian Life Commission (now Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission) of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Political support was equally broad with the coalition receiving a good hearing on Capitol Hill. In October 1993, the House of Representatives passed RFRA by a unanimous voice vote.

In the Senate, Sen. Harry Reid sought an amendment to exclude prisons from the Act. But the coalition argued that prisoners have religious rights as well. The amendment failed after receiving 41 votes.

Then the Senate passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by a 97-3 vote. The only opposition came from three Baptists: Sens. Jesse Helms, Robert Byrd and Harlan Mathews.

ABSTRACT TO APPLICATION

"Religious liberty is very popular in its abstract," said Thomas. "It is in its application that people start yelling at each other."

While participants at the symposium were respectful, with no raised voices, the differing opinions about the application of RFRA today were clear. Representatives of organizations that worked hand-in-hand to get the legislation



Left to right: Oliver Thomas, Doug Laycock and Brent Walker join others at the Newseum symposium to discuss the state of religious liberty in America.

passed two decades ago took opposing views on applying these principles to the controversial contraception mandate included in the Affordable Care Act.

Those same opposing arguments had been voiced the day before in the hearing of Supreme Court justices who are considering the case.

While the contraception issue was front and center, the symposium focused on the much larger question of whether religious freedom is more endangered now or better protected?

Several of the church-state experts lamented the current political climate that they said would not have allowed for RFRA's passage today.

"It used to be you could work across the aisle," said Doug Laycock, professor of law and religious studies at the University of Virginia, on the current gridlock in Congress.

Disagreement over religious liberty concerns "has only gotten worse," said Laycock. And the biggest challenges, he noted, are tied to "deep disagreement about sexual morality."

Divisions over same-sex marriage, abortion and contraception, he fears, "is turning much of the country against religious liberty" in general.

Others shared his concern that religious liberty "may be lost to culture wars." Thomas even wondered aloud if the treasured First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that provides religious liberty and other essential freedoms would pass today.

Those protections are more important today than ever, he argued — since the government has become "more pervasive and invasive, and America has become more diverse." Any loss of these freedoms, he said, should concern everyone.

"We're all a minority somewhere," said Thomas. "You may be a happy Baptist in Alabama, but if you move to Utah you are in a minority."

The diminishing of First Amendment freedoms deserves a strong response and the tireless work of all who understand and appreciate their importance, he said.

"There is no America without freedom of religion, press and speech," said Thomas. "They are the glue that holds America together." **BT**



Walker: RFRA, other laws helpful

Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, said the passage of the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) was important "to strengthen religious liberty and the rights of conscience in the aftermath of the disastrous *Smith* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court which essentially gutted protections historically afforded by the free exercise clause of the First Amendment."

He noted the shared advocacy and support that were present two decades ago.

"It's also important because it was the project that brought together a broad and diverse coalition of religious and civil liberties groups — across the religious and political spectrum — to put aside their differences and to seek to protect the rights of conscience and religious liberty for all."

Sadly, today there is less cooperation and cohesion, he said.

"Unfortunately, over the past 20 years, the coalition has frayed at the edges at the very least and, in some cases, come apart all together," he said. "In a sense, the coalition has fallen victim to the political poison that has inflicted our public life."

The hot-button issues of today lend themselves to even greater division, he said.

"Many of the accommodations of religion that prompted RFRA's passing in the first place — such as exempting members of the Native American church from laws banning the use of peyote, allowing the Amish to be exempt from compulsory education laws,

etc. — were easy to rally around," he said.

"Far more difficult are the cases where, as with the contraception issue in the Affordable Care Act, for example, the rights and well-being of third parties are directly affected by the requested accommodation," Walker continued. "In these cases, the courts are called upon to balance the free exercise rights of claimants with the rights of those detrimentally affected. This results in winners and losers and, in many cases, hard feelings."

Walker noted that while the Supreme Court has declared RFRA unconstitutional when applied to the states, it continues to limit the power of the federal government and the many states that passed their own RFRA's.

"Moreover, the Federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 provides protection for state and local laws interfering with religious liberty claims based on zoning and land use cases and in the context of claims by prisoners," he said.

Over the 20 years since the passage of RFRA, its purpose and application have been challenged. The key language of RFRA, said Walker, is the requirement that a "substantial burden" must be proven to restrict religious expression.

"In sum, gains and losses, cooperation and disagreement, successes and disappointments have ensued over the past 20 years," he said. "But, on balance, the state of religious liberty in the U.S. is far better today — because of RFRA and other related laws — than it was 20-plus years ago." **BT**

quotation remarks

“The Apostle Paul ... says we are to focus on the things that are right and noble and pure and admirable.

This is perfect advice for every Facebook devotee. Remember, your Facebook page is a social network platform not a middle school cafeteria, a *Lifetime Movie of the Week*, or an intervention. It can be drama free. Better yet, Facebook can be a reflection of your life in Christ — a place where love and laughter, peace and patience are the dominant themes.”

—Writer Bryan Roberts in a column titled “10 Ways to Avoid Facebook Drama” (Relevant)

“Religion is where Americans give, and a reason why they give.”

—A report on findings of the *National Study of American Religious Giving* that shows religious faith as the primary motivator for giving and that 73 percent of Americans’ charitable gifts go to religious causes (Religion Dispatches)

“Imagine that we no longer thought that it was about prospering in this life. Imagine that it is not about God taking care of us and protecting us, in this life or the next. Imagine instead that Christianity is about transformation...”

—Theologian Marcus Borg, blogging at *patheos.com*

“Transitioning from leading a church as institution to a church as the people of God is messy, uneven, and extremely exciting. I can’t imagine a better time to be a pastoral leader.”

—Eric Spivey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cornelia, Ga. (Visions)

“I challenge you to learn more about immigration. To study all the angles ... We all have a lot to learn.”

—Amy Beth Willis of First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Tenn., an Emory University graduate involved in a yearlong mission immersion experience in Tucson, Ariz. (Link)

“I have long argued that a preference for reading the Bible literally became popular in the South because it allowed theologians to trump the radically inclusive teaching of Jesus with select quotes from the Apostle Paul and the Old Testament. If you start with Jesus, you will never end with slavery or the systematic exclusion of women.”

—Alan Bean, blogging at *Friends of Justice*

“The irony in this is that gazing upon things that we know to be formed by natural causes, such as the jaw-dropping expanse of the Grand Canyon, pushes us to explain them as the product of supernatural causes.”

—Psychological scientist Piercarlo Valdesolo, whose studies showed that awe-inspiring sights increase belief in God (*HuffPo*)

“Young Christians today care about justice, world poverty and community transformation. They also want teaching on relationships, sexuality and practical discipleship. Christian TV must move beyond the talking-head style of the 1980s. If we want to appeal to young viewers, the false eyelashes, pink fringed wigs and ‘Granny hootenanny’ music will have to go.”

—Charisma magazine columnist Lee Grady, encouraging reformation of Christian television

“For nearly as long as there have been Baptists, there have been Sabbath-keeping Baptists.”

—Nicholas J. Kersten of the *Seventh Day Baptists Historical Society* (Sabbath Recorder)

Jesus didn’t arbitrarily break rules to unnerve people. He consistently moved beyond cultural barriers and self-limiting ideas in order to show that the higher law is love as expressed in the Great Commandment.”

—Terry Maples, field coordinator for Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (ABP)

“Interest rates on payday loans are usurious, often exceeding 500 percent for a two-week loan.”

—Aaron Weaver of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship writing on “The Problem of Predatory Lending” in fellowship! newsletter

“We just took the title from that concept. It doesn’t try to follow what Daniel ate, because the Bible doesn’t tell us exactly what he ate.”

—Saddleback Church pastor Rick Warren, who lost 65 pounds and authored *The Daniel Plan: 40 Days to a Healthier Life* (Zondervan), written with doctors Mark Hyman and Daniel Amen (RNS)

“I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people. Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands.”

—Nelson Mandela, who died December 5 at age 95, when addressing a South African crowd after his release from prison in 1990 (AJC)

The ineffectiveness of in-your-face faith

Contrast is a great teacher.

Longtime commentator on American religious life, Martin Marty, recently wrote a *Sightings* column on how some Christian leaders use public prayers to elicit negative reactions and to force their religious viewpoints.

His prime example was pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church of Dallas, who bragged that his distinctively Christian prayer before a city council meeting brought the desired result of offending some people in attendance.

While the Supreme Court will likely render a ruling clarifying the constitutionality of such prayers, the greater concern for people of faith should be whether in-your-face expressions of faith are helpful even if legal. I would argue that they are not.

Last Thanksgiving morning I arose before the sun to get a little exercise ahead of the looming feast and walked from the hotel in downtown Chattanooga, Tenn., where my family was staying toward the lovely riverfront. To my surprise, a mass of chilly people began gathering at Coolidge Park just after the sun made its welcomed appearance.

Market Street was soon closed off by police and instead of plodding the cold sidewalk alone, I found myself joined by hundreds of others to raise awareness of and money for the local homeless coalition.

But it was the prayer that preceded the walk that I remember the most. Bill Owens, retired pastor of Chattanooga's Ridgedale

Baptist Church, voiced a prayer of deep concern for those enduring the cold without adequate shelter and care. He asked for more divinely-inspired compassion — and thanked God for the goodwill of those who participated in the event.

The prayer was moving and honest — yet sensitive to the diversity of faith surely represented. It was humble — and reflected neither a compromise of one's own convictions nor an effort to offend those who might not share his particular ways of faith.

He is a Baptist. And I didn't mind people knowing that.

Sadly, some Christians confuse beligerence and boldness. Their idea of "standing up for Jesus" turns into acts of rudeness and arrogance that don't match up with the central figure of the faith they claim.

Jesus seems very wary of public prayers in general. And at no point does he endorse prayer as a weapon to intentionally force one's faith on another in a rude and offensive way — and then to brag about having done the Good Lord a favor.

Standing up and speaking up for Jesus is usually better done in ways other than standing and speaking piously in public. At least Jesus seemed to prefer a different approach — such as siding with the oppressed, caring for the suffering and offering hope to those

who despair.

To act ugly in the name of Jesus and then wear the intended negative responses as a badge of honor, often wrongly labeled as persecution, serves no meaningful purpose. It only exacerbates public perceptions that Christians are more concerned about dominance than fairness and faithfulness.

Or as Marty put it: "Perhaps some day, even those who obviously find political uses for their public prayers, will recognize that God ... gave pretty clear guidelines in 'their' Book against trumpet-blowing and boasting uses of prayer."

In-your-face expressions of faith are rooted in fear. However, our best ministry cannot be done when we are threatened that the cultural dominance of our particular religious brand is slipping away — along with the personal public power it affords our church leaders.

There are better ways to react. Prayer can be used for its greater intended purpose. And humility and hope can erase arrogance and anxiety.

Perhaps the greater question than whether sectarian prayers are legal at government meetings is whether they serve a positive or divisive purpose. And much of that answer rests with the intent of the one who prays aloud.

Jesus should never be portrayed as the captain of a cause other than the one he claimed. Sometimes the worst thing we can do is talk about Jesus — while not acting in the ways he taught and lived. **BT**



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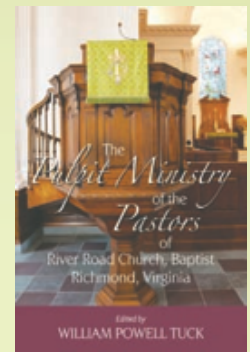
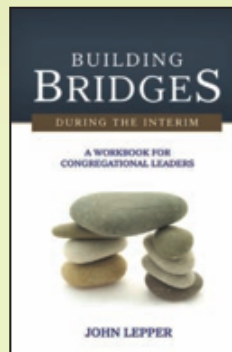
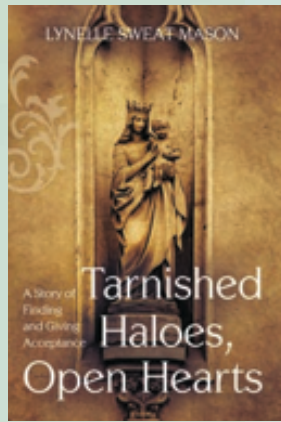
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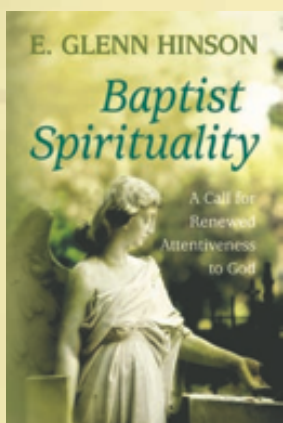
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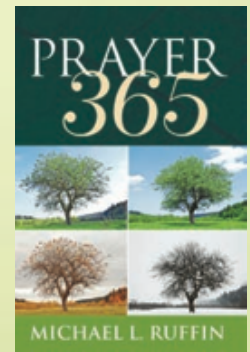
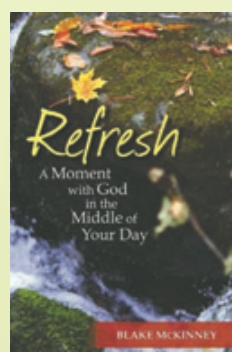
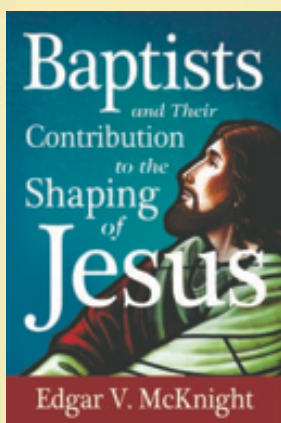
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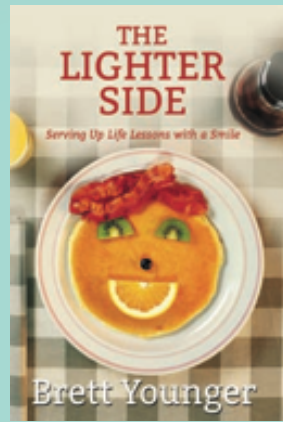
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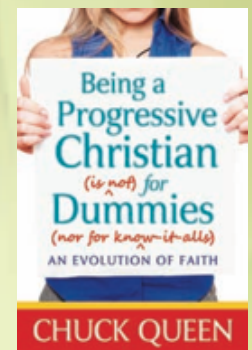
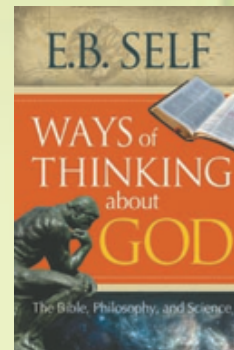
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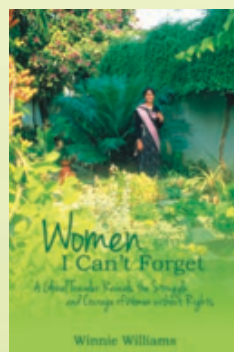
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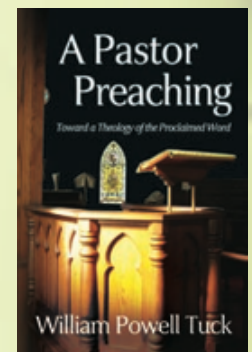
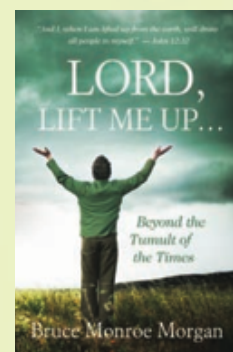
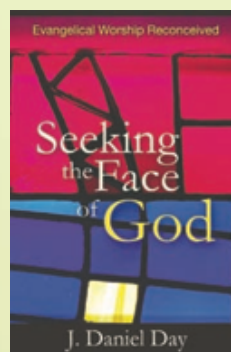
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Longtime pastor to President Carter remembered for his influence

By John Pierce

PLAINS, Ga. — Dan Ariail, pastor emeritus of Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, where thousands of visitors attend Sunday worship and Bible studies by President Jimmy Carter each year, died Nov. 25 at age 75.

“Dr. Dan Ariail was a personal friend and a wonderful pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church for 23 years,” President Carter told *Baptists Today* news journal.

Ariail’s 1996 book, *The Carpenter’s Apprentice*, written with Cheryl Heckler-Feltz, was a personal, spiritual biography of Carter, whose church commitments have included teaching Sunday school throughout his adult life.

“As you can imagine, everyone is so sad about Brother Dan’s passing,” said Sybil Carter, chair of the deacons at Maranatha Baptist Church. “He was like a father to us all.”

