

Contains **AUGUST** Nurturing Faith Lessons

Baptists ODAY

NEWS JOURNAL

Tourists *or* Pilgrims?

40



JULY 2013

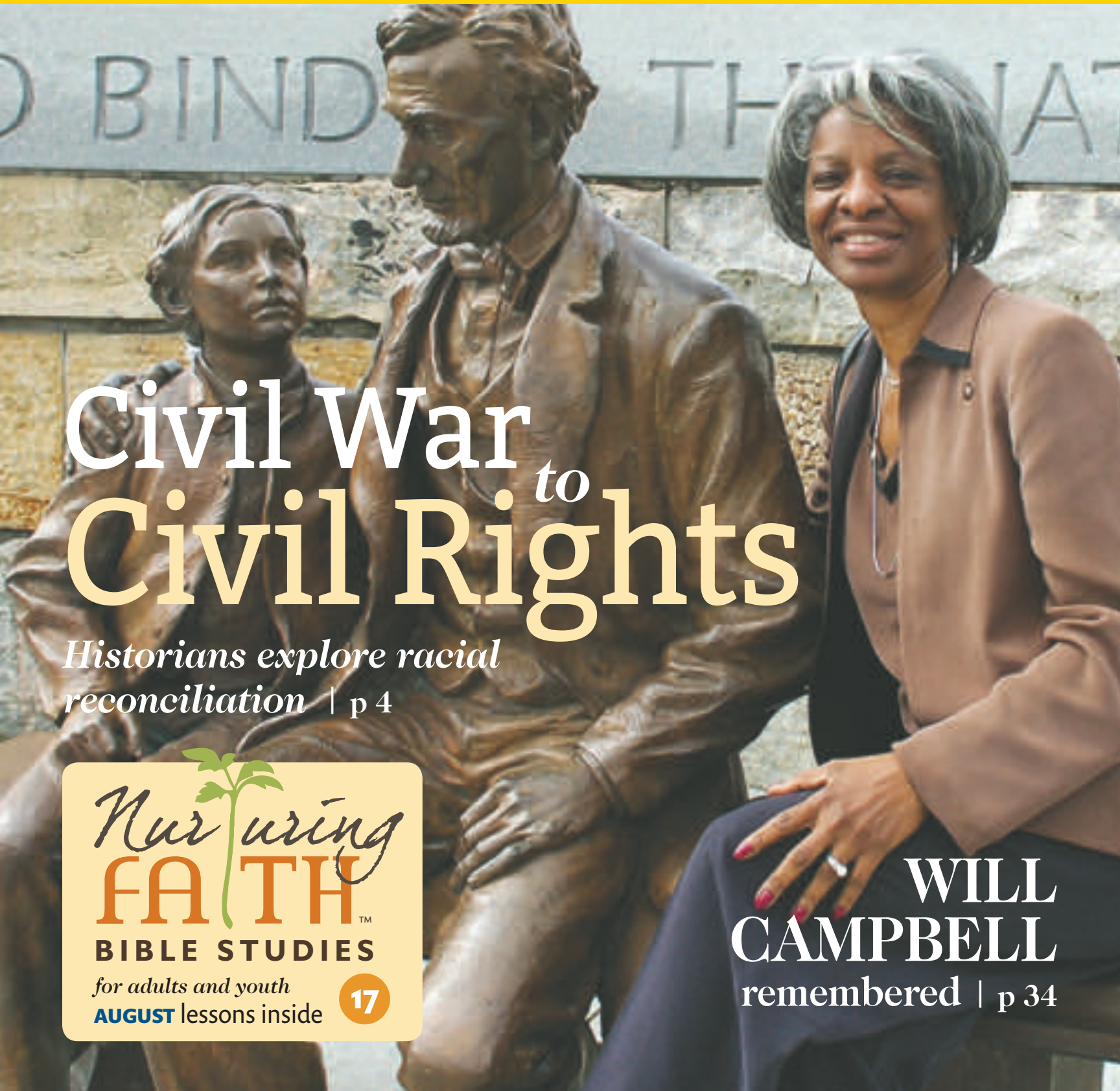
baptiststoday.org

Civil War *to* Civil Rights

*Historians explore racial
reconciliation* | p 4

Nurturing
FAITHTM
BIBLE STUDIES
for adults and youth
AUGUST lessons inside **17**