Ariail and his wife Nelle remained in the church and the tight-knit Plains community after retirement in 2005. Even though he passed off the weekly preaching tasks and other ministerial duties at retirement, his continued pastoral presence and contributions to the congregation were greatly appreciated, church members said.

“An accomplished musician, Brother Dan composed many original tunes and their lyrics that were both delightful and inspirational,” said President Carter. “His legacy in our church will last for generations.” **BT**

Baptists focus on ‘waging peace’

By Rachel Johnson

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Early in the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel announced the coming Christ child and Zechariah proclaimed that he would “guide our feet into the way of peace” (1:78-79).

Two thousand years later, in the town of Bethlehem where Jesus was born, peace remains an unrealized hope as decades-old conflict between Israelis and Palestinians continues to mar the region.

This ongoing reality brought Baptists from across the country to Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., for a November conference called “Waging Peace in Palestine and Israel.” Sponsored by the Alliance of Baptists, the conference was an American response to the Palestinian-authored *Kairos Document*.

An appeal to global Christians, the document outlines conditions of “oppression, displacement, suffering and clear apartheid for more than six decades” that have been enforced on the Palestinian people by the modern state of Israel. It asks for aid from the international community in bringing about lasting peace and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

Steve Hyde of Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale, Va., called for Baptists in America to respond to oppression in Palestine. While deeply moved by walking in the same areas where Jesus lived and ministered, Hyde said his experience of traveling in the region was tarnished by the reality that so many Palestinian Christians are denied the same opportunity by laws that restrict their

movements and freedom.

Mitri Raheb, one of the authors of the *Kairos Document*, described what it was like to grow up as a Palestinian Arab Christian in the town of Bethlehem. Five years old when the Six Day War brought Israeli troops to his hometown, Raheb has been witness to nine wars in the last five decades.

Raheb said his gospel is one that teaches how to live in the shadow of the empire in a way that brings about the kingdom.

Woven throughout the conference, as in the *Kairos Document* itself, was an emphasis on addressing not only the political reality in Israel-Palestine, but also the underlying theology that contributes to much of the conflict.

“While western countries are providing the State of Israel with the latest hardware, F35s, missiles, and submarines,” said Raheb in his opening remarks, “seminaries and preachers are providing the software for the occupation to continue.”

While there is no consensus between Christians — or even Jews — on how to view the modern state of Israel in connection with its 3,000-year-old biblical precursor, many argue that the conflation of the two has enabled the global community to turn a blind eye to human rights abuses in Palestine. For participants of the *Waging Peace* conference, it was particularly important for Christians to challenge this narrative by asserting Christ’s message of peace and justice for the poor and marginalized in relation to the Palestinians. **BT**

—Rachel Johnson is an associate with the Eleison Group and programs director for the American Values Network, based in Washington, D.C.

William Hull, scholar, author, dies at 83

By Bob Allen

Associated Baptist Press

William Hull, a renowned Baptist preacher, author and provost at both Samford University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Dec. 10 after a battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

Hull taught New Testament 17 years at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and held administrative positions including dean and provost before accepting the pastorate at First

Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., in 1975.

He returned to the classroom in 1987 as provost and university professor at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. After retiring as provost in 1996, Hull served as theologian in residence at Mountain Brook Baptist Church in Birmingham.

Diagnosed with ALS in 2007, Hull chronicled his journey with the progressive neurodegenerative condition often referred to as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease” in a final sermon at his church in 2008 and in an essay in 2011.

Despite struggling against the debilitating

effects of his illness, Hull worked to complete the Hull Legacy Project, a joint project of Samford University Press and Mountain Brook



Baptist Church, completing seven books in seven years, including one on a Christian approach to dying that will be published posthumously.

Hull wrote 21 books on theological subjects and Christian themes and contributed to 24 others. His works include the Broadman Bible Commentary on the Book of John. **BT**

Jews challenge worship rules at holiest sites

By Neri Zilber
Religion News Service

JERUSALEM — This holy city, home to three monotheistic faiths, is no stranger to religious tensions. One locale, however, stands above the rest.

Known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Haram As-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary), the most sensitive site in this most sensitive of cities is buffeted by a growing chorus of Israelis demanding their government allow Jewish worshippers access to the site, and thereby reverse decades of political and religious precedent.

Miri Regev, a parliamentarian from the ruling Likud Beitenu party, has held several hearings on the issue. One such hearing degenerated into a heated argument between right-wing Jewish parliamentarians and Israeli-Arab representatives who eventually stormed out.

“Every citizen of the State of Israel should be allowed to pray in the places holy to them, whether they are a Muslim, a Jew, or a Christian,” Regev said.

Israeli-Arab parliamentarians countered, claiming Regev and other parliamentarians were “pyromaniacs,” playing with fire around an issue “that could lead to a conflagration.”

According to Jewish tradition, the Temple Mount was the site of the Jewish temple, destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. The Western Wall, Judaism’s holiest site today, is believed to be the last of the ancient temple’s massive retaining walls.

Perched directly above the Western Wall is the Al-Aqsa Mosque as well as the Dome of the Rock, a gold-colored gem that dominates Jerusalem’s skyline and is, according to tradition, the place where Mohammad ascended to heaven.

During the 1967 war, Israel seized East Jerusalem and with it the Old City and the holy sites. Since then, the Israeli government has ensured relatively open access to people of all faiths — Jews, Muslims, and Christians. This openness is now being used by some Israeli Jews to gain legal access to the Temple Mount.

Concerns about how the site is handled



A group of ultra-Orthodox Jews in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem’s Old City look out onto the Al-Aqsa Mosque. RNS photo by Neri Zilber.

are well founded. The Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is the scene of sporadic riots by Muslim worshippers targeting the Israeli security presence there, as well as the Jewish worshippers below.

When Ariel Sharon visited the site in 2000 as Israel’s opposition leader, he helped spark the Second Intifada (“uprising”), referred to by Palestinians as the “Al-Aqsa Intifada.” The opening by Israeli authorities of archaeological tunnels under the Temple Mount in 1996 led to widespread clashes in the West Bank and the deaths of more than a dozen Israeli soldiers and scores of Palestinians.

In the 1980s, Israeli authorities arrested an underground Jewish terrorist cell that was planning to blow up the Dome of the Rock. Muslim authorities say any talk of allowing Jewish worship on the Temple Mount is a provocation that would undo the status quo.

For their part, Jewish pressure groups, both within government and outside, claim they only want a small area in the Temple Mount courtyard set aside for Jewish worship. The problem they face, however, is not political or security-related, but religious.

Israel’s Chief Rabbinate, responsible for all

religious decrees touching on state institutions, has ruled that Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount is forbidden according to Jewish law. The ruling has to do in large part with its location as the resting place of what Jews consider the Divine Presence, the “Holy of Holies.”

Rabbi Eliyahu Ben Dahan, the deputy minister for religious services from the pro-settler Jewish Home party, recently petitioned the Chief Rabbinate to reconsider. Such rabbis overwhelmingly hail from the religious-nationalist stream of Orthodox Judaism, considered close to the settler movement.

Observant right-wing Jews continue to visit the Temple Mount on a regular, if limited, basis. Hundreds of foreign tourists and non-Muslim Israelis are allowed to visit the site monthly, according to the Israeli national police.

But Israeli police officers securing the Temple Mount complex uphold the ban on any form of (non-Muslim) worship, although zealot activists often clandestinely recite prayers under their breath. Such acts, and the growing public debate over allowing Jewish worship at the site — and with it militant Islamic voices in Israel calling on the faithful “to defend Al-Aqsa” — have increased tensions. **BT**

‘Every citizen of the State of Israel should be allowed to pray in the places holy to them, whether they are a Muslim, a Jew, or a Christian.’

By Sarah Pulliam Bailey, RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

The most successful Christian author *you've never heard of*

NEW YORK — How do you get kids to read one of the world's oldest books? Ask Sally Lloyd-Jones, whose *The Jesus Storybook Bible* recently passed the mark of 1 million copies sold.

The British ex-pat and now proud New Yorker has never married or had children of her own, yet aims to retell the Bible to come alive for young people.

One of her editors told her once that there are two types of children's books authors: the ones who are around children, and the ones who are children inside.

"It kind of freed me, because I think I know I'm that second one," she said. "And I can still write from that place, because my childhood is so vivid."

Her *The Jesus Storybook Bible* was not an overnight best-seller, nor was her path to best-selling children's author a direct one.

"As a 6-year-old, I dreaded going to church," she said. "I made a little promise inside my head that when I grew up I was never going to church again."

Lloyd-Jones says that the Church of England Sunday school she attended was focused on keeping rules.

"I didn't get any sense of wonder, or adventure, or any story," she said. "That's why whenever I was working on a story and there would be a temptation to do a moral lesson, I'd have such a huge reaction."

The Jesus Storybook Bible, originally released by Zondervan in 2007, was an attempt to get through barriers children may have.

"The challenge with that book was 'How do I tell this story so a child would hear it for the first time in a fresh way?'" she said. "I wanted to explain it in a way that wouldn't rely on jargon."

"Kids can't be fooled," said Eric Metaxas, author of the biography *Bonhoeffer* and several children's books, who has known Lloyd-Jones



Sally Lloyd-Jones is the author of three bestselling children's Bibles, including the Gold Book Award-winning *Baby's First Bible* and *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Photo courtesy Zondervan/RNS

since she moved to the U.S. "There has to be a level of honesty and authenticity that isn't easily achieved."

The one biblical story she wanted to include but didn't was the wedding at Cana when Jesus turns water into wine, considered his first miracle. But Zondervan was worried about a story featuring wine. "I just love that the first thing that Jesus does is a party!" said Lloyd-Jones.

A petite, blonde-haired woman who jogs and photographs for fun at 53 years old, Lloyd-Jones' energy is contagious. Born in Uganda, Jones spent her first years in Africa.

"You would think my parents might be missionaries. Everyone thinks that's a much better story," she said. "My dad was working for Shell."

Lloyd-Jones attended boarding school in England, where a teacher first told her she could one day become a writer. While she studied art history at Sussex University, she spent a year in Paris, where she grew in the Christian

faith of her youth.

Her first job was at Oxford University Press as an editorial assistant in the textbooks division.

"Down the corridor from me there seemed to be a lot of laughing, and it was the children's picture book department. I remember thinking 'Oh, I'll never be able to write them, but at least I could work on them.'"

In 1989, she took a job in Connecticut where she eventually became the publisher of the Christian children's book list that was later purchased by *Reader's Digest*. She moved to New York City in 1998, and began to write full time after she later lost her job as part of a major downsizing. She became a U.S. citizen after 9/11.

Because of her last name, many mistakenly believe she is related to the late Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a Welsh minister influential in the British evangelical movement who's admired by many American evangelicals. No, she gently clarifies with anyone who asks, she is not related to him.

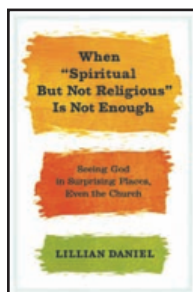
John Starke, pastor of New York's All Souls Church, said he uses her children's Bible with his four children because it gives a good overview of the Bible with quality writing and illustrations.

"I think the main difference is that the book is both biblical and imaginative. Children's books tend to err on one of those extremes," he said. "But Sally's book is strong on both ends."

Her breakthrough as an author actually came through a nonreligious book called *How to Be a Baby . . . by Me, the Big Sister*, a best-seller sold by Random House that won praise in *The New York Times*. But she doesn't make a distinction between which books are religious or nonreligious.

"I think the danger with Christian publishing is (the attitude), 'If it's got a Bible verse in it then it's OK,' even if it's got really bad writing and bad art," she said. "I suppose my vision has always been that it's got to be excellent." **BT**

By Jackie Riley



When “Spiritual But Not Religious” Is Not Enough

Seeing God in Surprising Places,
Even the Church
By Lillian Daniel

Author fed up with bad religion gives new spin on ‘church’

“I am tired of ...

- Hearing people say stupid things in the name of Christianity
- Nutty, pistol-packing pastors who want to burn the Koran
- Televangelists who claim that natural disasters are the will of God
- Christians who respond to the pain of disease with a lecture about behavior
- Preachers who promise prosperity
- People who have one bad experience with a church and paint the whole of Christianity with that brush
- Celebrities who criticize the church for being patriarchal and homophobic but do nothing to support the churches that are not
- People who say they want a church like mine but cannot be bothered to attend one
- People who say that they are privately spiritual but not religious ...”

Lillian Daniel is tired of the simple spirituality prevalent in our society, of people who have “itchy ears” and want easy answers instead of sound doctrine. She voices her biases readily in a book of sermons and short essays whose title is a spin-off from a 2011 op-ed piece she wrote for the *Huffington Post* in which she lambasted the cliché of “I’m spiritual but not religious.”

But Daniel also admits she is tired of herself for criticizing those with self-styled religion, acknowledging that she “can’t do this religion thing alone” but needs a community. So, in her third book, she gives not only a stinging critique of the “spiritual but not religious” but also describes unexpected places (even the church) and unlikely “theologians” where we may find God — giving evidence that the church can be a community of flawed characters and that they all belong “at the table.”

These church “members” come alive with Daniel’s fiery brand of humor and candor that is a cross between Erma Bombeck and Anne Lamont. They include, among many: a BB gun-toting grandmother and her dog Amos enmeshed in alienation from and blaming the neighbors, prisoners in a maximum security

facility who are studying to be ministers, and a group of strangers who make a long road trip together when their airline flights are cancelled.

Along with her hilarious tales, Daniel exposes raw personal emotions. She tells about moving every year or two as a child and the constant rejection at the school lunch table, her reasons for leaving the church and the value of spiritual homes both good and bad, and her parents’ marital and personal problems and her family being reunited through the church.

Each story, whether lighthearted or serious, has a pointed conclusion — despite the detours the author takes to reach it — built on a scriptural foundation. She makes ordinary things relevant by creating tension, expressing honest feelings and personal fallibility, and then sometimes failing to resolve all issues presented. Even with open-ended conclusions, the reader has no doubt where Daniel stands.

In critiquing the culture of “spiritual but not religious,” for example, she says:

- “Being privately spiritual but not religious just doesn’t interest me. There is nothing challenging about having deep thoughts all by oneself.”
- “Self-styled religion” is nothing unique or innovative, but rather just as “boring and predictable as the rest of our self-centered consumer culture.”
- “We are creating a culture of narcissists who have never had a thought they did not press ‘send’ on.”

- “People who worship their own opinions will at some point have to come face-to-face with an idol that like all idols will disappoint.”

In defending the need for a community of faith, she says:

- “In an age of spiritual people who are not religious, we need religion, and its dearest expression to this particular religious Christian person, the church.”
- “The church remains a place to remember that there is someone much better than we are at original creations.”
- “The stand-in church is called not to be brilliant, not to be persuasive, not even to tell the entire story right then and there, but rather ... to simply be.”
- “In the church at its best, we challenge [the] idolatry of opinion and acknowledge the limits of our own taste.... It is not all about you... The customer is not always right.”

When “*Spiritual But Not Religious*” Is Not Enough is an excellent source of instruction and inspiration for both laity and clergy. Written by one who has unique perspectives both as an “outsider” and an “insider” of the church, Lillian Daniel is receiving rave reviews of her work by the likes of Lauren Winner and Brian McLaren and in publications such as *Publishers Weekly* and *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*. She is gaining her place “at the table” of modern-day Christian apologetic literature as she seeks to defend the church from “dumbing down” and trivializing Christianity and cultivating a culture of narcissism. **BT**

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The Lighter Side

By Brett Younger

Telling a good story

Don't you hate it when someone says, "Tell me a little bit about yourself"? What do you tell? What do you skip? Do they really care about where you were born or what you do to pay the bills? Would they rather learn that you once made a paper airplane that flew for eight seconds? Would they appreciate your theory on rock, paper, scissors? When is it too early to mention that you were a Bible drill champion? Do you want this to be your last conversation?

Some people are anxiously waiting for an opportunity to list their accomplishments. Some players practice their touchdown dance. We like to tell our stories as if we pulled ourselves up by our own bootstraps — as if we are the kind of people who have bootstraps.

I grew up in the turmoil of the Deep South in the 1960s (where it was 100 degrees in the shade) and the hardship of the rust belt North in the 1970s (where it was 0 degrees in the sun). I had to overcome near-sightedness and being three inches shorter than the average male. I chose Baylor, the world's largest Baptist university, before the football team was good. My parents wondered if I would have enough money to pay tuition — it was up to \$45 a semester hour — but I took a grueling job in the bookstore, worked as many as eight hours a week, and I made it.

I moved to Louisville, Ky., where I finished a Master's and a Ph.D. in only eight short years. I served as a pastor for 22 years in four churches that my mother would call prominent. In each place of service I was respected by several people in the community. The fourth largest seminary in Atlanta thought I should be shaping young minds, so I am one of the 15 finest professors at the McAfee School of Theology.

Telling about our glorious success is fun.



Who doesn't want to spike the football in the end zone? I am what I made of myself, even if I do say so myself.

There are other ways to tell your story. You can tell it without any dancing at all.

I was born in South Dakota, which is a lot like North Dakota. I grew up in Mississippi after Elvis went to Memphis, and went to high school in Ohio after Dean Martin went to Las Vegas. Like a lot of people, I graduated from college. Carol and I met in Louisville. Like a lot of couples, we got married. I took a job in Indiana. Graham was born. I took a job in Kansas. Caleb was born. We moved to Waco, then Fort Worth, and now Atlanta. I'm getting older. I'm 52. I'm still three inches shorter than the average man.

If we see our lives as meaningless happenstance or as the product of our own hard work, then we have missed the point. Every Christian's story is the story of what God has given. This is my story.

In the beginning, before the bang that made matter and energy, there was the mystery of God. God's goodness erupted and created the heavens and the earth. God made people to hear their amusing stories. Through holy men and women God told a joyful story.

Two thousand years ago, my story took a dramatic turn in the story of Jesus. In Jesus' life and death we see the heart of God broken and opened. The people who loved Jesus' story became the church. Our ancestors tried to

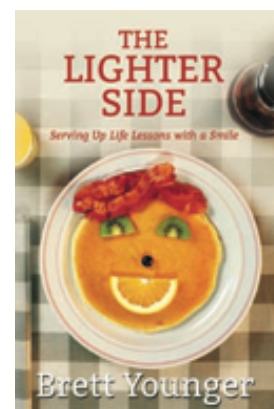
figure out what is important enough to tell and what to leave out.

Not many years ago, some people in Mississippi told the story to my grandparents who told it to my mother who claimed it as her story, too. A college student in Texas told the story to my father who decided that he wanted it to be his story. Those who share the story helped me understand that my life has meaning in the light of the story.

Several churches encouraged me to explore God's gracious invitation to ministry. At seminary I met a most genuine Christian. I was amazed that Carol wanted to share ministry with me. A church in Indiana cared for us through the tragedy of a miscarriage. When Graham and Caleb were born, we recognized that they were gifts of grace. We served delightful churches filled with saints. Through those caring sisters and brothers God loved me. Learning with the students at my seminary has been delightful. God's story and my story are all about grace. Our story is about God helping us find hope in a story bigger than our own. **BT**

—Brett Younger is associate professor of preaching at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology.

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February lessons in this issue

THINGS THAT MATTER

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Feb. 2, 2014

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Spiritual Secrets
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1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Baby Talk
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1 Corinthians 3:10-23
Quality Construction
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Bible Study

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

with Tony W. Cartledge

Feb. 2, 2014

Foolhardy Wisdom

Have you ever learned something new or grasped a novel insight that seemed to turn your way of thinking about something upside down?

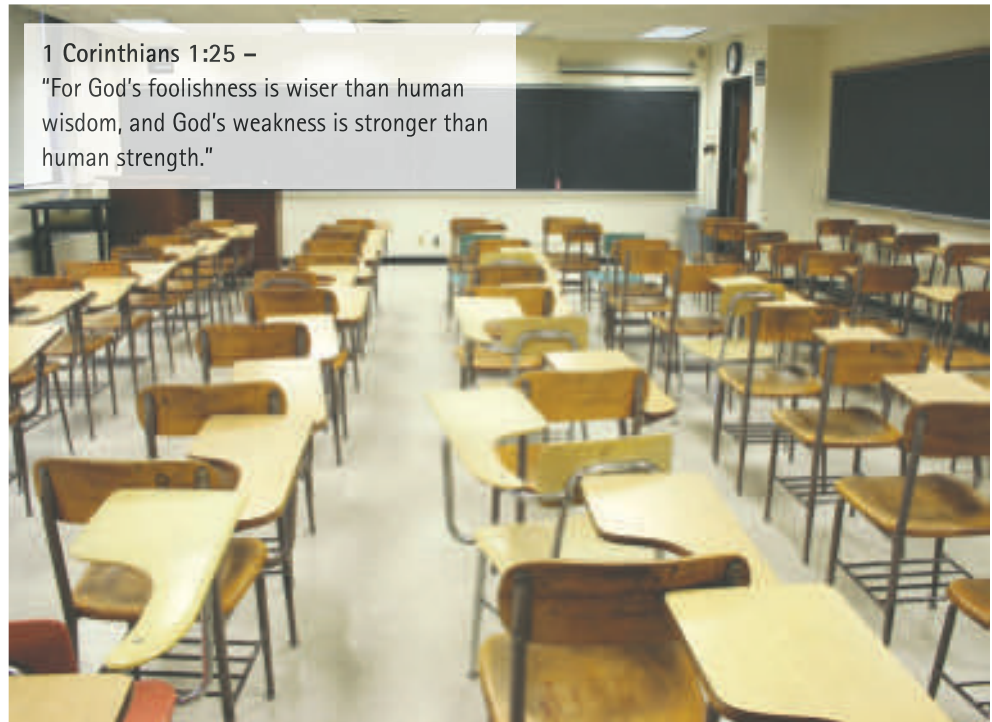
Perhaps you've known a person whose insecurities seemed ridiculous – until you discovered that she had been abandoned as a child and grew up in a string of foster families. Then you understood.

Or maybe you took a college or seminary course in Old or New Testament that completely changed the way you look at the Bible.

In 1 Cor. 1:18-31, Paul's argument was designed to convince the Christians in Corinth that their way of thinking – their culture's understanding of wisdom – needed a global shift. His goal was to turn their world upside down.

Corinth was a cosmopolitan center where rich and poor alike admired public speakers who could impress hearers with eloquent displays of wisdom. Notable Greek philosophers, Jewish scholars, and professional rhetoricians could attract the same kind of acclaim as modern-day movie stars or pop idols, even without the benefit of celebrity magazines and Twitter accounts.

The church in Corinth was beset by conflict in several areas. Paul's letter alluded to the conflict in vv. 1-17, and addressed specific issues beginning in chapter 3. In the meantime, the apostle sought to lay a theological foundation designed to establish a basis for later arguments. Most of the conflicts related to power struggles in which various groups considered themselves superior



to others, or in possession of deeper knowledge.

Thus, Paul found it needful to contrast the potentially divisive wisdom of the world with the powerfully transforming word of the cross.

The power of the cross (vv. 18-19)

Paul confessed that the whole notion of the cross sounds crazy. Would anyone be so insane as to invent a religion whose messiah was humiliated through a public crucifixion? That sounds like stupidity on steroids. But the wisdom of the world fails to comprehend the surprising wisdom of God.

“For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God,” Paul said (v. 18).

The event of the cross divides the world's population into two groups, the apostle insisted: those who are perishing and those who are being saved. That's powerful.

Note that Paul spoke of this in the present tense, which in Greek implies

continuation. “Those who are perishing” does not imply immediate death, but describes those who follow a path that leads to death.

To those who are spiritually dying, the gospel of the cross sounds like foolishness (*mōria*, the root of the English word “moron”). To the human mind, the thought of a god submitting to the humiliation of a public execution makes no sense: it's moronic. Rational arguments such as those taught by Greek philosophers seem much more reasonable.

But God's wisdom has a way of turning things upside down. Paul drew on Isa. 29:14b to reinforce his contention: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart” (v. 19). 📖📖

In contrast to “those who are perishing,” Paul spoke of “those who are being saved,” who find in the cross the power of God. “Those who are being saved” are on the pathway of life, with eternity as their ultimate destination. 📖

The life of faith is empowered by Christ's self-sacrificing love at work in

Additional background information
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the believer. The power of the cross is the forgiveness of God, transforming the lives of those who put their trust in Christ. 📖

The wisdom of the world (vv. 20-25)

Paul's argument calls up three models of earthly wisdom: wise philosophers, Torah experts, and skilled orators. [See "The Hardest Question" online for more.]

To people like this, the gospel of the cross appeared as foolishness. It made no sense for a deity to save humans through self-sacrifice. 📖

That's why Paul insisted that God's wisdom is of an entirely different nature than earthly wisdom. What seems foolish to humans makes perfect sense to God, even a divine willingness to be stripped, beaten, and nailed to a cross for the sake of humans (v. 23).

Nothing could seem more ridiculous to those who look for salvation in a powerful leader, a surpassing philosophy, or a new technology, but the salvation of God does not come through intellectual arguments any more than through keeping the law. Salvation comes through faith as "the called" – those who respond to God's call by trusting Christ – discover that Christ is indeed "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v. 24).

Believers learn that God's gift of life is not gained as a result of human wisdom. Rather, *true* wisdom comes through a true surrender to God's way of thinking. Paul's readers, like most of us, lived in a sophisticated society that found pride in self-reliance and continual achievements. Still, he said "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength" (v. 25).

When we base our evaluation on wisdom that makes sense in human categories, it is not surprising that the gospel message seems strange: it's not rational. Those who open their minds to God's way of thinking have to stretch beyond human logic, but in doing so may come to appreciate a deeper and broader wisdom. 📖

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The pride of the church and the work of Christ (vv. 26-31)

Human nature loves to brag, and various factions of the church at Corinth boasted that their understanding of and expression of the faith was superior to the way others worshiped.

Paul insisted that human pride and humble acceptance of Christ's saving work cannot coexist, and sought to drive the point home in vv. 26-31. After speaking about society in general, Paul turned to the church in particular.

The church in Corinth had some influential members, but most members did not belong to the intelligentsia, the power brokers, or the cultural elite of Corinthian society (v. 26). 📖 Still, Paul believed that God could use their weakness to impress the strong, even as the foolishness of the gospel was destined to challenge the wise (v. 27).

To the world, lowly people and crazy ideas may seem unimportant, but from the perspective of eternity, it is the proud who will become nothing (v. 28). Paul insisted that this paradox is not only intentional, but also necessary. As long as salvation is attainable by human means, however strict the requirements, then God falls out of the equation and human pride reigns supreme.

But salvation is a gift of God, not the reward of good or wise or powerful works. No one can boast about having achieved salvation when he or she knows that God alone is the source of life (v. 29).

The issue of boasting is a recurring theme in the Corinthian correspondence, and the frequency with which Paul addresses it betrays the danger it poses. Self-assured boasting cannot coexist with trusting faith.

The ultimate source of the believer's life is not found in philosophy or science or even the Higgs boson, popularly but inappropriately tagged "the God

particle." Abundant life, ultimate life is found in Christ Jesus, "who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (v. 30). Notice the fourfold description of Christ's work in the believer.

To say that Christ is our *wisdom* is not just to identify Jesus with the personified wisdom of the Wisdom literature in the Old Testament and the rabbinic traditions, but to say that Jesus is the final source of our knowledge of God.

To say that Christ is our *righteousness* means that Christ is the one who puts us right with God. We are incapable of achieving that status by our own merit, but through our acceptance of Christ's death on our behalf, we can enter a right relationship with God (Rom. 8:33).

Those who are put right with God begin the lifelong challenge of growing in holiness, but such growth is also a work of Christ in us, so Paul could say he is our *sanctification*. In Christ we are set apart to live for God and give our time and our money in sharing God's love, even when it seems like foolishness to the world.

Finally, Christ is our *redemption*. The word Paul used denoted the ransom price paid to set someone free from slavery or imprisonment. We do not have to subscribe to an elaborate "ransom theory" of the atonement to appreciate Paul's imagery. Knowing what it is to live in bondage to sin and the fear of death, we rejoice in the great Christian hope – the promise that Christ's atoning life, death, and resurrection have set us free to live an abundant and eternal life within the care of Almighty God.

Paul concluded his argument with another reference to scripture, a loose and abbreviated quotation from Jer. 9:23-24. 📖 If there is any boasting to be done, we should boast in what God has done, not in our own accomplishments. Paul expressed this same thought even more eloquently in Gal. 6:14: "May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." **BT**

Bible Study

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

with Tony W. Cartledge

Feb. 9, 2014

Spiritual Secrets

Have you ever participated in a formal debate? Good debaters are skilled in marshalling rhetorical devices and rational arguments to make their case. By appealing to the emotions as well as the intellect, a skillful orator can take even a ridiculous proposition and argue convincingly that it is true.

While the Christians Paul addressed in Corinth were accustomed to oral debates in the public square, the “debates” we are familiar with today are more typically one-sided exhibitions played out in opinion columns, blogs, and video clips – which can also make persuasive arguments for false claims.

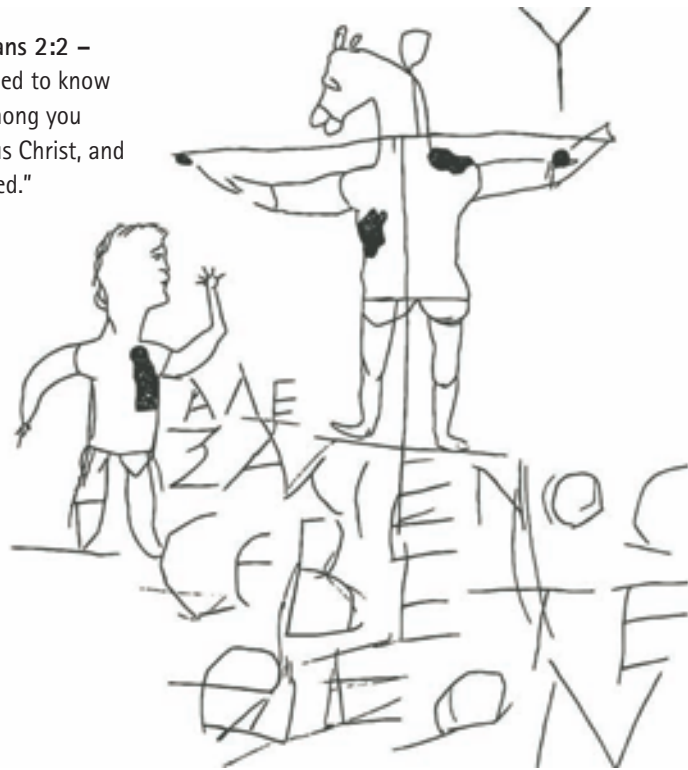
Consider the hundreds of political ads that jam the airways each election season. Often they are based on bogus facts, half-truths, and totally misleading accusations, yet many voters find them convincing – especially if the candidates’ claims match their own biases or preferences. It’s enough to make a thinking person gag – but also an effective reminder of the power of compelling rhetoric. 📌

The testimony of God (vv. 1-5)

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians was designed, in large part, to counter conflict that arose from overconfident people pushing competing agendas.

Having argued in the previous chapter that human and divine wisdom are on entirely different levels, Paul insisted that his message to the Corinthians was not based on human

1 Corinthians 2:2 –
“For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”



oratory, but focused on Christ alone. “I did not come proclaiming the mystery (or “testimony”) of God to you in lofty words or wisdom,” he said (v. 1). 📌

The Corinthians were accustomed to hearing Greek orators or philosophers speak with impressive force, but Paul refused to be judged by style, polish, or rhetoric alone. He knew that the gospel of Christ does not make sense by human categories of logic, in which the concept of a crucified God seems like so much foolishness (1:18).

We have evidence for this. Sometime in the early history of the church, someone who thought the faith was foolish ridiculed a Christian believer by scratching a graffito into a plaster wall near Palatine Hill in Rome. The drawing portrayed a donkey-headed man on a cross, and another man looking up in worship. A crude inscription labels it “Alexamenos and his god.” 📌

Paul recognized that the concept of a crucified savior would seem laughable to the world (1:18-25), but he remained determined “... to know nothing among

you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (v. 2). His testimony about Christ was not proclaimed in the elegant speech of a professional orator, but in the wondrous amazement of a sinner who had been saved by grace and who could speak of it only “. . . in weakness and in fear and in much trembling” (v. 3).