**WILL
CAMPBELL**
remembered | p 34



John D. Pierce
Executive Editor
editor@baptiststoday.org

Benjamin L. McDade
Executive Vice President
ben@baptiststoday.org

Julie Steele
Chief Operations Officer
jsteele@baptiststoday.org

Jackie B. Riley
Managing Editor
jackie@baptiststoday.org

Tony W. Cartledge
Contributing Editor
cartledge@baptiststoday.org

Bruce T. Gourley
Online Editor
gourley@baptiststoday.org

David Cassidy
Church Resources Editor
david@thefaithlab.com

Terri Byrd
Contributing Writer

Vickie Frayne
Art Director

Jannie Lister
Customer Service Manager
jannie@baptiststoday.org

Kimberly L. Hovis
Marketing Associate
kim@baptiststoday.org

Lex Horton
Nurturing Faith Resources Manager
lex@nurturingfaith.net

Walker Knight, Publisher Emeritus

Jack U. Harwell, Editor Emeritus

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Walter B. Shurden, Macon, Ga. (chairman)
Robert Cates, Rome, Ga. (vice chair)
Nannette Avery, Signal Mountain, Tenn.
Kelly L. Belcher, Asheville, N.C.
Donald L. Brewer, Gainesville, Ga.
Huey Bridgman, The Villages, Fla.
Mary Jane Cardwell, Waycross, Ga.
Jack Causey, Statesville, N.C.
Anthony D. Clevenger, Pensacola, Fla.
Kenny Crump, Ruston, La.
James M. Dunn, Winston-Salem, N.C.
Jack Glasgow, Zebulon, N.C.
Frank Granger, Athens, Ga.
Ben Gross, Chattanooga, Tenn.
Leslie D. Hill, Lexington, Ky.
Cynthia Holmes, St. Louis, Mo.
Fisher Humphreys, Birmingham, Ala.
Michael M. Massar, Baton Rouge, La.
William T. Neal, Stone Mountain, Ga.
Roger Paynter, Austin, Texas
Kathy B. Richardson, Rome, Ga.
Lee Royal, Greensboro, N.C.
Charles Schaible, Macon, Ga.
Macon Sheppard, Clemson, S.C.
Charlotte Cook Smith, Winston-Salem, N.C.
Leo Thorne, Valley Forge, Pa.
Cathy Turner, Clemson, S.C.
David Turner, Richmond, Va.
Tom Waller, Alpharetta, Ga.
Vickie Willis, Murfreesboro, TN
Cynthia Wise, Birmingham, Ala.



Alabama church benefits from couple's decades of dedication

28

PERSPECTIVES

Will we leave an embarrassing legacy? **7**
by John Pierce

Old man Jesus **12**
by Marion Aldridge

Did the founders support church-state separation? **13**
by David M. Stratton

Congregations benefit from young ministers' training **33**
by Mike Queen

IN THE NEWS

World War II experiences led veterans to church **9**

SBC task force seeks unity amid Calvinism concerns **10**

Theologian John Franke to lead Yellowstone Theological Seminary **10**

Survey: Acceptance of gays varies by nation **11**

Piper's tornado tweets stir up a theological debate **11**

Myron Madden shaped counseling, chaplaincy among Baptists **16**

Cover photo by John Pierce. Historian Pamela Smoot, who teaches at Southern Illinois University and serves as vice president of the Baptist History & Heritage Society, visiting the American Civil War Center in Richmond as part of a May conference on racial reconciliation. **page 4**



FEATURE

At 94, Helen Brown still reminding inmates of God's wide embrace **42**



PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

Quotation Remarks	6
Editorial	7
Media	14
Classifieds	16
In the Know	16
Baptists and the Civil War	30
Reblog	31
Lighter Side	32

Great Bible Study

Is just **TWO STEPS** away

1. Place a discounted group order for *Baptists Today* with the **Nurturing Faith Bible Studies** by Tony Cartledge

2. Access the abundant, free online teaching resources at nurturingfaith.net

- > Lessons are provided for adults and youth.
- > Online resources for teachers include Tony's video overviews and "Digging Deeper" background materials, along with Rick Jordan's lesson plans.
- > Enjoy consistently solid scholarship, applicable lessons and the convenience of once-a-year ordering.
- > All teaching materials are free — no multiple book orders, no waste.

Nurturing
FAITH

TAKE THE RIGHT STEP

Call **1-877-752-5658**
or visit baptiststoday.org.

READERS SERVICES

Mission Statement

Baptists Today serves churches by providing a reliable source of unrestricted news coverage, thoughtful analysis, helpful resources and inspiring features focusing on issues of importance to Baptist Christians.

Advertising

- Print and online ads for purchase separately or in combination
- Frequency discounts available
- Rate card: baptiststoday.org/storage/ratecard.pdf
- Inquiries: advertising@baptiststoday.org

Individual and Gift Subscriptions

- \$20 (1 yr.) / \$35 (2 yrs.)
- Credit card: baptiststoday.org / 478-301-5655 / 1-877-752-5658
- Check: *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318

Group or Bulk Subscriptions

- \$18 (1 yr.) / min. 25 orders / pd. by single check or credit card
- Group sent to individual addresses / Bulk sent to single address

Single Issues

- \$4 (includes postage)
- Credit card: baptiststoday.org / 478-301-5655 / 1-877-752-5658
- Check: *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318

Tax-deductible Gifts

- Online: baptiststoday.org
- Phone: 478-301-5655 / 1-877-752-5658
- Mail: *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318
- Information on designated gifts or estate planning: editor@baptiststoday.org
- *Baptists Today, Inc.*, is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit charitable organization.

Letters to the Editor

- Limit 200 words
- Email: editor@baptiststoday.org
- Include name, city, state, phone

Writing Submissions

- Unsolicited manuscripts welcomed for consideration
- Email: editor@baptiststoday.org

Contact Information

- 478-301-5655 / 1-877-752-5658
- info@baptiststoday.org
- *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318

Civil War, Civil Rights

Baptist historians explore racial reconciliation then and now

RICHMOND, Va. — “Reconciliation” may not be the best term to use when speaking of the quest for racial equality and cooperation, said Valerie Carter, associate pastor of Richmond’s Bon Air Baptist Church and an instructor of sociology at Reynolds Community College.

“Reconciliation suggests we are coming back together.”

Although blacks and whites in the U.S. “have not been together equally,” Carter said she “doesn’t have a better word” to offer and continues to seek racial healing and engagement.

Carter and other participants in a panel discussion on race relations in the former capital of the Confederacy addressed real and current concerns while expressing hope for a brighter future despite the city’s troubled racial past.

“I don’t have any problem with the word ‘reconciliation,’” said Michael Paul Williams, a columnist for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and who, like Carter, is an African American. “But it is hard work.”

Rob Corcoran agreed, adding: “Healing and structural equity must go hand in hand.”

Corcoran, who is white, spent many years in South Africa and Europe before moving to Richmond in the 1980s. He directs Hope in the Cities and is the author of *Trustbuilding: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation and Responsibility*.