Paul understood that rational arguments for the gospel would be largely ineffective, and any results produced by them would probably be short-lived. He was more concerned that people appreciate the power of God than simply gain knowledge about God. Thus, he said, “My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God” (vv. 4-5). 📌

What convincing “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” did Paul have in mind? We may assume that his preaching had been accompanied by an outpouring of the Spirit that manifested itself in a variety of ways,

Additional background information online where you see the “Digging Deeper” icon



including miracles of healing, speaking in tongues, and other spiritual gifts. Unfortunately, the Corinthians had managed to turn those gifts into a source of conflict, too (see chs. 12-14).

Paul would also have credited the Spirit with the outbreak of faith among the Corinthians. The growth of the church, like the salvation of the sinner, is the work of God, the fruit of God's empowering Spirit. 📖 📖

The mystery of God (vv. 6-13)

With v. 6, Paul shifted gears, but his precise intent is unclear, and interpreters have struggled mightily with understanding 2:6-16. A surface reading suggests that Paul turned to the subject of Christian maturity, promising that he did in fact have additional mysteries to share with those who were spiritually mature.

That would contradict everything Paul had said in 1:18-2:5, however, for there he insisted that believers have no need of esoteric mysteries, but should focus on the crucified Christ alone.

For this reason, it may be best to read these verses as irony or sarcasm in which Paul was saying something to the effect of, "You want mystery? I'll give you mystery!" He had already insisted that God's secret is subsumed in the cross of Christ, and that was all the mystery anyone needed. (For more on the passage as irony, see "The Hardest Question" online.)

Whether Paul turned to irony or simply adopted his opponents' terminology to bolster his own case, he may have been responding to criticism that his proclamation of the gospel was too simplistic – that he had not revealed to the church the real mysteries of Christ that others claimed to know.

The criticism could have been fueled by the popularity of Jewish apocalypticism, which looked to ancient prophecies for secret revelations of a new age, or of mystery religions that initiated members through clandestine ceremonies and mystic rituals.

Other critics may have promoted

an incipient heresy we know as Gnosticism, which claimed that persons could ascend to higher spiritual realms by attaining secret knowledge (*gnosis*).

It is also possible that some Corinthians had been more impressed with the teaching of Peter and Apollos (see 1:12; 3:4) than with Paul's straightforward version of the gospel.

What did Paul mean by "Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish" (v. 6)?

Some of the Corinthians evidently considered themselves to be more mature than others, but we will soon learn that Paul considered all of the Corinthian believers to be spiritual infants (3:1). Perhaps we should understand Paul's use of "mature" to be in quotation marks, a sarcastic setup before calling them babies in 3:1.

Whether we read his tone as ironic or not, Paul insisted that the "wisdom of this age," the human attempt to make sense out of life, would have no future.

Paul's reference to "this age" is a reminder that he saw salvation in eschatological terms. Notice that Paul had talked much about the cross, but not to argue for a particular theory explaining the atonement. Rather, Paul saw Christ's crucifixion as introducing a new age. Those who still belonged to "this age," whether wise or powerful, were doomed to perish. Those who trusted Christ, however, belonged to the new and eternal era.

Paul contended that the "secret and hidden" wisdom that God "decreed before the ages" (v. 7) was not some arcane knowledge revealed to a few, but "a reference to God's plan and purpose in salvation, manifested as a free gift in Jesus Christ and him crucified" (Raymond Bryan Brown, "1 Corinthians," *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 10 [Broadman Press, 1970], 307; compare 1:23-24).

This hidden purpose of God had been revealed in Christ, Paul said, but "the rulers of this age" did not understand God's plan, or else they would not have crucified Christ (v. 8). 📖 There could be no greater truth or deeper secret than this, Paul argued – no more important bit of knowledge than the revelation that Christ died for our salvation. The Corinthians would do well to grasp this truth more completely before demanding deeper knowledge.

Understanding v. 9 is problematic. Paul introduced an Old Testament quotation in his typical manner ("as it is written . . ."). However, the quotation itself – "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" – does not appear in the Old Testament. It is likely that Paul was freely adapting Isa. 64:4: "From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God beside you, who works for those who wait for him." 📖

If this was the text Paul had in mind, we should not overlook his substitution of the word "love" for "wait." God's eternal gift is not for those who gain wisdom or speak with eloquence, but for those who love God. And those who understand God best are not those who learn from human teachers, but from the indwelling Spirit of God (v. 10).

In v. 11, Paul used an analogy. Just as we know ourselves better than anyone else when we're in touch with our own spirit, so no one fully understands God except God's own Spirit (v. 11).

It is the Spirit of God, not of the world, that introduces us to the deeper mysteries of the faith and to the reality of our spiritual gifts (v. 12). Appreciating the deeper things of God is not a matter of deep knowledge, but of deep faith and openness to God's Spirit. Spiritual things cannot be communicated in logical categories, but in a common ground of experience known to those who experience God's Spirit (v. 13). 📖

That, Paul might say, is real wisdom. **BT**

Youth

February 2 — February 23, 2014

Youth Lessons by
David Cassady
and online youth
teaching resources
(at nurturingfaith.net) by **Jeremy
Colliver** build off



of the Bible lessons by Tony Cartledge.

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FEBRUARY 2

Of Course!

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

"That makes so much sense now!" Sometimes we say this after the "light bulb" goes off in our head. Perhaps it is the words used by a speaker or the way an author spells out an argument, but the right ideas can make everything else come alive. Or maybe a moment comes when you are part of a mission team and all seems right in the world. It is in these moments that we can plant a flag and say, "That is when it all changed."

The people of Corinth enjoyed discussions that led to life-changing understandings and words of wisdom. Paul joined the conversation by writing to the Corinthians to help them see the difference between divisive wisdom and the transformation of the cross.

In his letter, Paul admits that the idea of the cross can sound crazy: Why would a person choose to die and be humiliated? To the logical-thinking philosophers, this makes no sense. But to those who have been saved, it makes complete sense. God's wisdom turns this act of humiliation upside down and makes it a saving act.

God's wisdom is not like the wisdom of this world and may seem foolish. That is why a life with God is self-sacrificing even to the point of death. A sacrifice often means giving up the wisdom of this world for the wisdom of God.

If the people of Corinth are starting to lean toward earning their faith through self-sacrifice, Paul reminds them that salvation is completely a gift from God. Life comes from God, in Jesus Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Think About It:

You probably don't have to think very long to come up with a list of your "light bulb" moments. What surprising things have you learned about God?

Make a Choice:

We can choose to live by the wisdom of the world or the wisdom of God. How do you know the difference between these two? How do you learn and live through the wisdom of God?

Pray:

Dear God, may we see the wisdom of the cross as a way to live, and may we offer mercy to those we encounter.

FEBRUARY 9

Prove It

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Most youth groups have interesting discussions or event debates about ideas and issues. They make claims, share ideas, and take different positions. Sometimes people ask each other to "prove it" when they offer ideas. Paul would have had no problem responding to such a challenge, because he was excellent in debates. He needed this gift, because Corinth was filled with skilled and trained debaters.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians seeks to speak the truth to a people who are pushing their own agendas. He begins his argument not claiming his own wisdom, but rather giving authority to "Christ alone." He starts this way because he knows that the idea of Jesus' death on the

cross does not make sense to human logic. Paul preaches not out of his own wisdom and power, but through the power of God. If the Corinthians doubt the power of God, Paul points to the miracles and gifts that have occurred because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

To further prove his point, Paul takes on the language of those who are attempting to defy him by speaking of the mystery of God. Paul explains that the mystery of God has already been revealed in the person of Jesus. In fact, Jesus would not have been crucified if the people understood this. So those who understand God best are those who have the Spirit of God in them. Paul is certain that to know God, we have to know the Spirit of God, and that is revealed through Jesus Christ.

Think About It:

To know God, we must know the Spirit of God that is revealed through Jesus. How have you experienced Jesus? How has this deepened your understanding of God?

Make a Choice:

Paul debated with many people about the truths of God, but he did it out of love and humility. How will you choose to share God with others when you interact with them? How will you show them love?

Pray:

Admit to God that there is still much mystery around God. Ask for the Spirit of God to guide your quest to know God better through Jesus Christ.

FEBRUARY 16

Planting

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Have you ever planted a tree or flowers? Have you been ambitious enough to plant a garden?

The digging, removing of rocks, loosening of the soil, and other preparations seem hard enough when planting something, but then you have to care for the garden as it grows.

You have to remove the weeds around the plants, water them – but not too much – and maybe even stake them if they grow too large. We can do all we want, but if the sun doesn't come out to shine, the plants won't live. We are reliant on the sun for our plants to grow, and Paul wants us to know that we are reliant on the Son for us to grow spiritually.

Paul doesn't start his object lesson

talking about plants, but rather about raising infants. He doesn't mean the chronologically young, but the spiritually young. The people of faith want to know deep spiritual truths, but Paul reminds them they have to grow into those understandings. He continues to feed the basics of the faith to the people as they grow, but they continue to rely on their own understandings instead of the wisdom of God.

The people of Corinth have the Spirit of God within them, but they tend to rely on what they think and believe instead of the Spirit that is within them. Even when the people do rely on something other than themselves, they align with leaders such as Apollos and Paul instead of God. Paul wants the Corinthians to focus on Christ instead of the messengers who brought them God.

Think About It:

We should all continue to grow in our faith no matter our age or experience. Who are some of the people in your life that help you grow in faith?

Make a Choice:

How has your faith changed since you were a child? What parts of your faith might need to mature as you grow older?

Pray:

Ask God to help you continue to grow in faith so that you may be a stronger follower of Christ.

FEBRUARY 23

What's Left?

1 Corinthians 3:10-23

Ibought a new set of Legos recently. After dumping them all out on the floor, I noticed a bright orange piece. I had no idea how to use it. When I opened the directions, I discovered it was a tool to help take the Legos apart. My fingernails were thrilled that they no longer had to be used to pry apart the pieces, because I am one of those persons who firmly presses the Legos together.

This habit developed after a project fell apart because I had rushed through the first steps and not secured everything properly. I learned that a good foundation makes everything else work better. This lesson also applies to other scenarios: Jenga,

card towers, building blocks, decks and other projects.

Paul applies the idea of a firm foundation to the spiritual life of every believer. When he talks about the church, it is not of physical buildings but rather the community of faith that is present in Corinth. He argues that each person must have a foundation in the wisdom of God or it will be destroyed when tested.

The foundation can't be Paul or Apollos, even though they are the ones who delivered the message. The foundation must be Jesus Christ. Paul goes on to explain that believers should continue to build upon the foundation if they want to stand up to the scrutiny that will come. Their temples are to be for Christ and no one else.

Think About It:

We have each been blessed with gifts that allow us to continue to build upon our foundations in Christ. How do you use your gifts for God?

Make a Choice:

Perhaps you are strongly invested in your youth group. How does the way you care for the members help each other grow in faith?

Pray:

Thank God for the person who has helped you build up your faith in Christ. Ask God to use you in a similar way for others.

Bible Study

with Tony W. Cartledge

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Feb. 16, 2014

Baby Talk

In human life, few things can compare with the pure wonder of a baby. When holding a newborn, we marvel at the miracle of life – especially if the infant is our own child or grandchild. Within the tiniest baby lies the potential for such growth and life and accomplishment, but children don't grow on their own. Babies cannot survive, much less grow strong, without someone to care for them and nurture their growth.

While infants can bring transcendent joy to life, they can also bring persistent trials and much aggravation. Babies cry in the wee hours, and sleep-deprived parents must fight through groggy nights to feed, change, and comfort them. Babies soil their diapers at the most inopportune times, spill things with great frequency, and often totter on the edge of danger, leaving their caretakers emotionally ragged.

The delight of raising children outweighs the annoyance, but parents and other caregivers must be prepared for puddles as well as cuddles.

Paul, the parent

Today's text is about infants of the spiritual kind. The Apostle Paul approached his work in growing churches as a father with his children, and often used that terminology (1 Cor. 4:14-16). He knew the prodigious joy of seeing people forsake their sins and come to Christ – but he also knew the predictable frustrations of nurturing those same persons to maturity.

The letter of 1 Corinthians suggests that the Christians in Corinth were slow

1 Corinthians 3:3 –
"For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?"



in maturing, causing Paul considerable aggravation if not sleepless nights as he tried to clean up some of the messes they made. 📌 His letters mention issues such as blatant immorality, elitism, and infighting between various factions within the church. Some of the Corinthian Christians considered themselves to be more spiritual than fellow members, or privy to secret knowledge that others had not attained.

Paul dealt with some of these matters in the previous chapter in an ironic, almost sarcastic manner – and then brought the message home in 3:1-9. Instead of taking sides with those who considered themselves to be more spiritual or wise than the others, Paul accused them all of acting like babies.

Spiritual infants (vv. 1-4)

The Corinthians had complained that Paul had not introduced them to the deep mysteries of the faith, but his reply was straightforward: Spiritual things can only be revealed to spiritual people, and "I could not speak to you as

spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ" (v. 1).

Thus, Paul kept them on a steady diet of the most basic truths. Until they proved themselves mature enough to digest spiritual milk, he knew they would not be ready for more solid food (v. 2, cf. 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14). Even then, Paul insisted that all they really needed to know was what he had already taught: God was at work through Christ and the humiliation of the cross to bring about a new age of salvation.

What evidence of immaturity did Paul see? "You are still of the flesh," he said in v. 1. "For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?" (v. 3). Words such as "fleshly," or "merely human" are awkward translations for the words *sarkinos* (v. 1) and *sarkikos* (v. 3), which carry the sense of being earthly-minded rather than spiritually directed. 📌

Paul's charge was that they were self-centered, "behaving according to human inclinations" (v. 3b), directed by


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their own interests rather than by God's interests. They were more concerned with supremacy than service, more devoted to factionalism than to friendship (v. 4).

Paul was not implying that the Corinthians did not possess the Spirit: there had been any number of spiritual manifestations among them, from speaking in tongues to healing and other demonstrations of power.

The problem is that they had not let the Spirit possess them. God's Spirit was alive within them just as surely as human life is present in the tiniest baby, but they had given the Spirit scant room for promoting growth.

As long as human persons remain self-serving in their living and relationships with others, they cannot experience the spiritual growth that comes through humility and service. Factionalism, strife, and jealousy are not the product of the Spirit's work, but of human nature – of the “flesh” (see Gal. 5:16-21). 

This is why Paul insisted that he had fed them only with milk previously, and that they were still too immature for spiritual pabulum, much less anything more substantial (v. 2).


Recall that in 1:12, Paul spoke of having learned that some church members claimed to follow Paul, others Apollos, and others Cephas (Peter), while another group apparently said they only followed Christ. Paul returned to this in 3:4 to illustrate his contention that they were still thinking and acting on a human level rather than a spiritual one.

When one claimed to be of Paul's party while another pledged allegiance to Apollos, Paul wrote, “Are you not merely human?”

Christian faith is not about competition for the most followers, but about selfless service to God and “the least of these” whom God loves (Mat. 25:40).


This text challenges us to think about our own lives and the relationships we see within our church. What signs do we see of spiritual maturity, or the lack of it? When we think of how


our church relates to other congregations, do we cooperate in service to others, or compete for more members to serve our cause?



If Paul were to visit our homes, where would he direct the conversation? If he were to speak in our church, what might be on his preaching menu? 

Spiritual growth (vv. 5-9)

Having introduced the subject in vv. 1-4, Paul moves in vv. 5-9 to speak directly to the folly of factionalism. Why should the Corinthians align themselves with one leader or the other when all of the leaders were working for the same goal?

Paul wondered why the people should feel a need to align with one or the other (v. 5).  Were Paul and Apollos guided by ego or the desire for fame, determined to build up a personal following like some high-profile contemporary preachers?

No, Paul insisted. They were both servants of God “through whom you came to believe,” people who were simply doing what God had led them to do (v. 5). 

Paul described himself and Apollos as field hands who had worked among the Corinthians at different times, but for the same purpose: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (v. 6). Paul had begun the work (Acts 18:1-8), and Apollos came after to build it up (Acts 18:24-19:1).  

It was only natural that church members would feel closer to one than the other, even as any of us can name our favorite pastors or teachers. Paul, the straight-talking rabbi from Tarsus, would appeal to many, especially those from a Jewish background. The eloquent Apollos, from the city of Alexandria, would be the darling of others, particularly among Greeks who were enamored with oratory.