The panel discussion was part of a multilayered conference in Richmond May 20-22 titled “Faith, Freedom, Forgiveness: Religion and the Civil War, Emancipation and Reconciliation in Our Time.” It was sponsored by the Baptist History & Heritage Society, the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, and the Center for Baptist Heritage and Studies at the University of Richmond.

CIVIL WAR

As good historians always do, participants in the three-day conference looked back to explore the context out of which current discussions of race were born. Certainly the American Civil War was one of them.

“If you don’t know where you’ve been, you don’t know where you are going,” said Frank



James Kilby (left) talks with Andrew Manis who addressed a Baptist History & Heritage Society luncheon. Manis, who wrote *A Fire You Can’t Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham’s Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth*, said the long years of slavery, segregation and discrimination have “generational consequences.”

Williamson, who guided a tour for some participants to nearby Petersburg National Battlefield.

Petersburg was the site of the longest (nine and a half months) of the battles and one in which many black soldiers fought for freedom.

In one of many addresses, University of Richmond President Ed Ayers recalled the end of the war that gave the First African Baptist Church in the city the freedom to worship and minister without supervision from the pastor of the white First Baptist Church. However, the black congregation asked that the white pastor, Robert Ryland, who also founded the small seminary that has evolved into the University of Richmond, preach a final sermon.

First African, said Ayers, was an influential church that “created a rare space for leadership development,” spinning off new congregations and sending out ministers.

The story of Ryland, himself a slaveholder, the two First Baptist churches and the young Baptist school, he noted, is “complicated.” But lessons emerge: People are people; conditions matter; and talking about it can unite us.

“There is a tradition of faith and forgiveness that equips people to think about the tough issues,” said Ayers.

CIVIL RIGHTS

In the 1950s, construction of I-95 through Richmond threatened the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church in the city’s tough Jackson-Ward neighborhood. But compromise and a big curve preserved the historic African-American sanctuary built in 1887.

The church’s historian, Benjamin Ross, told of how former slave John Jasper birthed the congregation in an abandoned Confederate horse stable in 1867. One of the most famous preachers of his time, Jasper was best known for his widely-offered sermon on the Bible and science titled, “De Sun Do Move.”

Under current pastor Tyrone Nelson, the congregation is healthy and growing with worship, educational and social ministry programs. Nelson does pulpits with the predominantly white First Presbyterian Church and is active in community affairs.

Also, he admits that pastoral ministry is very different for him than for the church’s founding pastor.

“If I adopted some things John Jasper employed,” said Nelson. “I’d be unemployed.”

Likewise, Virginia Union University has its roots back to freedom for slaves. The first school

was formed by the American Baptist Mission Society for the education of African Americans coming out of bondage.

While the university has evolved — through mergers and expansion — from its humble start to claiming graduates such as Adam Clayton Powell Sr., Benjamin Mays and Samuel DeWitt Proctor, the school still holds to its motto: “The Lord will always find a way.”

“We haven’t changed who we are in 148 years,” said President Claude Perkins, noting that weekly chapel services are held.

Speaking in the VUU chapel, Yale historian Harry Stout noted the “profound spiritual odyssey” leading to Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation — calling it “the most revolutionary proclamation ever signed by an American president.”

Stout, the Jonathan Edwards professor of American Religious History at Yale Divinity School, said the Emancipation Proclamation “was both a moral enactment and a religious act.”

He noted how through the war years Lincoln’s perception of the divine changed with a growing understanding of providence and the personal nature of God: “Lincoln’s God informed the act from start to finish.”

Stout said Lincoln was “always infuriated” at clergy who “assumed to read God’s mind,” and avoided such assumptions himself. However, he believed that “God hated slavery” and told clergy urging emancipation: “Whatever shall appear to be God’s will, I will do.”

Lincoln’s concern for the survival of the Union, said Stout, was surpassed by a higher moral purpose: affirming that all persons are created equal.

“Like Lincoln,” he added, “we cannot escape history and the judgments it bears,”

BUILDING BRIDGES

“The learning process never ends,” said historian Pamela Smoot, an administrator and teacher of African-American studies at Southern Illinois University, in response to Stout’s presentation. “Black and white Baptists, we can come together.”

Frequent calls were heard throughout the conference for learning from the past in order to move ahead in helpful and hopeful ways.

“When forgiveness is done well ... you get freedom,” said Virginia Baptist leader John Upton who serves as president of the Baptist World Alliance. He cited numerous examples from within the global fellowship of more than 200 diverse Baptist groups.

Andrew Manis, who teaches at Middle Georgia State College in Macon and wrote a biography of civil rights leader Fred

Shuttlesworth, began an address by quoting Psalm 133:1 (RSV): “How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity.”

Then he added: “When the Psalmist said these words he wasn’t just whistling ‘Dixie.’”

Manis, who is white, compared white and black Americans with the biblical brothers Jacob and Esau. Jacob was “the favored one” who sought first place by going around his brother. Esau was “closer to earth,” and the one “cheated out of birthright and blessing.”

White Americans have been “tricksters” like Jacob, he said, in creating systems to their benefit — first with slavery and then the Jim Crow laws and practices that followed.

“The good news is the Jacob and Esau story has a final act,” said Manis. He then focused on the story of reconciliation that unfolds through the Bible.

“Race still matters and racism still exists,” said Manis, noting that centuries of slavery and Jim Crow “have generational consequences.”

However, he urged listeners to face the realities of racial conflicts and concerns with honesty, compassion and confession. Repentance, he said, involves “doing something to fix what we broke.”

“Reconciliation,” he said, “is our final act.”

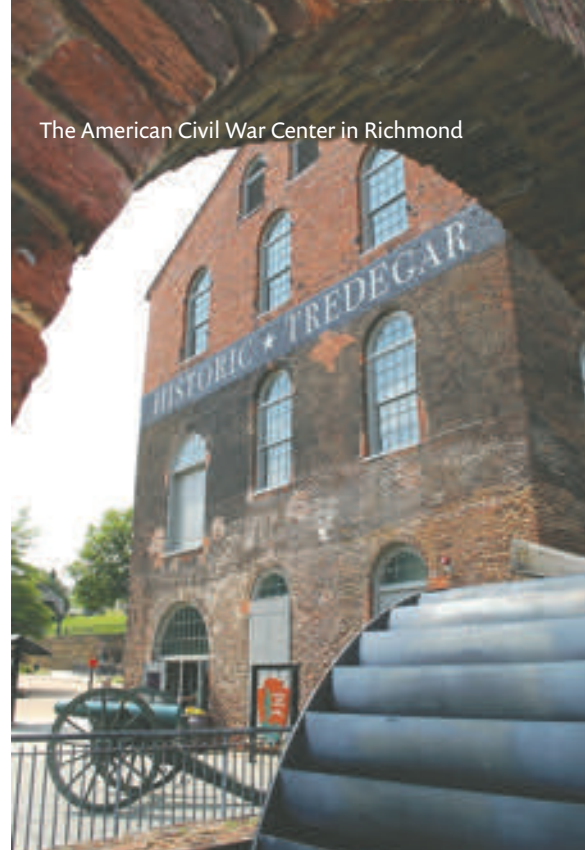
In the closing session of the conference, Jim Somerville, pastor of Richmond’s First Baptist Church, addressed “Toward a theology of forgiveness.” He expressed appreciation for the word “toward” being a part of the topic.

Rather than claim a theology of forgiveness, he said, we can at best “wander in that direction ... and see if you can help me get to that place.”

At its Greek root, he said, forgiveness means “to let go of something.”

Somerville recalled talking with Pastor Rodney Waller of Richmond’s First African Baptist Church, which shares a common history

The American Civil War Center in Richmond



rooted in slavery and segregation. After the Civil War, the two congregations split amicably according to the recorded history. The white congregation relocated.

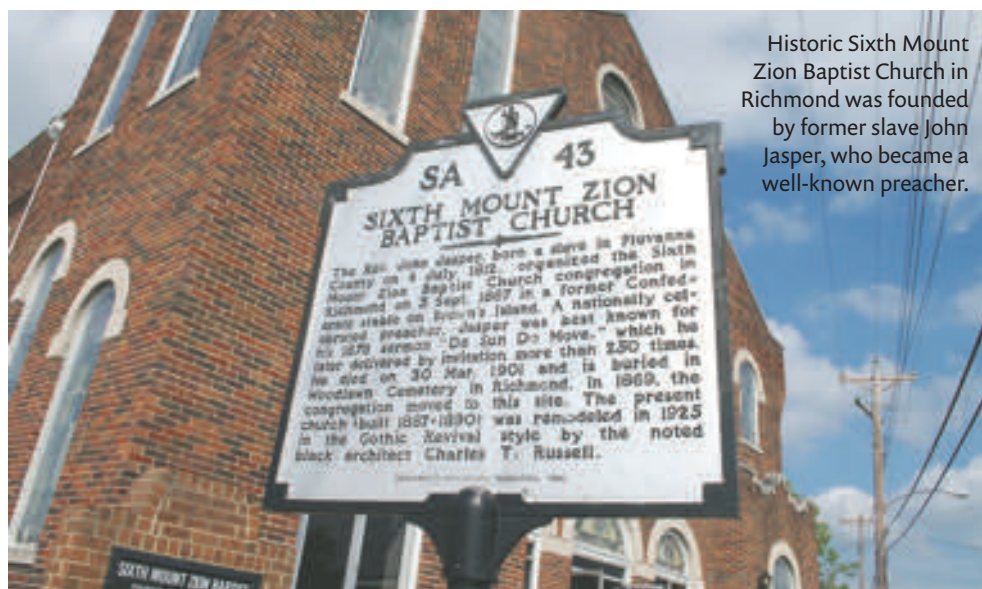
“I think the white members were afraid and moved out of the building and up the street,” Waller suggested to his pastor colleague over lunch one day.

Somerville said his favorite definition of reconciliation is “to be friendly again.” But some situations require people to be friendly for the first time.

“And if we’re going to become friends, we can’t treat it like a mission project,” he said.

Somerville said real friendship calls for sharing meals, telling stories and letting go of fear, shame, guilt, anger, bitterness and resentment.

History consists mainly of stories, Somerville said, “And finally, you listen.” **BT**



Historic Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church in Richmond was founded by former slave John Jasper, who became a well-known preacher.

quotation remarks

“You want everyone to have fun and buy souvenirs and have a good time, but you also want to tell everybody how terrible everything (was).”

—Patrick Marsh, design director for a proposed Noah's Ark theme park in Kentucky, delayed due to finances, whose plans in addition to a 500-foot-long wooden ark include the wicked pre-Flood society with pagan temple ceremonies done in a “Disneyesque” way (*Huffington Post*)

“People who cannot articulate their faults or mistakes see life as a game. They are keeping score, and they intend to win. They want you to submit but have no intention of submitting themselves. Theirs is not a world where we are supposed to create intimacy and trust through grace, but a world where we are supposed to accumulate power and security by tricking the people around us.”

—Author Donald Miller in a blog titled “The single defining characteristic of a manipulator” (*storylineblog.com*)

“Your church will grow as a byproduct of it being the presence of Christ in its community. People long to be loved without an agenda. They will sense this when they interact with you in the community and even when they walk through your church doors.”

—Nathan Dean, a church starter and pastor of Edgewood Church in Atlanta (*ChurchWorks*)

“Unfortunately, the recent decision to affirm participation by homosexual Scouts puts Johnson Ferry in a very challenging position.”

—Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, announcing that his congregation is ending its 13-year sponsorship of a Boy Scouts troop (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

“Moments after the pastor went on camera and declared that this troop would need to find someplace else to carry on the mission of scouting, several churches in the area graciously offered to host Troop 2.”

—Joey Kiker, program and marketing coordinator for the Greater Alabama Council of Boy Scouts, on response to First Baptist Church of Helena, Ala., ousting the troop after a national policy change that doesn't exclude openly gay Scouts (*Christian Post*)

“[The word] ‘Baptist’ today has as many flavors as Baskin and Robbins ice cream. It has no defined meaning, and where it does, no positive meaning.”

—Lead pastor Bill White of Christ Journey, known for 87 years as the University Baptist Church of Coral Gables, Fla. (*Miami Herald*)

“For those of us who live in the weird old houses of Capitol Hill, Frager's was a temple where we went at least weekly to ask the priest what the mysterious thing was that just broke under the sink and what sin we committed to cause it to break.”

—Dean Snyder, pastor of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, after a four-alarm fire destroyed Frager's Hardware, a 93-year-old institution on Capitol Hill (*RNS*)

“The go-to number in American religion is ASA — average Sunday attendance. Or as an irreverent colleague put it, ‘Fannies in the pews’ ... A much better quantitative measure would get at ‘touches,’ that is, how many lives are being touched by contact with the faith community in its various Sunday, weekday, off-site and online ministries — and then, for a qualitative measure, asking how those lives are being transformed.”

—Church consultant and Episcopal priest Tom Ehrlich (*RNS*)

“Like so many other graduates, the education I received at Baylor prepared me for personal and professional success.”

—Texas oilman Paul Foster who with his wife Alejandra made a \$35 million gift to the Baptist-related university in Waco (*ABP*)

“To say that you can kill in the name of God is blasphemy.”

—Pope Francis, warning Catholics not to demonize those outside the church (*RNS*)

“Now that we're exposed to other faiths, Norwegians have gotten more interested in their own faith.”

—Anne Veiteberg, publishing director of Norway's Bible Society, following the surprise news that a recent translation of the Bible has become a best seller despite the nation's very poor church attendance (*CBS News*)

“As Christianity developed, women were silenced. And when they refused to stay in their place, they were shamed into submission — a pattern that, unfortunately, is too familiar today.”

—Miguel De La Torre, professor of social ethics at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver (*ABP*)

By John Pierce

Will we leave an embarrassing legacy?

My recollections of the civil rights movement of the '60s are rather limited. I was sheltered from much of that reality and shaped by a social context that placed blame solely on “troublemakers” like Martin Luther King Jr.

Living in a community where African Americans were scarce and isolated led to little contact outside my small, white, blue-collared, baptized world. One of the few personal experiences with the struggle for racial equality was the minor inconvenience caused by curfews in nearby Chattanooga, designed to stem rioting.

We had to get home from K-Mart by the designated hour.

Of course, any effort to raise the visibility of discrimination was viewed as troublemaking, if not rioting. All blame, according to the familiar narrative, rested with those seeking equality, never those who denied it.

So while younger moviegoers gasped at the use of strong racial slurs hurled at young Jackie Robinson in the movie, *42*, it was sadly not shocking to those of us who heard such insults and insensitivity in daily discussions decades ago.

However, I wondered how the grandchildren of those baseball players, coaches, and executives felt about the ignorant and obstructionist ways of their forebears. Or how do the offspring of those who turned water hoses and billy clubs on defenseless black citizens in Alabama feel today?

Is “That’s the just way things were back then” enough of a response?

However, the more constructive question for us is what are we saying and doing today

that might cause those who spill out of our family trees to shake their heads in amazement and shame at our ignorance and insensitivity. How baffled will they be at trying to reconcile our words and actions with our claims of following Jesus?

Watch a movie like *42* or *Remember the Titans* with a young person — or take a youth to a civil rights site in Birmingham, Montgomery, Memphis or Atlanta — and then listen. Listen carefully.

Expect to hear an incredulous questioning of: “How could people who claimed to be good Christians act that way?”

And don’t give some flippant answer in an attempt to justify such horrors. It doesn’t help as much as confessing, “I don’t know; I just don’t know.”

However, we must keep moving to the present tense. What am I saying and doing today that someone else will someday struggle to reconcile with the faith and goodness I claimed?

It is a question many dismiss with, “but this one is different?” And then “the Bible says” gets thrown in for justification, as if that wasn’t used to justify bad behavior before.

I think about those aggressive Baptist leaders today who seem to delight in degrading women pastors and make a big public deal out of breaking ties with the congregations that call them.

If the families of these men are not

ashamed now, they should be (and more so should these men). What will their granddaughters or great-granddaughters think if they read the reports of those actions years from now?

Sadly, so many examples could follow. We are much too comfortable in justifying prejudices and discrimination — and using whatever power is within reach to fulfill the resulting goals.

On the other hand, there are those who look back with great pride at courageous and insightful relatives who stood for what was just and loving, even when it was against the grain of their culture. That must be very gratifying.

However, the wholly sufficient reason for doing what is right is because it is right.

To be found on the right side of history, when it comes to issues of justice and equality, is not some careful strategic plan to leave a good legacy or reputation.

But it sure doesn’t hurt if we stand for truth, justice and love — and those who follow are glad we did.

A letter writer recently asked why we include articles about civil rights in *Baptists Today*, saying they have no spiritual value. I think they do.

The cover story about Baptist historians exploring racial reconciliation and the tribute to Will Campbell, who spent a lifetime reaching across social lines of division, will disappoint those who wish to separate Jesus from justice.