It is unlikely that doctrinal issues were involved in the factionalism involving Paul and Apollos. According to Acts 18:24-28, Apollos knew the scriptures, taught them accurately, and was tutored by Paul's friends Priscilla and Aquilla in understanding the way of God (probably a reference to Christ's work) more accurately.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to get past their human favoritism and realize that both he and Apollos were nothing in comparison to Christ. They both played a role in planting and watering the Corinthian fields, but it is “only God who gives the growth” (v. 7). Human leaders cannot take credit for God's work of grace, nor should they claim the personal loyalty of persons saved by Christ. God's servants will receive appropriate rewards in due time (v. 8, cf. 3:3; 4:5) – it is not for them to organize fan clubs to sustain their egos.

Paul pointed to himself and Apollos as examples of the kind of unity the Corinthians should be pursuing. They saw themselves as God's fellow servants, working together in God's field, or, to mix a metaphor, working together to construct God's great building project of the church (v. 9).

As Paul and Apollos were different persons, but united in ministry, so Paul called the Corinthians to a new solidarity in faith. Unity in the congregation would have to come from surrender to the Spirit of God who lives in each believer, as well as within the church's corporate body.

Only a fortunate few among Christians have escaped some aspect of church conflict, from temperamental tiffs over minor issues to heated disagreements that lead to division and an exodus of church members, even a church split.

While we sometimes joke about “multiplication by division,” Christ is not honored by infighting among those who are called to be peacemakers. Working for unity among believers is serious business, and it is the work of the spiritually mature.

What kind of work are we doing? **BT**

Bible Study

1 Corinthians 3:10-23

with Tony W. Cartledge

Feb. 23, 2014

Quality Construction

Have you ever built a house – even a playhouse, a doghouse, or a bird house? Building something new can bring both satisfaction and challenges. Houses are hard to hide: the use of poor construction techniques or inferior building materials will be obvious to everyone. If you dare to build a house, you had best do it carefully.

Today's text continues the theme that Paul has been hammering from the opening verses of 1 Corinthians: Christians are called to live in unity within cooperative communities of faith that are focused on Jesus. Paul had heard of sharp divisions in the church at Corinth, factions based on things such as social status, spiritual elitism, and personality preferences.

Paul labeled their ongoing conflict as a sign of immaturity. Noting a division that existed between those who favored Paul and those who preferred Apollos, Paul insisted that both he and Apollos were servants of Christ – and that the Corinthians should focus on serving Christ, too.

The church's one foundation (vv. 10-15)

After describing the church as God's field (3:5-9a), Paul added metaphors of the church as God's building (3:9b-15) and God's temple (3:16-17). When reading, we must remember that Paul was not talking about the church as a literal building or even as an institution. His subject was the gathered community of believers.



Western culture is so individualistic that we often misread this text as a treatise on personal behavior and the final judgment, but Paul's concern was with those who serve the church.

Any building needs a well-designed foundation, and Paul described himself as a "skilled (or wise) master builder" who laid a firm foundation for the church in Corinth (v. 10a). Paul's apparent lack of humility was not braggadocio, but a realistic appraisal of his work. He was a proficient and practiced church planter, the pioneer who blazed new trails and who trained others to follow in his steps. ⚓

"I laid a foundation," Paul said, and now "someone else is building on it." That did not trouble Paul. Like a modern building contractor, he laid a firm foundation and entrusted subcontractors to build upon it while maintaining oversight of the project.

"Each builder must choose with care how to build on it," Paul said (v. 10b). Paul had earlier taken issue with those who sought or claimed to have esoteric knowledge about the faith,

insisting that Christ was the only foundation needed (v. 11). Without Christ as its basis, there is no church, no matter who its leader might be.

The church at Corinth could not be built on Paul, on Apollos, or on Peter – only Christ. Paul's point is echoed in the words of a favorite hymn: "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, the Lord." ⚓

Was Paul's choice of metaphors coincidental, or is it possible that the "Peter party" in Corinth had championed Jesus' promise to Peter: "... upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18)? Paul insisted that the foundation of the church was not Peter, Paul, or Apollos, but Christ. ⚓

The type of division experienced in Corinth remains a constant danger. Many of us have observed huge churches grow up surrounding popular pastors or faddish methodology that takes the focus away from Christ.

Churches and their leaders may build upon the foundation of Christ in different ways. They may focus on a hard line of doctrine (orthodox or

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otherwise), on political activism, on catering to members' needs, on missionary outreach to the community, or on other things, some more appropriate than others. The results of those efforts will become obvious in time, for good or ill.

Expanding his analogy, Paul spoke of teachers who might build upon the foundation with the metaphorical equivalent of gold, silver, or precious stones, while incompetent or self-focused teachers would add to it wood, hay, or straw (v. 12).

Every ancient city contained fine dwellings made of brick and stone, as well as rustic buildings of wood and hovels made only of thatch. On those occasions when fires caused by accident or enemies swept through town, it became obvious which buildings were most substantial: the dwellings of thatch and wood turned to ash, while homes of brick and stone remained.


Paul's challenge to churches then and now is to remember that one day all will know what kind of materials and workmanship have gone into building the community of faith (v. 13). Those who have built well will have the reward of seeing their efforts stand firm (v. 14). Those who added shoddy construction will see their work come to naught.

No church built on the foundation of Christ will be lost altogether, but for some builders it will be as if they escaped from a burning house with nothing to show for their efforts (v. 15). 

The church as God's temple (vv. 16-17)

In v. 16, Paul shifted from the general idea of a building to the specific image of a temple: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" English translations don't distinguish between the singular and plural sense of the pronoun "you," but the Greek does – and Paul routinely used the plural form in this section.

Elsewhere Paul spoke of individual Christians as the temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16), but here (as

in Eph. 2:21) his subject remained the believing community. The Spirit dwells in the hearts of individual believers, but is best experienced and communicated to others through the gathered body of the church. 


It is hard to experience the Spirit in a fractured church. Internal strife can destroy the witness of God's people, who are called to stand like an impressive temple, revealing God's glory to others. Paul underscored the seriousness of the matter with v. 17: "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."

This troublesome verse seems to predict divine capital punishment for those who cause dissension. Yet, in v. 15, Paul had argued that even those who built with "wood, hay, and straw" would be saved despite the loss of their labors.

The church belongs to Christ (vv. 18-23)

Paul concluded his discussion about true wisdom and the dangers of factionalism with a sharp warning against boasting that reprises earlier themes. Those who claim to be wise in this age are lost in their own self-conceit, Paul said. Rather, "you should become fools so that you may become wise" (v. 18).

In other words, "You must become fools (as far as the world is concerned) by accepting the wisdom of God displayed in the crucified Christ – only then can you become truly wise."

Returning to the refrain he began in 1:18-2:5, Paul labeled worldly wisdom as foolishness to God (v. 19), even as the world might think of a crucified "savior" as a crazy way to start a religion. The wisdom of the world is folly because it assumes people can save themselves by their own efforts, while true wisdom does not come by human effort, but through what God reveals in the cross of Christ. 

Wise and mature believers do not divide the church with pride-inspired divisions, but build it up as a community focused on Jesus.

Through God's work in Christ, all things "belong to" the church, Paul said. Whether it is the teaching of any leader or anything related to "the world or life or death or the present or the future" – all is done for the sake of the church (v. 22).

Philosophers of Paul's day, both Stoics and Cynics, taught that the wise learned to become master of all things, and thus, to possess them. Paul argued that all things belong to the church – including all of the leaders – because all things belong to Christ, in whom believers live. Believers must remember, however, that they also belong to Christ. All that they have and all that they are is a gift – including their relationship with God through Christ (v. 23).

God graces individuals with the gifts of teaching and leadership, but gives no one the right to fracture the fellowship through seeking personal power or acclaim. The church's leaders belong to the faith community in the same way that all other things belong to the church – to be used in service for the greater glory of God.

Paul concluded the section with a powerful rhetorical chain. All things belong to the church, the church belongs to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Thus, just as Christ can be described as subordinate to God (cf. 15:28), the church is subordinate to Christ, and individual leaders must recognize their place as servants of the church.

When things are set in proper order, the church's witness will be more impressive than the most majestic cathedral, declaring the love of Christ to all.

This passage challenges church leaders and members alike to take a close look in the mirror. Do we utilize the church as if it belongs to us? It's easy to speak of "my church," but we must remember that means "the church to which I belong," not "the church that belongs to me." The church, Paul has reminded us, belongs to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. **BT**

Classifieds

Pastor: Heritage Baptist Fellowship is a CBF church looking for a full-time pastor. We are located 45 miles north of Atlanta in Canton, Ga. Heritage is an inclusive congregation of 160 members with a strong presence in our community. We worship in a way that is Baptist by tradition and ecumenical in outlook. Interested candidates should submit résumés to Sharron Hunt at heritagesearch2013@comcast.net.

Senior Pastor: The First Baptist Church of Jasper, Ga., an active congregation located in a growing area about 50 miles north of Atlanta, is receiving résumés for senior pastor. This moderate church is aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The congregation currently averages 200+ for Sunday worship, which is traditional in style. Interested persons should send a cover letter and résumé by March 15, to Chairperson, Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 198 E. Church St., Jasper, GA 30143.

Pastor: First Baptist Church in Corbin, Ky., affiliated with CBF and Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, is seeking a pastor. FBC is a traditional, progressive church with a community focus. The church has a proud 118-year history in Corbin and is ecumenical in its approach in reaching the communities of Southeastern Kentucky. Located in historic downtown Corbin, the church is within minutes of I-75. The congregation of approximately 400 members welcomes diversity and inclusiveness while celebrating many gifts among its members for service and ministry. Candidates should submit résumés to the Pastor Search Committee at fbc_resumes@yahoo.com.

Minster of Education and Youth: First Baptist Church of Hamlet, N.C., is seeking a minister to lead the educational and youth programs of the church. Seminary training and youth ministry experience are preferred but not required. The minister should be self-motivated, cooperative, creative, and have genuine love for youth of all ages. Send résumé and ministry statement to fbchamlet@yahoo.com or Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 906, Hamlet, NC 28345.

Minister to Youth and Their Families: First Baptist Church of Dalton, Ga., is seeking a minister to youth and their families. The ideal candidate will be a self-motivated, creative and spiritually mature person, capable of inspiring youth in their faith development and guiding adult volunteers to become effective youth ministry leaders. Seminary education and some experience are preferred. We will gladly make available a position profile and job description upon request. Interested persons are asked to request an application by emailing fbc Dalton.youthsearchteam@gmail.com. Applications will be accepted until January 15.

Youth Ministry Intern: First Baptist Church of Burlington, N.C., a congregation in friendly cooperation with the SBC and the CBF, is seeking a youth ministry intern. Candidates should have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and also a strong sense of calling to youth ministry. Inquiries should be made to pastor@firstbaptistburlington.com. Résumés can be sent to Youth Ministry Intern Search Team, P.O. Box 2686, Burlington, NC 27216.

Associate Minister of Preschool and Children: Greystone Baptist Church, located in a diverse and growing area of North Raleigh,

N.C., is prayerfully seeking a part-time (20 hours per week) associate minister of preschool and children. A four-year degree from an accredited college or university with additional training and experience in ministering to preschool and children through fifth grade at church or in a church-related environment are required. Responsibilities would include coordinating and planning goals and activities for preschool and elementary school children in the area of understanding the Bible, spiritual growth, recreation, fellowship and mission involvement. Duties would also include mentoring families with young children. Greystone is a contributing member of CBF and CBFNC, is affiliated with the Raleigh Baptist Association, and partners with local ministries. Our 750+ member church affirms and ordains men and women as leaders, including deacons and ministers. Please submit a résumé to Children's Search Team, 8313 Apple Orchard Way, Raleigh, NC 27615 or to ampc-search@gmail.com. Please also visit our church website, greystonechurch.org.

CBF Global Mission Coordinator: This person will mobilize local churches to be on mission, empower field personnel for effective global mission, develop relationships with other Christian ministries and with other faith groups, and will support the work of the executive coordinator and other leaders in carrying out CBF's vision. The successful candidate will have exceptional skills in leadership, communication, administration, strategic thinking, interpersonal relations and the guidance of complex organizations. For a full job description, go to thefellowship.info/About-Us/jobs/Coordinator-of-Global-Missions. Submit résumé by Jan. 13, 2014 to jobs@thefellowship.info or to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, c/o Linda Jones, GM Search Committee Chair, 160 Clairemont Ave., Ste. 500, Decatur, GA 30030.

In the Know

Richard G. Cook Sr. of Eight Mile, Ala., died Nov. 28 at age 86. His military service spanned more than 30 years including duty in Korea, Vietnam and Germany as a chaplain with the U.S. Army.

Martin Copenhaver has been appointed as the next president of Andover Newton Theological School. His term begins June 1 upon the retirement of current president Nick Carter, who has served for 10 years.

David Fitzgerald is minister of worship, music and arts at Ardmore Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., effective Jan. 6, coming from Wake Forest (N.C.) Baptist Church.

Mary Beth Foust is networking coordinator for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Virginia.

Andrew Maurice Hall died Sept. 30 in Fayetteville, Ark., at age 92. He was pastor of First Baptist Church of Fayetteville (1953-1970) and First Baptist Church of Delray Beach, Fla. (1970-1984), among other congregations.

Blake Hart is missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina. He has done one-year and two-year missions stints, respectively, in Ecuador and Chile. As a student he worked in the CBF Global Missions office in Atlanta.

Gaylord Lehman died Nov. 15 in Durham, N.C., at age 81. He was an instructor in preaching at Southern Baptist Seminary (1960-1961) while completing a doctorate in homiletics. He was pastor of Benson (N.C.) Baptist Church in Benson (1962-1966) and Lakeside Baptist Church in Rocky Mount,

N.C., where he served for 32 years until his retirement in 1998.

A. Roy Medley was installed Nov. 18 as chair of the National Council of Churches Governing Board, a position formerly known as president.

Rick Wilson will spend 2014 as interim president of the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary. He is chairman of the Christianity department at Mercer University and has traveled to Liberia nine times to work with the seminary.

Sarah Brown Withers died Nov. 18 in McDonough, Ga., at age 82. A retired educator, she was an active leader in First Baptist Church of Morrow, Ga., where she taught Sunday school and served as chair of deacons. **BT**

BAPTISTS AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

As harsh winter weather sets in this month and forces armies to hunker down, the fortunes of the Confederacy continue to plunge. Inflation in the South, soaring ever more quickly, reaches a point where food costs 28 times more than in 1861.

With Confederate soldiers starving, President Jefferson Davis acquiesces to General Robert E. Lee's request to commandeer food in Virginia, upsetting local citizens. Even so, many soldiers, disheartened and hungry, are deserting and returning home.

Meanwhile, the United States experiences its own troubles. Foremost is the problem of military desertion, which reaches an all-time high. Contributing to the situation are schemes to pilfer government coffers by abusing a law allowing draftees to avoid military service by paying a fee for a substitute. Instances of disabled men being hired to replace the able-bodied soar.

Yet the Union Army maintains the upper hand in the war, and the march for freedom for slaves continues. Black congregations throughout the North celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on the first day of January. In Portsmouth, Va., seven black members withdraw from the Court Street Baptist Church and, against the wishes of white members of the church, begin holding their own worship services in a blacksmith shop.

In Washington, D.C., what will become the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution takes the form of a joint resolution by the

150 YEARS AGO

January 1864

Senate and House to abolish slavery nationally and permanently. Green Clay Smith, Baptist layman and Congressional representative from Kentucky, is a champion of the resolution. At the same time, President Abraham Lincoln presses forward in efforts to normalize relations with southern states under Union control.

Lincoln's strategy of reconstruction includes religion. The U.S. Secretary of War grants American (Northern) Baptists permission to occupy abandoned Baptist pulpits in Union-controlled portions of the South. One Northern Baptist editor rejoices that

We are marching on with a tread that is shaking the very foundation of things. Hundreds of abandoned Baptist pulpits will be open to loyal Baptist Ministers of the North.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society quickly appoints J.W. Parker, Baptist pastor in Boston, to oversee the "possession" and "occupying" and ministry of southern churches that have been "deserted by former occupants," until which time the Confederate States are defeated and the churches are able to support themselves. To this end, the ABHMS issues a call for northern churches "so long blessed with an able ministry" to provide their pastors with a salaried leave of four to six months to "occupy each a deserted house and gather a church from the broken fragments of society and scattered members of former

churches there to be found."

White Southern Baptist leaders, not surprisingly, are outraged. Indignant that the abolitionist enemy has determined to take over their very houses of worship, some leading voices immediately decry a violation of their religious liberties. Even worse, though, is the charge — vividly expressed in editorials in Southern Baptist newspapers — that the real goal of Northern Baptists is to place black preachers in every pulpit of the South. If the goal is to alarm rank-and-file believers and elevate opposition to the North, the image of blacks pastoring southern churches probably does the trick. Surely this is the biblical abomination of desolation, a sign of the end of times, and must be resisted to the death.


Providentially, on the very day that American Baptists receive permission to occupy southern churches, the editor of the *Virginia Baptist Religious Herald*, perhaps fearful of just such a move on the part of Northern Baptists, pens an unequivocal editorial equating abolitionism — "the humanitarianism of the age" — as the Antichrist:

Is not the true character of this humanitarianism betrayed by the fact, that it gains currency, for the most part, in those countries, in which the divinity of Christ, and even the inspiration of the Scriptures, pass into the form of nominal beliefs, or encounter rejection as exploded superstitions?

This seems obvious. And then, does not humanitarianism — the germ of the last and crowning mystery of iniquity — everywhere voice itself in anti-slaveryism? Is not abolitionism, therefore, (to say no more,) the point of transition, for the present age, to that "apotheosis of man" — first, of man's nature, next of individual man — which shall constitute "the final Antichrist!" And in fighting against Abolitionism are we not fighting against "the final Antichrist"....

With the rhetorical warfare escalating to new levels in the cold of winter, there seemingly can be no turning back for faithful believers of a God-ordained, biblical-mandated society of white supremacy and black slavery — even as the future of the Confederacy is at its darkest yet. **BT**

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By Jack U. Harwell, EDITOR EMERITUS

Remembering a ‘profile in courage’

Before he became our nation’s president, Sen. John F. Kennedy wrote an inspiring book titled, *Profiles in Courage*. It contained his tributes to the courageous men and women he had encountered during his U.S. Navy combat service during World War II.

My own discovery of a profile in courage — seen in a young woman I met behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany in 1987 — still blesses and challenges my soul.

As editor of the historic Baptist newspaper, *The Christian Index*, at the time, I was invited to be the journalistic advisor for a class of Christian ethics students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on special assignment. David Hughes, recently retired pastor of First Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, N.C., who then was a pastor in Elkin, N.C., served as pastoral advisor.

Three seminary professors — Glenn Hinson, Paul Simmons and Glenn Stassen — accompanied the group. The students were tasked with conducting extensive interviews with ministers in East Germany who had survived the horrors of Adolf Hitler’s Nazism and the subsequent persecutions and restrictions of Soviet Communism.

It was emotionally exhausting to hear the German clerics tell of being pressured to compromise, to appease, to “go along to get along” with the Nazis and Communists. Never shall I forget the broken, limpid and empty spirits from these wounded ministers.

However, I could not judge them too harshly because the question kept roaring through my own conscience: “What would I have done if I had been in their place?”

We spent several days and nights conducting the interviews under the careful surveillance of a Communist Party functionary. Her most common refrain was that we had to cross the Berlin Wall back into West Berlin before midnight — or else.



On the Fourth of July, we donned red, white and blue and spent the day studying documents, news articles and ghastly memorabilia in the Check Point Charlie Museum at the Berlin Wall. These findings served as permanent reminders of the need to rededicate myself to the highest principles of liberty and justice for every person — regardless of race, nationality, political instincts or religious creed.

On the last night of our visit, we were invited to a tiny Baptist seminary in the village of Buckow, between Berlin and Moscow. The Communists allowed the seminary — as an outward sign of religious tolerance — but limited attendance to 25 students. The small Buckow Baptist Church met at the seminary as well.

A family in the church named Kirsten invited us to their humble home for coffee and pastries. In the family were two sons and a daughter named Judith who appeared to be in her 20s.

Judith’s father proudly announced that his daughter had received her license as a jewelry maker and was working in a local jewelry shop. Ever the nosy journalist, I asked if the

Communist Party allowed her to do that freely.

She didn’t respond until her father prodded her to do so. Then she said: “One month after I got my license, there was a knock on our front door. It was the chairman of the local Communist Party. He told me that since they allowed me to get my jewelry license, I was expected to join the party quickly.”

“How did you answer him?” I asked.

Again she didn’t respond until her father prodded her.

“I said, ‘Sir, I have one Lord, and one Lord is sufficient,’” she said boldly.

Her heroic answer stunned me. I hardly knew what to say next. But I asked if the official ever returned.

“No, but if he does I’ll say the same thing,” she said, as her father hugged her approvingly.

Two years later the Berlin Wall came down. More than 25 years have passed since that visit with the Kirsten family on a dark night in Buckow.

Yet many times I have prayed for them — especially Judith. Her courageous faith has been a beacon of light for my earthly pilgrimage ever since. **BT**

Lessons learned

Congregation's messy, missional ministry rooted in hospitality

By Courtney Allen

Most of us know the church is called to mission and ministry beyond our walls, but just how to go about it can often be a challenge. We want to serve God and our neighbor, but engaging the community can be messy and even a bit scary.

Good intentions and the call to ministry beyond the sanctuary must be met with thoughtfulness, honesty and intentionality in order for the missional effort to be healthy and sustainable. Starting (and continuing!) the effort in a congregation takes time, patience and prayer.

At First Baptist Church of Dalton, Ga., we have a feeding ministry called Soul Food. Every other Tuesday we serve a meal to 350-500 working poor neighbors and their families.

These are a few lessons we have learned over the last seven years about what it takes for this missional ministry to remain vibrant and significant.

Ensure the ministry is birthed out of the specific gifts, passions and calling of the congregation.

The kind of ministry in which congregations engage should intersect with the passions and gifts of the congregants as well as the lives of those we seek to serve. Each Tuesday that our fellowship hall doors open to the community, our congregation's ministry of hospitality is engaged.

Our congregation has practiced hospitality well for a long time, and it is a natural fit for these gifts to be used to reach beyond our walls. Additionally, Soul Food has expanded its

ministries over the last two years to include a children's choir and a mentoring ministry, both of which engage First Baptist's great passion for children and education.

It is helpful to take some time to focus on a congregation's gifts and assets and then think creatively about how those might be used in missional ministry.

Create a context of genuine welcome.

Soul Food guests often describe the sense of welcome and the love they feel. This is not an accident.

All are welcomed, all are served, and there is room for every person who comes through the doors. No questions are asked about income or background.

What happens in the fellowship hall is not just a feeding program. It is not just handing a plate of food to another person, but a ministry in which God's love, grace, and mercy are freely and beautifully given and shared by all.

Our guests are treated with dignity and respect. Conversations and expressions of care are genuine, and thus, God is in our midst.

Intentionally build and develop authentic relationships.

This is where things can get a little messy, yet where transformation begins. Authentic relationships rooted in the willingness to journey with people through the joys and pains of their lives are essential for any kind of healthy missional ministry.

Relationships formed with Soul Food

guests have broadened our congregation's circle of care and concern. We are no longer aware of just our members' pastoral care needs and celebrations, but also those of Soul Food families.

This broadened circle of concern has taken us to dinner tables, hospitals, funeral homes, and into the loving arms of people we would have otherwise never known had it not been for this ministry that is rooted in a commitment to listen and learn from one another.

Being intentional about getting to know those we serve becomes the starting place for forming meaningful relationships, and these relationships make the missional ministry thrive. It just might mean the congregation starts to look different — and to think differently about who is "us" and who is "them," and who is really being "served."

Feeding physical bodies is only a part of the ministry of Soul Food. When it all began, the intent was to provide a meal and a place of fellowship for the working poor and unemployed in the community. But so much more happens on these Tuesdays.

The congregation's effort to live out the gospel has made Soul Food not only a ministry of the church to the community, but Soul Food also has become a ministry where those of us at First Baptist see God in new and transforming ways.

Our church is a different place because of this ministry, thanks be to God! And this is my prayer for all congregations that seek to engage in missional ministry in ways that are healthy, meaningful, sustainable and worthy of the kingdom of God. **BT**

—Courtney E. Allen is minister of community ministry and missions at First Baptist Church of Dalton, Ga.



Being intentional about getting to know those we serve

becomes the starting place for forming meaningful relationships.

What is ‘quality of life’?

Survey finds surprising answers to what makes good aging

People often say they want a good “quality of life” in their older years. “But we don’t know what that means to people,” said Cary Funk, a senior researcher at the Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project.

So when Pew explored end-of-life decision-making for a new survey released in November, Funk included questions on the “measures of a good life.”

It turns out that perhaps the most obvious choice — living without “severe lasting pain” — wasn’t at the top of the “quality of life” list. It came in at No. 4.

No. 1 was the ability to talk or communicate with others, with 93 percent rating this as extremely or very important.

SURVEY SAYS

Then these responses followed:

1. The ability to get “enjoyment out of life” (90 percent)
2. The ability to feed yourself (89 percent)
3. Living without severe pain (87 percent)
4. Retaining long-term memory and feeling worthwhile in what you do (tied at 83 percent)
5. Being able to dress yourself (81 percent)
6. Retaining short-term memory for events of the day (71 percent)

The idea that communication, physical independence and enjoyment in daily life are quality-of-life leaders fits with another finding of the survey: Most people are nearly as afraid of physical dependency as they are of pain.

While 57 percent overall said they would want to stop treatment and die if they had an incurable disease and were in a great deal of pain, a nearly equal number (52 percent) said they would give up treatment if they had an incurable disease that left them “totally dependent on another for care.”

CALLS FOR COMPASSION

The finds bolstered both supporters and opponents of laws that permit doctors to prescribe lethal drugs for terminally ill patients who want to set their own date of death.

If society would address the depression, loneliness and isolation of people suffering grave illnesses, people would be able to carry on their last days with what matters most: a sense of connection, said C. Ben Mitchell, a professor of moral philosophy at Southern Baptist-affiliated Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

Mitchell shared his views with Pew senior researcher David Masci in a report accompanying the survey.

But Peg Sandeen, executive director of

Death with Dignity, which advocates for legalizing doctors’ aid in dying, said personal independence is a critical value to people who suffer if they lose their ability to make their own choices.

“A compassionate society does not allow people to suffer unnecessarily,” she told Masci.

FIGHT IT?

Death may be inevitable, but one in three Americans — including most blacks and Hispanics — want doctors to never quit fighting it. That number has nearly doubled in 23 years, the new survey finds.

In 1990, 15 percent of U.S. adults said doctors should do everything possible for a patient, even in the face of incurable illness and pain. Today, 31 percent hold that view.

The majority of U.S. adults (66 percent) still say there are circumstances when a patient should be allowed to die. At the same time, however, the never-say-die view calling for nonstop aggressive treatment has increased across every religion, race, ethnicity and level of education.

“We don’t really know why there is a doubling in that viewpoint,” said Funk, the survey’s author, who found the shift “surprising.”

“When it comes to yourself, well, you might just hang on a little longer as you face the reality of identifying your own condition,” said Funk. Doctors “are always offering one more hope, one more treatment. You don’t know what the possibilities are.”

Questions about end-of-life care loom large for the 14 percent of Americans who are 65 or older. And nearly half (47 percent) of all U.S. adults surveyed say they have already faced these issues in the life of a relative or friend who had a terminal illness or was in a coma in the past five years.

END-LIFE VIEWS

The new “Views on End-of-Life Medical Treatments” survey reveals a significant divide by religion, race and ethnicity on what people say they would do if they were suffering great pain with an incurable illness.

More than six in 10 white evangelicals, Catholics and people with no religious identity



would tell their doctors to halt treatment and let them die if they were in great pain and had no hope of improvement. For white mainline Protestants, 72 percent would rather stop treatment.

But the clear majority of black Protestants (61 percent) and Hispanics (57 percent) say they would want their doctors to “do everything possible to save their lives.”

However, patients’ doctors and families might have to guess at their end-of-life wishes if they can no longer communicate with them.

Only 37 percent of adults say they’ve given “a great deal of thought” to this issue. Just 35 percent have put their views in writing, either informally or in legal documents such as a living will or health care directive. Another 27 percent say they have spoken about their views to someone.

The Pew report, based on a survey of 1,994 adults, has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points. It was conducted between March 21 and April 8. The sample size did not include enough members of minority religions, such as Jews and Muslims, for analysis.

A MORAL RIGHT?

Pew also asked people about their moral views on suicide, on laws that allow “physician-assisted suicide” (where a physician prescribes lethal drugs that a terminally ill patient may choose to take) and on euthanasia, in which someone takes direct action leading to someone else’s death.

Many said they believe a person has “a moral right” under certain circumstances to commit suicide.

Most (62 percent) see it as a right if someone is in great pain with no hope of improvement; 56 percent say so if someone has an incurable disease; 38 percent say so if “living has become a burden” for the patient; and 32 percent would see suicide as a right if living on is an “extremely heavy burden on his or her family.”

Physician-assisted dying is legal in Oregon, Washington, Vermont and Montana and goes by positive-sounding names such as the “Death with Dignity Act” or “Patient Choice and Control at End-of-Life Act.” But similar legislation has stalled or been defeated in several other states.

Pew senior researcher David Masci, in a report accompanying the survey, found that

Spelling out end-of-life care is ‘spiritual’ act

The Pew Research Center’s new survey on end-of-life treatments found that most people (72 percent) have given at least some thought to what they might want or refuse. And nearly half (47 percent) have known someone in the last five years who was dealing with a life-threatening illness or in a coma.

However, far fewer — just 35 percent — of all adults say they’ve written down their end-of-life treatment wishes in any form of advance directive. Another 31 percent say they’ve talked about this with someone, but one in three Americans have said or done nothing to spell out what should be done if a time comes when they cannot speak for themselves.

“It hurts their hearts to think about this,” said Sandy Silva, the vice president of education at the Center for Practical Bioethics, in Kansas City, Mo.

Silva meets frequently with community groups and religious congregations to introduce them to the center’s *Caring Conversations Workbook* to get them thinking about the issues. It’s not always easy.

“It’s a sad conversation and it’s a scary conversation. We human beings are, by our very nature, hopeful. We are reluctant to face the fact that we are just not going to live forever,” she observed.

Many factors can play into people’s reluctance to talk about or write down values or set limits on aggressive treatment when they are too ill to speak for themselves. And even when people know what they want, they may not know which paperwork will make those wishes clear and effective.

Is a health care power of attorney, authorizing someone to make decisions, enough?

What about a living will or an advance directive? What do MOLST or POST or TPOPP even mean?

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

The umbrella term “advance directives” includes:

A living will: It can spell out your overall desires, but it may be too vague to be useful.

Silva said. “It may say you don’t want any ‘extraordinary measures,’ but what does that mean to you? Many people will say they don’t want to be ‘on machines’ but if you have a reversible condition, maybe you really

will want a ventilator for a while,” said Silva. “Right away, people are confused.”

A durable power of attorney of health care (or health care proxy): It gives an agent you select the legal power to make medical decisions for you when you no longer can.

It requires careful communication to be sure your values are clear. But physicians may not be able to reach the agent and “sometimes people are shocked because no one told them they were the agent,” said Silva.

Forms available through the American Bar Association and the *Caring Conversations Workbook* and MyDirectives.com guide people through several scenarios for consideration so an agent would be better prepared.

Transportable Physician Orders for Patient Preferences: In Kansas and Missouri, the form goes by TPOPP.

But the idea started 20 years ago in Oregon, where it is known as “Physicians Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment” (POLST). It has been adapted state by state with similar names, such as MOLST in Maryland.

This addresses some of the shortcomings of the other formats, said Silva, who directs the TPOPP project at the center. First, it is designed for “people who already have a life-threatening diagnosis that could limit the length or quality of their life.”

It requires the patient and his or her agent to verify that “this is what a person wants now, not what they said years ago when they were healthy or just beginning treatment,” she said. People who want aggressive treatment that never quits can specify that, or they can elaborate on the circumstances when they would want to reject or withdraw from treatment.

Unlike other types of directives, a physician signs a TPOPP type form after a conversation with the patient. That makes

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Continued on page 34

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Inspired Creativity

Continued from page 32

14 of 16 religious denominations teach that suicide, assisted or not, and euthanasia are against the teachings of their faith. Only the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association say these choices are up to individuals.

Buddhist and Hindu experts pointed out that suffering is viewed as part of the cycle of karma, and interrupting that could trouble someone in his or her reincarnated next life.

Still, many religious voices allowed a sort of moral wiggle room for withdrawing or withholding some treatments that may prolong dying rather than extend life. The line between those two is not always clear, said Ayman Shabana, a visiting fellow at the Islamic Legal Studies Program at Harvard Law School.