For others of us they are needed, though perhaps painful, reminders that a more inclusive love in the present tense is the best way to follow Jesus. And it can remove the need for remorse in the years ahead. **BT**



MAKING A GIFT to support the ministry of *Baptists Today* is just one click away. Make a gift online at baptiststoday.org/donate. Your generous giving is most helpful and deeply appreciated.

Partnership perspectives

Fellowship leaders discuss collaboration

GAINESVILLE, Ga. — “Partnership is at its best when both partners benefit ... and our churches are the ultimate beneficiary,” said Bo Prosser, coordinator of missional congregations for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Prosser joined Larry Hovis, executive coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina (CBFNC), and Ben McDade, executive vice president of *Baptists Today*, in a panel discussion April 26 on ways to improve the effectiveness of the partnership model that CBF adopted at its outset as an alternative to owning and controlling agencies and institutions. The discussion took place as part of the spring meeting of the *Baptists Today* Board of Directors.

After more than two decades, the Fellowship can find “greater effectiveness” through collaboration than it has in the past, said Hovis, who served on the national CBF 2012 Task Force that examined partnerships as part of its assignment and report.

“I think we’ve been on a 20-plus-year learning curve about what partnership means,” he said, adding that “funding and governance” typically defined the organization’s early relationships.

Hovis’ state CBF group often uses “collaboration” rather than “partnership” to describe its intentional relationships with other independent organizations. Criteria “beyond money,” he said, include addressing questions such as: “How can this partnership strengthen churches and God’s mission? How can we mutually affirm each other and be mutual beneficiaries?”

Prosser said the 2012 Task Force report emphasized the need for partnerships to include such criteria as well as to better define meaningful relationships between the Fellowship and congregations.

When considering partnerships with other organizations and institutions, Prosser said it is important to ask: “What is the value we



CONSIDERING COLLABORATION : (Left to right) Bo Prosser of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Ben McDade of *Baptists Today* and Larry Hovis of CBF of North Carolina discuss ways to strengthen partnerships between independent organizations to better serve congregations.

provide to our congregations when we come together?”

Baptists Today director and former CBF moderator Cynthia Holmes of St. Louis said that “a real sense of entitlement” led to the distribution of funds to various organizations in the formative years of the Fellowship.

“It is changing,” said Hovis in response. “We’re making real progress on ‘It’s not just about money.’”

Hovis said that congregations benefit more when the Fellowship is not the “direct provider” for all services but rather “catalysts for the larger community.”

“We see ourselves less as deliverers of services and more as network engineers,” he added.

Greater effectiveness, said Hovis, comes when groups work together to share funds, avoid duplication of services and celebrate the accomplishments “even if my organization is not the one doing it.”

CBF-Baptists Today collaboration

McDade, who worked with the Fellowship in communication, marketing and development before coming to *Baptists Today* last year, asked Prosser and Hovis to assess the value — and potential for more value — to congregations through collaboration.

Hovis said the relationship between CBFNC and *Baptists Today* has been “one of the best laboratories for living this out.” He

noted how collaboration resulted in the launch of the North Carolina edition of the news journal and the Nurturing Faith Bible Studies.

As an example, he referred to his colleague Rick Jordan, church resources coordinator for CBFNC, who writes the adult lesson plans for each of the weekly lessons provided by Tony Cartledge of *Baptists Today*. The lessons appear in the news journal with the teaching resources online.

Prosser noted that CBF has collaborated on Christian education with *Baptists Today* for a long time and values the move toward providing Bible studies and other church resources in partnership.

Prosser and Hovis agreed that facing the questions of how curriculum and technology come together is the biggest challenge as they and *Baptists Today* leaders look at new products and methods of delivery.

As another example of collaboration, Prosser spoke of CBF missional congregations working with Upper Room Ministries to sponsor a spiritual formations academy last year. Then the presentations by E. Glenn Hinson were published as a book, *Baptist Spirituality: A Call for Renewed Attentiveness to God*, through Nurturing Faith, the book-publishing arm of *Baptists Today*.

Such collaborative efforts benefit all who are involved, said Prosser. “And if *Baptists Today* is a part of it, that’s the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.” **BT**

World War II experiences led veterans to church

A new study has found that American veterans who had a negative experience serving during World War II attend church more frequently today than those who were less troubled by their service.

The study also found that when service members were fearful in combat, they reported prayer was a better motivator for getting them through it than several other factors, including the broader goals of the war.

Researchers say the study, to be published in the *Journal of Religion and Health*, has implications for health professionals, counselors and clergy who work with veterans with more recent service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The most important thing is that the more veterans disliked the war, the more religious they were 50 years later,” said Craig Wansink, a professor of religious studies at Virginia Wesleyan College and co-author of the study with his brother, Brian Wansink, a professor of consumer behavior at Cornell University.

“And the takeaway is that for people who work with combat veterans, if veterans have had a bad experience, it is clear that one alternative that has helped people understand the world or find a common community has been religion.”

The study, titled “Are There Atheists in Foxholes? Combat Intensity and Religious Behavior,” also found that:

As combat became more frightening, the percentage of soldiers who reported praying rose from 42 percent to 72 percent. After the war, soldiers who faced heavy combat attended church 21 percent more often if they felt their war experience was negative; soldiers who described their war experience as positive attended 26 percent less often.

In general, religious behavior was high among all World War II veterans surveyed — approximately 69 percent were church members and reported attending services slightly more than three times per month.

The study was conducted with both old and new data, including data collected from U.S. Army service members in the Pacific in

1944 and from surveys the authors sent to surviving veterans more than 50 years later.

Brian Wansink said that while it is not surprising that service members in the heat of battle prayed — World War II journalist Ernie Pyle made the famous quip about atheists in foxholes that’s in the study’s name — it is important that those who work with veterans not overlook the impact of faith during and after combat.