However, Masci said, the survey shows that “just because someone identifies as a particular denomination, doesn’t mean that they know the teaching and, even if they do, that they have squared it with their own views.”

For example, nearly half (47 percent) of U.S. adults approve of laws allowing doctor-assisted death. That’s a statistical tie with the 49 percent of Americans who oppose such laws.

DIFFERENT WORLD

Masci also wrote an accompanying essay examining the “social, legal and political dimensions of the end-of-life debate.”

He traced the court cases, legislation and controversies, such as the death of Terri Schiavo in 2005 when her husband battled to remove her from the artificial food and hydration that kept her alive in a persistent vegetative state.

In an interview, Masci observed that individual views are chiefly shaped by family dynamics, by new medical technologies and by

Continued from page 33

it a doctor’s order, effective across all levels of care — from the ambulance crew to the emergency department all the way to the intensive care unit and hospice.

SPIRITUAL VALUE

Silva sees a spiritual value to urging people to think about their end-of-life wishes, talk about them and write them down. She calls these actions of autonomy and self-respect.

“Throughout all of our lives, we are constantly trying to make sense of the beyond, whatever that may be,” she said. “It’s an honor and a responsibility to participate in such conversations in this world so we make that transition in a way that reflects how we lived our lives.” **BT**

the way society views personal autonomy.

Today’s cultural emphasis on individual autonomy “comes out of the same firmament as other rights movements of the last half-century,” he said.

But the belief that people need to be free to make their personal choices is not the only driver in end-of-life views.

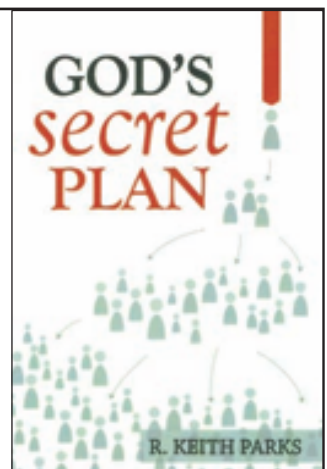
“We live in a very different world than people 100 years ago. The idea that there is a family home where people are born, congregate and die has largely faded. Fewer than one in three Americans die at home now and technologies have prolonged the last stages of life so people are faced with very different choices today,” Masci said.

“These affect the way we live and the way we die.” **BT**

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‘Crown Jewel’

Bay Psalm Book fetches \$14.2 million in record auction

NEW YORK — On a dark, damp and expensive Tuesday night at Sotheby’s auction house in Manhattan, one of the 11 surviving copies of the Bay Psalm Book, the first book (and the first book of Scripture) printed in English in America, was sold for the highest price ever recorded for a print book in open sale.

The \$14.2 million price (a bid of \$12.5 million, plus fees) exceeded by more than a million dollars the \$11.5 million paid for the previous record-holder, John James Audubon’s *Birds of America*, in 2010.

The psalm book’s new owner is the private equity fund founder and philanthropist David Rubenstein, who called in his bid from Australia. According to Sotheby’s auctioneer David Redden, who gaveled down the sale in two and a half minutes of concerted bidding, Rubenstein, a well-known antiquities buyer and donor, intends to lend the ancient Puritan hymnal to libraries around the country, eventually putting it on long-term loan to one of them.

The buyer of the Bay Psalter (its full title is *The Whole Booke of Psalmes, Faithfully Translated into English Metre*), wasn’t present in the hall, but the seller was.

Nancy Taylor, senior minister and CEO of Old South Church in Boston, stood smiling next to the 4-inch-by-7-inch psalm book, which was nestled in velvet in a tall rectangular case.

“It’s fantastic,” she said. “We’re just delighted. This means the world to us in terms of the continuation and the building up of our ministries in Boston.”

Though the world record price was on the low end of estimates by Sotheby’s, which had suggested the psalter could go for \$30 million, Taylor said, “In the rarefied world of some people this may not be much, but for a church, this is huge. It’s going to make all the difference in the world.”

Rubenstein, a co-founder of the private equity firm the Carlyle Group, whose worth Forbes has estimated at \$2.5 billion, is famous for buying important copies of iconic documents such as the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation



Photo courtesy Sotheby’s New York/RNS

Proclamation and loaning them to branches of the federal government.

He is also a large benefactor for Duke University, which renamed its special collections the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Rubenstein edged out a \$12 million dollar pre-set bid by Steve Green of Oklahoma City. The billionaire Green family owns the 500-store Hobby Lobby chain. The Greens had been bidding on the Bay Psalm Book in hopes of including it in a biblical museum the family plans to build just off the Washington Mall in early 2017.

The Bay Psalm Book has been referred to as “a crown jewel” and “the icon of American printing.” It is also a landmark in American faith, or one of its strongest colonial strains.

Like all good Calvinists of the time, the Bay Colony Puritans revered the entire Bible — but after the sermon, the most important part of every church service was unison psalm singing. Since the colony was a theocracy, that meant hymnals for all its citizens. Their first run was about 1,700 copies.

Of those, there are now only 11 left. Since

almost all belong to blue-chip institutions that will never need to put them up for resale, this copy sold in November could well be the last Bay Psalm Book ever to hit the open market.

Given the laws of supply and demand, there was every expectation that the bidding would beat the record. Taking the psalter on a pre-sale, nine-city tour and meeting an enthusiastic public had left Redden, who is also Sotheby’s worldwide chairman of books and manuscripts, a little melancholy.

While museums display their treasures, libraries reserve them for scholars. To see a Bay Psalter in most of the places where they now reside, one would need an appointment and probably an institutional affiliation.

“It would be inconceivable for a public institution to, say, keep 10 Rembrandts in the basement,” Redden said. “But it’s par for the course” for libraries to do the equivalent. After the sale, he declared himself delighted.

“As I understand it,” he said, “Rubenstein wants the libraries he sends this to around America to display it to the general public. That’s a fantastic outcome. I think we made the Bay Psalm Book famous again.” **BT**

By Tom Ehrich

Making a difference in a world falling apart

While church planners listened, a five-person focus group described life outside the congregation's doors: a world falling apart.

Families are in disarray, the group said. Parents are refusing, or unable, to do the basic work of parenting, from giving guidance to saying “no.” Instead, they are prepping their children to join a national epidemic of narcissism.

Obesity is rampant, along with obesity-related diseases such as diabetes. Infant mortality is worsening as pregnant girls routinely continue smoking, doing drugs and drinking during pregnancy.

Clueless parents are buying heroin — today's drug of choice — for their children, so the little ones don't get beat up by dealers. Parents buy cases of beer for their underage children so they can drink at home, rather than drive drunk. Methamphetamine usage is widespread.

Rising awareness of autism has forced health care professionals to deal with autistic children needing more care than schools and community agencies typically can provide.

Unemployment rates might have stabilized, but that masks a growing population who are unemployable because of criminal records, drug use, or lack of skills.

Elderly residents are dealing with profound loneliness, as well as unavailability of health care. Older citizens are living longer, but because of skyrocketing chronic diseases, their quality of life is lower.

Overall student count is down 20 percent at local schools, but the numbers of special-needs children is increasing. Financial crisis results, as a typical child costs \$7,300 to educate and a special needs child costs more than \$20,000.

Were these speakers “Cassandras” from some fringe doomsday element? No, these were the local schools superintendent, the county health commissioner, two principals in a family counseling practice, and a longtime family health specialist.

These were the front-line folks who deal daily with the nightmare many choose not to see.

The church planners had agreed just to listen and not to interject any comments or questions that might channel the flow of information to safer ground. After two hours, they were overwhelmed.

“We have been living in a bubble,” said one planner.

They had been fretting over minor changes in church life. Elderly members have been filled with anxiety about getting their needs met. Leaders have been wondering whom to blame for a decades-long erosion of

membership, attendance, participation and giving.

The outside focus group changed the air. By simply describing the realities with which they deal every day, they put Sunday morning fussing into perspective. A world broken at its very core demands better of its churches.

Energy devoted to blaming could go to reopening their preschool and helping families get it together. Anxiety among elderly members could move from nattering about minor changes to opening church doors to an elder-care ministry or a respite ministry for families of special needs children.

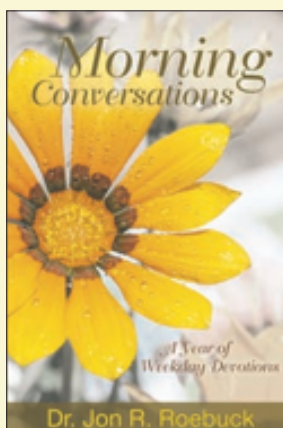
A long-standing inward focus could turn to networking with other concerned faith and secular communities. With so many “moving pieces,” as one expert put it, it will take the entire “village” to turn the tide.

Worries about money could turn to worries about vulnerable people. Preserving historic facilities could turn to opening church doors seven days a week to needy neighbors.

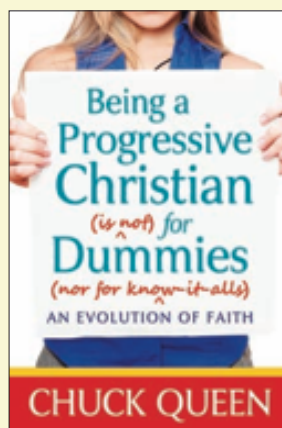
To their great credit, these church planners not only endured two hours of difficult news, but they allowed it to stir their passions and fire their imaginations. Ideas and energy poured forth — and they weren't about survival tactics, but strategies to make a difference in a world falling apart. **BT**

—Tom Ehrich is a writer, church consultant and Episcopal priest based in New York.

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Hebrew is in the air

By Tony W. Cartledge

Members of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and the American Academy of Religion (AAR) brought more than 10,000 scholars to Baltimore's convention center and surrounding hotels last fall. There must have been at least a thousand papers presented in so many work sessions that the program guide was the size of a phone book.

With a Monday class looming, I had to leave before the meeting ended on Tuesday. But over the course of two days I heard at least 30 lectures, as my sore backside and overloaded brain could attest.

Carol Meyers, one of my professors from Duke, delivered an intriguing presidential address arguing that the Old Testament world wasn't as patriarchal as is usually

thought. A section on "Meals and Gender in the Old Testament World" was real food for thought, and another on the "Israelite Cult in Archaeology and Text" asked important questions about the emergence of Israel in Canaan.

I would mention others, but only at the risk of boring anyone who's still reading by now.

The most challenging session I attended was a look at "Biblical Genocide in Biblical Scholarship," which examined what appear to be divine commands for the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites as they entered the land of promise (mainly, Joshua 6-11). The invaders never succeeded in wiping out the land's inhabitants, of course, but records of the effort are troubling, given the universal condemnation of genocide these days.

Are we to posit that it was acceptable in the ancient world in a way that's no longer

kosher, or that bashing babies was an act of mercy because they had not reached the age of accountability and were thus granted access to heaven? Can we argue that God never really ordered the mass slaughter of entire populations, but that the ancient traditions justifying the conquest were developed to support Israel's nationalistic interests? My lot is with the latter.

There are no easy answers to hard questions such as these, but the best line I heard at the meeting came during that session. In noting that some people want to throw out the Old Testament with its God of violence and hold on to the New Testament with its portrayal of a more loving deity, Hector Avalos noted: "Well, you have to remember that the Old Testament God would hurt you, but it was only for this life..."

That's something to think about. **BT**

Teamwork counts

By John Pierce

The *Baptists Today*/Nurturing Faith staff is spread from North Carolina to Montana with most members working in other capacities as well. So bringing everyone together is a big calendaring challenge.

But we pulled it off in November — and held our second annual planning retreat, this time on Jekyll Island. The one in 2012 at Lake Burton in Northeast Georgia had been so beneficial that we were eager to bring these busy, creative people back into face-to-face conversations with a singular focus on our shared mission.

We began with my sharing some perspective on the philosophy and values that drive our work.

Here are those points — in a more legible form than my scribbling with a blue marker at the retreat.

ONE: Recruit the best possible people — staff, contract workers,

directors, donors and partners — to think, do and support the mission.

TWO: Produce the best possible resources (news journal, books, curricula and more) and plan innovative, inspiring programs while always insisting that everything be of high quality and effectiveness.

THREE: Treat all persons — customers, co-workers, authors and others — with respect.

FOUR: Collaborate with trusted, effective organizations whenever possible.

FIVE: Dream big; act decisively but responsibly; work hard; and pray it all works — seriously.

These are shared values. In fact, I was speaking out of the experiences of our fine staff and the great supporters who enable our work.

Many good ideas were hatched; evaluations were most constructive; and the teambuilding needed to accomplish these expanding tasks was enhanced.

Time and distance require that our ongoing work be carried out with the wonderful tools of conference calls, emails and other technological ways of connecting.

At times, however, there is the need to turn off those devices, turn all attention in one direction and build the relationships that enable us to know, trust and appreciate one another more.

Sharing meals, laughter and informal conversations between planning sessions contributed much as well.

So thanks to Ben, Julie, Jackie, Tony, Bruce, Kim and Lex for investing your good gifts and time in the mission we share — and for setting aside a few days so that we might do it better. And thanks to those faithful supporters who make fulfilling this mission possible. **BT**



From inspiration to perspiration

New Baptist Covenant turns focus from meetings to meeting needs

A century and a half after the Civil War divided Baptists in America into separate congregations predominantly black and white, a diverse group of U.S. Baptists is exploring ways to cross boundaries of identity, doctrine and ethnicity to collaborate in community service.

In 2008, former President Jimmy Carter convened more than 15,000 people representing more than 30 Baptist organizations in a gathering called the New Baptist Covenant. His desire was to bring unity to a faith tradition fragmented enough to inspire the old saying: “I don’t belong to any organized religion. I’m a Baptist.”

Subsequent national and regional gatherings were held to focus not on the various controversies that caused Baptists to separate over 150 years, but common values they all share. Now, said planners of a meeting of participants of previous gatherings convened Nov. 21-22 in Atlanta, it’s time to move beyond talk.

“We’ve come to the New Baptist Covenant before as groups and enjoyed the camaraderie, enjoyed the worship and enjoyed the time together,” Suzii Paynter, executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, said at a New Baptist Covenant summit meeting at First Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga. “Now we’re in the enlistment part. We’ve had the inspiration, and now it’s time for the perspiration.”

Baptists in four cities — Dallas, Birmingham, St. Louis and Atlanta — and others in the Northwest United States region will develop covenant partnerships to work together in their communities to advance Jesus’ mission described in Luke 4 as: “The Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight for the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Over the next four years, planners have a goal of 100 “covenants of action” between sectarian Baptist groups differentiated for historical reasons that participants now regard as second-tier.



The New Baptist Covenant is getting ready to go into a new phase,” said Hannah McMahan, national coordinator of the New Baptist Covenant movement. “We’ve gathered here to make Covenant an action and not a philosophy.”

McMahan, who participated in the first New Baptist Covenant gathering as a student at Wake Forest Divinity School, said the experience made her proud to be a Baptist.

“What we know as Baptists, when we are at our best, is that when we embrace diversity we are opened to God,” she said. “That’s where we find God.”

“Each of us carries a piece of God, and when we extend ourselves, when we stretch ourselves, and we look over to another horizon by reaching out a hand — by caring for someone, by listening, by being heard — through those relationships we’re not just loving each other. We’re loving God.”

Jeff Haggrey, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and past executive director of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, said Baptists “have always been a people of mission action.”

“Baptists are those who say that we would rather see a sermon than hear one any day,” Haggrey said. “We are those who believe that it’s not important how high you jump when your spirit gets happy but how straight you walk when your feet hit the ground.”

“Even though we’ve been a people of mission action since our inception, so often mission action is constrained by the stuff of this world,” he said. “We’ve done mission action in our own silos of geography, of race, of Baptist ideology, of theology, of politics,

of ethnicity and so forth. And we’ve been separated from each other by boundaries and by fences that are not of God’s making but of humankind’s making. Through these covenants of action we’re going to climb those fences.”

Paynter said the Baptist witness is “not just about what we say,” but a mutual commitment “toward shared values and common understanding of Baptist principles that bind us together.”

“We recognize the autonomy of each of our congregations and each of our organizations, so what do we have to prove?” she asked. “We have to prove that we can work together. We have to be a witness to what we can do together — not for our own devotion or for our own identity — but to what we can accomplish across the country for the betterment of God’s kingdom.” **BT**

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Boomers will return to church, says researcher

Like their parents, many baby boomers will attend religious services later in life. But unlike their parents, baby boomers are more likely to describe a deep, intense spiritual connection from a personal experience than a religious one from an institutional practice.

Many of them don't know it yet, said a researcher at the annual conference of the Gerontological Society of America, but growing old, regardless of what generation you belong to, brings on dramatic changes that can propel people to seek new meaning in religious services.

Vern Bengtson, author of *Families and Faith* with co-authors Susan Harris and Norella Putney, based his findings and predictions on a 35-year longitudinal study of 350 Southern California families and interviews with a subset of 156 families. The study's scope spanned six generations from 1909 to 1988.

Bengtson, professor emeritus of gerontology and sociology at the University of Southern California, discussed his findings with Religion News Service.

Q: Which part of the study made you think many boomers will end up attending religious services when they currently do not?

A: We now know that the oldest generations had an uptick in attending religious services after retirement. It's too early to have gathered that data on boomers because they're just starting to retire, but I'm willing to predict this will happen to them based on what we've observed in older generations and from what we heard in the interviews with boomers.

Q: You list examples in your book of young boomers saying they reject religion. How then do you make the jump that they will eventually go to a church or synagogue when they're older?

A: When people get older, they retire and have more time to think about moral, religious and spiritual things. Our study shows this. It's the life course. They will also face a serious illness or lose a loved one for the first time.

The religious education of their grandchildren becomes a concern for some grandparents. Not all, but some are concerned the parents aren't doing enough. They might have skipped a generation by not educating their



own children, but they got older and discovered one of the most wonderful things in life and won't want to miss an opportunity with their grandchildren.

Q: How do the religious and spiritual views of baby boomers set them apart from the other generations?

A: The oldest groups (1909-1931) were religious and went to church until a certain age set in when they found it physically too difficult to go anymore. ... They were more likely to link spirituality and religion to institutional practice.

Boomers were the first generation to clearly differentiate between spirituality and religion. They said spiritual practice is not equal to going to church. They are the first to associate spirituality with an emotion, an intense feeling of connection with God.

Millennials (early 1980s to early 2000s) said, "Religion — what's that?" God is whatever you want it to be. They have much less of an awareness of religious and liturgical traditions.

Q: The number of "nones" in American society — those who said they claim no traditional religious affiliation — has doubled to 20 percent of the U.S. population in one decade. Does your research support or dispute that finding?

A: First of all, this is a varied group, and while it's true of our Southern California sample, it isn't true in all regions of the U.S. There are fewer nones in Southern and Midwestern states. Some of the nones are still looking to find a religion to meet their needs. Some are spiritual but not religious. Some attend religious services. And some are anti-religious.

Q: What brought about the development of the "nones"?

A: There's no single answer. We have seen a high degree of intergenerational similarity in nonreligion today, and the transmission of nonreligion from parents to their children can be seen to a far greater degree than in the past.

Some of this is rooted in the 1960s and 1970s, a time of great social upheaval, when baby boomers switched to a "no religious tradition" because they were influenced by changes in the larger religious and cultural environment, particularly the declining legitimacy of formal religious organizations. When they had children of their own, they passed on their nonreligious orientation.

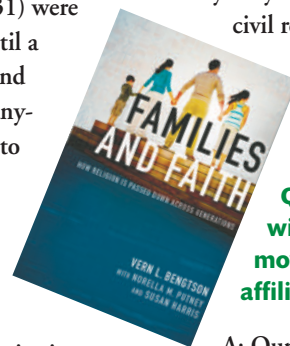
Some religious agendas have alienated moderates who consider "organized religion" a synonym for an anti-gay, anti-abortion, pro-civil religion agenda. Others don't want a dogma to tell them how to live their lives. They want to remain open-minded.

Q: Is there any sign the nones will redefine themselves and move toward stronger religious affiliations?

A: Our next analysis of our data on boomers will address this, but I can speak from a personal experience. I came from a conservative religious family. When I started to question my faith during college, my mother said if she had to do so she would pick Jesus over me.

She ended up rejecting me. It broke her heart and mine. I was an atheist for 35 years.

But when I retired, I walked into a progressive church on Easter Sunday, heard the choir singing and was utterly surprised by joy, as C.S. Lewis described his own later-life religious experience. I haven't stopped going to church. If there is a heaven and if my mother is there, I think she'd say "I told you so." **BT**





Members of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops gather for Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption. Photo by Nancy Phelan Wiechec, courtesy Catholic News Service/RNS

New Balance

Catholic bishops challenged to adapt to pope's priorities

BALTIMORE — As the U.S. Catholic bishops met last fall, they were directly challenged by Pope Francis' personal representative to be pastors and not ideologues — the first step of what could be a laborious process of reshaping the hierarchy to meet the pope's dramatic shift in priorities.

"The Holy Father wants bishops in tune with their people," Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, the Vatican ambassador to the U.S., told the more than 250 American churchmen as he recounted a personal meeting in June with Francis.

The pontiff, he added, "made a special point of saying that he wants 'pastoral' bishops, not bishops who profess or follow a particular ideology," Vigano said. That message was seen as an implicit rebuke to the conservative-tinged activism of the bishops' conference in recent years.

Almost since his election in March 2013, Francis has signaled that he wants the church to strike a "new balance" by focusing on the poor and on social justice concerns and not over-emphasizing opposition to hot-button topics such as abortion and contraception and gay marriage — the signature issues of the U.S. bishops lately.

While Francis' new approach — which Vigano said must include "a noticeable lifestyle characterized by simplicity and holiness" — has captivated the wider public, some bishops and church conservatives have chafed at the

pope's shift.

Others, however, have welcomed the new agenda, or are adapting. The process of reorienting the hierarchy began as soon as Vigano concluded his remarks.

He was followed by the outgoing president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who used his final address to call on the bishops to take up the persecution of Christians in other countries.

That represents a fundamental change after years in which the hierarchy focused on culture war issues at home — such as gay marriage and the Obama administration's contraception mandate — through their campaign on domestic religious freedom.

Dolan instead asked the bishops to "broaden our horizon" and recognize that their own domestic concerns "pale in comparison" to the suffering of Christians in the Middle East and elsewhere "who are experiencing lethal persecution on a scale that defies belief."

In a press briefing after the first sessions, Dolan said the bishops were not abandoning their own religious freedom cause but said it had become clear that their efforts would seem "hollow" unless they focused on the genuine sufferings of other believers.

"We don't have tanks at our door or people getting macheted on their way to Mass," the cardinal said. Dolan also dismissed as "rather apocalyptic" the views of some conservatives

Catholic Church attendance rise in Italy attributed to 'Francis effect'

First, the name "Francesco" leapfrogged to No. 1 on the list of the most popular baby names in Italy. Then, the city of Rome reported a tourism boom, mostly from Latin America.

Now, there's word that Roman Catholic Church attendance is climbing throughout Italy. Blame it on "the Francis effect."

Italy's Center for Studies on New Religions reported in November that around half of the 250 priests it surveyed reported a significant rise in church attendance since Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope Francis in March 2013.

The findings came as Opinioni, a political polling company, reported that more than four in five Italians had a "positive" or "extremely positive" opinion of the new pope.

The latest findings fit into the popular narrative of Francis, who has earned headlines for his humble and popular style and statements. Roman police said the average attendance at papal audiences in St. Peter's Square were on the rise, and souvenir sellers have been quoted in the local press as saying business has improved since March, despite Italy's moribund economy.

— including a number of outspoken bishops — that such oppression is imminent in the U.S.

The remarks by Vigano and Dolan represented the first salvos in what church observers expect to be an arduous effort to turn around the unwieldy national hierarchy.

The U.S. bishops have been so focused on social conservatism in recent years that they issued no collective statements on the economy — once a hallmark issue — during the recession. In fact, their agenda for this four-day meeting was focused almost entirely on small-bore internal issues, such as liturgical translations, and on developing a statement on pornography.

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the retired archbishop of Washington, asked the bishops to issue a statement backing passage of the immigration reform bill. The bishops assented on a voice vote. And Texas Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza, also retired, appealed to the bishops to speak out on economic concerns and to answer Francis' call to have "a church of the poor and for the poor."

Seattle Archbishop Peter Sartain, who briefed the bishops on their long-range pastoral plans, said there was "great awareness" of Francis' desire to highlight social justice issues. **BT**



“There is such high and wide respect for the remarkable leadership that Dr. McCall has given to Baptists, and on behalf of Baptists to the larger faith community. We look forward to acknowledging those contributions and celebrating this occasion with him, his wife Marie, and the many who love them.”

—JOHN PIERCE
Executive editor of *Baptists Today*

Join us in honoring
EMMANUEL MCCALL
with the 2014 Judson-Rice Award

The Award Dinner will be held on Thursday, April 24, at Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Stone Mountain, Ga.

Hold the date! Reservation and sponsorship information will be available soon in *Baptists Today* and at baptiststoday.org.

A Pennsylvania native, McCall has long built bridges of understanding and cooperation. Currently, he fills the pulpit of historic Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta. Significant leadership roles have included service as vice president of the Baptist World Alliance and national moderator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The Judson-Rice Award was created by Baptists Today in 2001 to celebrate the contributions of early Baptist leaders Adoniram Judson, Ann Hasseltine Judson and Luther Rice, and to recognize a current Baptist leader who has demonstrated significant leadership.

Let the lessons come alive!

NURTURING FAITH EXPERIENCE: ISRAEL with DR. TONY CARTLEDGE
Nov. 3–13, 2014

Nurturing Faith Bible Studies writer Tony Cartledge, who holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies from Duke University, will lead Sunday school teachers and other interested persons on a personal tour of Israel Nov. 3–13, 2014.

Join Tony and other *Baptists Today* staff on this unique opportunity to see firsthand the places where biblical stories came to life and to gain insights into the culture and languages of this remarkable setting.

DESTINATIONS will include Megiddo and other ancient cities, the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Capernaum, the Mount of the Beatitudes, the Golan Heights, the Jordan River, Jericho, Qumran, Masada and the Dead Sea.

In Jerusalem, view the city from the Mount of Olives, walk down the Palm Sunday Road, visit the Garden of Gethsemane,

and follow the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Then visit the City of David and slosh through Hezekiah’s Tunnel, pray at the Western Wall, and walk around the Temple Mount.

In Bethlehem, visit the Church of the Nativity and Shepherd’s Field — then venture through the Valley of Elah to Moreshah, for a hands-on archaeological dig, bringing pottery and other finds to light for the first time in more than 2,000 years. Other highlights will include the Israel Museum and Israel’s Holocaust memorial.

COST: \$3,800 includes airfare (from select cities), lodging, breakfasts and dinners, and travel on a luxury motor coach for the entire trip. The group will be joined by one of Israel’s most experienced and sought-after guides, Doron Heiliger.

Reservations, itinerary and other travel details will be available in upcoming issues of *Baptists Today* and online at baptiststoday.org. For now, hold those dates!

NURTURING FAITH is an expanded ministry of *Baptists Today* — providing trusted resources for Christian learning and living including the Nurturing Faith Bible Studies, Nurturing Faith Books and the new Nurturing Faith Experiences.



Emergency Transport Services chaplain takes ministry to meet critical needs

WILMINGTON, N.C. — A typical day for Lauren Deer is different than for most hospital chaplains. Instead of ministry inside the walls of the hospital, Deer uses her training as a certified first responder to minister in the back of ambulances and in the region's air ambulance helicopters.

Through the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, N.C., Deer ministers to the hospital's Emergency Transport Services (ETS) personnel and the patients under their care.

As chaplain to the ETS staff, a majority of her time is spent in uniform riding the emergency vehicles. She works both day and night shifts, allowing her to be related to more staff.

Ministry opportunities present themselves with patients who are being transported to the hospital, and with distressed family members who are on the scenes of calls.

"Just being a presence in high anxiety situations is sometimes the greatest ministry I can provide," said Deer.

When not in an ambulance, Deer often finds herself in the EMS Radio Room, where she is able to interact with all the ETS crews who come through the Emergency Department. She offers a smile and a listening ear, and helps get the crews back out on the road by restocking their supplies and making stretcher beds after a call.

Other ministry opportunities for the ETS chaplain include conducting critical incident stress debriefings, performing weddings, memorial services and funerals, and leading seminars on managing stress.

While attending Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Deer served as fire chaplain intern to the City of Richmond Fire Department and she is currently serving as a volunteer firefighter with the Wallace Volunteer Fire Department in North Carolina.

"Being the chaplain of ETS at New Hanover Regional Medical Center allows me to use both my calling to ministry and my passion for emergency services to make a difference in the lives of these caregivers," she said.

This unique ministry originated in 2010 after the ETS administration saw a great need within their department for a chaplain to



serve alongside them. Under the direction of the Spiritual Care Department and the ETS administration, an emergency services chaplain got the program up and running. Through the CPE residency program, a position was added to minister to the paramedics.

"We are entering our third year of having a resident chaplain and each year is becoming more successful," said EMS Battalion Chief Scott Goodyear. "We are seeing staff acceptance and benefits to the program."

Since an emergency responder's job can bring about a lot of stress, the ETS chaplain offers several practical and unique ways to help responders cope with the stress. "Tea for the Soul" is a ministry offered throughout New

Hanover Regional Medical Center that gives the staff a few minutes to help them de-stress by listening to peaceful music, drinking tea, and eating some goodies.

While paramedics are not always able to spend much downtime during their 12-hour shifts, they do enjoy having some goodies to take with them, especially on days when they barely have time to eat.

Another creative way to relieve stress is through the "Laugh More, Stress Less" box housed at every station. Items in this box include coloring pages, Slinkys and Zen gardens. These activities are portable, allowing crews to take the box with them on the go, and can induce a laugh or smile to help lower anxiety during a stressful day.

Deer is still new to her unique job, but is grateful for the foundation built by former chaplains that allow her to provide a much-needed ministry for the paramedics.

"Through laughing together, crying together and praying together, I have found my place within this special group of people," Deer said. "I can't wait to see what the future holds for me and the ministry here at New Hanover Regional Medical Center." **BT**



Chaplain Lauren Deer (right) brings her ministry and first responder training to her work in Wilmington, N.C.

Washington National Cathedral to charge visitors

WASHINGTON — Facing a \$26 million earthquake repair bill and years of financial woes, the iconic Washington National Cathedral will charge visitors in 2014, an abrupt change that cathedral officials had long resisted.

Adults will be charged \$10, and seniors, students, children, veterans and members of the military will be charged \$6, according to cathedral officials. Regular worship services and Sundays will remain free of charge; the ticket plan is scheduled for a six-month trial run starting in January.

“We are called to preserve and restore a building that is more than a century old and to offer programs that have a distinctive impact on our city, our nation, and the world,” said David J. Kautter, chairman of the Cathedral Chapter, the building’s governing board, in a statement.

The rare 5.8-magnitude earthquake in August 2011 damaged the cathedral’s central tower, flying buttresses, decorative finials and intricate stonework. To date, the cathedral has raised \$10 million toward its \$26 million repair bill.



The cathedral has hosted three presidential state funerals (Eisenhower, Reagan and Ford) and six presidential inaugural prayer services, as well as other services to mark important milestones. It is the mother church of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and the unofficial national home of the Episcopal Church.

In 2012, the cathedral attracted 400,000 visitors beyond regular worship services, including scores of tour buses of children who are led beneath the cathedral’s soaring arches by teams of volunteer docents. For years, the cathedral has operated in a deficit and experienced several rounds of layoffs and program cuts.

The cathedral has insisted that it remain a house of worship open to all faiths, not a museum of sacred artifacts. But, borrowing a page from the storied cathedrals of Europe that charge admission to tourists, the cathedral hopes an estimated \$300,000 in annual ticket sales can help shore up finances and the building itself.

“The Cathedral does not receive any direct operating support from the federal government. Nor is it subsidized through the budget of any Christian denomination,” Kautter said. “While this financial independence increases the Cathedral’s freedom to speak freely in the public square and to convene people of all faiths, it also requires us to seek other means of ensuring our sustainability.” **BT**

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Baptists Today is experiencing unprecedented growth and expanding into some wonderful new ventures. Our autonomy gives us the opportunity to dream, connect and collaborate.

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All gifts received from the February Offering are used to provide care and services to Baptist Older Adults with limited financial resources.



Making Life for Older Adults *The Best of Times:* The Looming Financial Crisis in Senior Care



Older Adults at Fayetteville's First Baptist Church (pictured above) are typical of Baptist Older Adults across the state. Statisticians tell us that fifty percent of those Older Adults will be unable to pay for the long-term care services that they will need before the end of their lives.

FEBRUARY 2-9, 2014



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