“Religious involvement could help these people,” he said. “One reason it may have been so effective in the past is that religion is a very social experience, and that might be healing of itself because these are people who developed strong social bonds with their units and strong commitments to their comrades. That might be missing from current strategies in helping recent soldiers cope with stress.”

The authors spent 12 years working on the study — three times as long as the U.S. involvement in World War II — and were influenced by respect for their father, a member of the so-called “Greatest Generation” who fought in the war. **BT**

Be a part of something good and growing!

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

But producing this uniquely independent news journal with excellent Bible studies — and developing exciting new resources — requires support from those who value such efforts.

Please support the ongoing and growing mission of *Baptists Today* by one or more of these good ways:

- **SEND A ONE-TIME GIFT**
(in honor or memory of someone if you wish)
- **MAKE A THREE-YEAR PLEDGE**
(to help us anticipate support)
- **INCLUDE BAPTISTS TODAY IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS**
(to make a lasting impact)

Let us hear from you by mail (P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318) or by phone (toll-free 1-877-752-5658). Or give online at baptiststoday.org/donate. **THANKS!**



Baptists Today Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization under the careful stewardship of a trusted, self-perpetuating Board of Directors.

SBC task force seeks unity amid Calvinism concerns

By Bob Allen

Associated Baptist Press

An ad-hoc task force appointed to study Calvinism's impact on the Southern Baptist Convention says the 2000 *Baptist Faith and Message* is a sufficient guide for orthodoxy in the nation's second-largest faith group behind Roman Catholics.

"We should call upon all Southern Baptists to promote the unity we share within *The Baptist Faith and Message* and, while recognizing that most Southern Baptists will believe and teach more than what that confession contains, we must never believe or teach less," the 16-member task force says in a 3,200-word report published online at *SBC Life*.

Page named the group last year amid statistics showing that recent seminary graduates embraced a rigid Calvinism at percentages far higher than the people in Southern Baptist pews. Convention leaders worry that young pastors bringing those views into churches can be divisive, particularly if the congregation is unaware of the differences between the two views.

They also fear division among pastors and denominational leaders, as rumor mills circulate reports both of Calvinists trying to "take

over" the convention and of qualified scholars being denied teaching jobs because they adhere to Calvinist views.

The committee, chaired by Union University President David Dockery, included both Calvinists, who emphasize God's sovereignty and downplay free will, and others who accept parts of Calvinism, such as mankind's fallen state and belief that a truly saved Christian cannot fall from grace, but not ideas such as God predetermines who is saved or damned and that Jesus died only for the elect.

While acknowledging "points of tension" between the two sides, the group celebrated broad agreement that Southern Baptists stand united on the truthfulness of Scripture.

"We should be thankful that these are the issues Southern Baptists are now discussing, even as liberal denominations are debating the full abdication of biblical morality and allowing the denial of central doctrines," the report said. "We are, seen in this light, blessed by the discussions that come to Southern Baptists who want to affirm the fullness of the faith, not its reduction."

They found agreement on the *Baptist Faith and Message's* 138-word article on "God's Purpose of Grace," but differences on

explanations about matters such as the reason why only some are saved and if sinners inherit only Adam's fallen nature or also his guilt.

While significant, those differences need not be insurmountable, the task force agreed, calling for trust and dialogue between the opposing views.

Regarding convention politics, the leaders agreed: "We should expect all leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention and all entities serving our denomination to affirm, to respect and to represent all Southern Baptists of good faith and to serve the great unity of our Convention. No entity should be promoting Calvinism or non-Calvinism to the exclusion of the other. Our entities should be places where any Southern Baptist who stands within the boundaries of *The Baptist Faith and Message* should be welcomed and affirmed as they have opportunities to benefit from, participate in, and provide leadership for those entities."

To avoid theological conflict in churches, the task group encouraged "all candidates for ministry positions in the local church to be fully candid and forthcoming about all matters of faith and doctrine" and for pulpit and staff search committees to similarly "be fully candid and forthcoming about their congregation and its expectations." **BT**

Theologian John Franke to lead Yellowstone Theological Institute

By John Pierce

BOZEMAN, Mont. — The newly forming Yellowstone Theological Institute has announced the appointment of theologian John R. Franke as its first executive director.

Franke, who holds a Ph.D. in theology from Oxford, has Presbyterian roots but an ecumenical outlook. He is a familiar voice within the emerging church movement. (A conversation with Franke appeared in the November 2012 issue of *Baptists Today*.)

The idea for an innovative initiative in theological training based in this Rocky Mountain region arose within the First Baptist Church of Bozeman, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, USA, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, where Jay Smith serves as pastor and leads the YTI board. A family within the congregation provided a gift of an 80-acre tract of land adjacent to Montana State University and start-up funding.

While educational offerings are still developing, organizers intend to incorporate both

the arts and outdoors adventure that are popular in the Bozeman area as part of theological and ministry training. Bill Leonard, founding dean of the Wake Forest University School of Divinity, is consulting on organizational issues.



John Franke

offered this summer and beyond.

Acting YTI President Bruce Gourley, a member of the Bozeman congregation as well as executive director of the Baptist History & Heritage Society and online editor for *Baptists Today*, said Franke will help position YTI as a "missional partner" with Baptist congregations and seminaries worldwide.

YTI leaders are exploring ways to work in collaboration with existing seminaries and theology schools as well as provide comprehensive theological training in their own region.

A series of short-term courses, called "Big Sky Immersion," are being

"As we move forward in the 21st century, the church is facing numerous challenges as it seeks to live out an authentic, holistic, living faith," said Gourley. "Fostering a missional re-imagining of Christianity is the task of Yellowstone Theological Institute, and there is no better theologian to lead YTI in this pursuit than John Franke."

Franke, who most recently served as theologian in residence at First Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Penn., assumed the full-time leadership of YTI on July 1.

"I am excited to be part of this new venture," said Franke. "I am convinced that the missional vision of the Institute and its commitment to fresh and innovative approaches to leadership and training will make a vital contribution to the future of Christianity in North America and the world." **BT**

—Additional information is available at yellowstonetheology.org. Baptists Today staff is providing communications and networking consultation to the YTI.

Pastor's tornado tweets stir up theological debate

Sarah Pulliam Bailey
Religion News Service

Oklahoma's devastating tornado stirred up a theological debate that was set off from a series of deleted tweets referencing the Book of Job.

Popular evangelical author and speaker John Piper regularly tweets Bible verses, but two verses tweeted after the tornado struck some as at best insensitive and at worst bad theology:

"Your sons and daughters were eating and a great wind struck the house, and it fell upon them, and they are dead." Job 1:19

"Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped." Job 1:20

In the Book of Job, God allows Satan to afflict "blameless" Job, killing his 10 children, livestock and servants. While Piper's tweets didn't mention the tornado by name, critics said it was too close, and inappropriate.

Piper, who recently retired from the pulpit of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, is a leading theologian of the neo-Calvinist movement that's sweeping many evangelical churches. In essence, Desiring God staffer Tony Reinke wrote, Piper was highlighting God's sovereignty and that he is still worthy of worship in the midst of suffering and tragedy.

In response, popular evangelical writer Rachel Held Evans blasted Piper's "abusive theology of 'deserved' tragedy," and said Christians have to stop the idea of responding to tragedy by suggesting God is inflicting his judgment.

"The only thing we need to tell them is, 'I don't know why this happened but God is good and God loves us,'" she said in an interview.

However, she apologized in a follow-up

post. "Piper's tweet was vague enough that I don't know that he was necessarily saying this point this time. Maybe it wasn't the best time to call him out."

Piper, who has nearly a half million followers, tweeted a brief explanation, saying in part: "My hope and prayer for Oklahoma is that the raw realism of Job's losses will point us all to his God 'compassionate and merciful.'"

"John realized ... pretty quickly that what gives him comfort in the wake of tragedy is not what resonates with everyone," David Mathis, executive director of Piper's Desiring God ministry, wrote in an email.

Idaho pastor and blogger Doug Wilson came to Piper's defense, saying that the theological issues are logically simple but emotionally complex.

"The Christian church has to return to a robust understanding of who God is," Wilson said in an interview. "If we do, we won't have to hash through this with every tragedy."

Author Philip Yancey said that the worst thing Christians could do is to be like Job's friends, who tried to explain why God allowed tragedy to strike Job's family.

"God endorses the confusion and even outrage that we feel when mysterious things happen," Yancey said. "When suffering happens, it forces us to confront life in a different way than we normally do."

Megachurch pastor Rick Warren tweeted a few days after the tornado, "In deep pain, people don't need logic, advice, encouragement, or even Scripture. They just need you to show up and shut up. #Love."

This is not the first time Piper has generated theological debate through Twitter. He also came under fire after suggesting in a blog post that a small tornado during a conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was a "gentle but firm warning" as it debated its position on homosexuality. **BT**



Survey finds acceptance of gays varies by nation

By Cathy Payne
USA Today

The world is divided over the acceptance of homosexuality, a survey released June 4 found. There is broad acceptance of homosexuality in North America, the European Union, and much of Latin America, according to the Pew Research Center survey.

"I can't think of any question we have asked where we have this sort of global polarization," said Juliana Horowitz, the report's lead author and a senior researcher at Pew. "In North America, Europe and several countries in Latin America, we have really high acceptance of homosexuality. In predominantly Muslim nations and in sub-Saharan Africa, we have equally widespread views on the other side."

African nations and predominantly Muslim countries are among the least accepting of homosexuality. For example, about 98 percent of people in Nigeria say homosexuality should not be accepted. In Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country in Southeast Asia, 93 percent say homosexuality should be rejected.

About 60 percent of Americans say society should accept homosexuality. They are more tolerant today than in 2007, when 49 percent said homosexuality should be accepted.

In several countries, younger respondents expressed more tolerant views than older people. For example, in Japan, 83 percent of those younger than 30 say homosexuality should be accepted, compared with 71 percent of those ages 30-49, and 39 percent of those 50 and older.

The survey was conducted by telephone and face to face in 39 countries among 37,653 respondents from March 2 to May 1. The margin of error for the survey ranges from plus or minus 3.1 to plus or minus 7.7 percentage points. **BT**

African nations and predominantly Muslim countries are among the least accepting of homosexuality.

Baptists Today has received gifts:

IN MEMORY OF ...

ANNE SWAIN LAWRENCE

From John L. Lawrence

KATHERINE TISDALE PITTARD

From Roger B. Pittard

By Marion D. Aldridge

Old man Jesus

Old Man Jesus — the very idea is somehow offensive. Jesus did not get old. He died young.

The idea of following Jesus, as our model, as we get older requires some mental and theological gymnastics. We have to make some guesses about “what might have been.”

Would he have mellowed? Would he have continued to rail against unjust and uncaring religious traditions? How would Jesus have lived out his own journey into old age?

It is hard to imagine Jesus becoming tame or domesticated by further exposure to the bad habits of the religious leaders of his day who showed few signs of being converted.

The bottom line is that I failed at following Jesus because I am still alive. Had I followed Jesus fully, I would have picked up my own cross some time during the past 40 years.

I did not sell all I have and give it to the poor. I put money away for retirement income, storing some in figurative barns.

A friend lamented to our ministerial support group that we just aren't as committed to following Jesus as we were when we were younger. Maybe he was right, but I have additional commitments. Though none are as important as my obligations to God, they are loyalties nonetheless. I am married, and Sally prefers that I come home at night. Sober. That is a commitment.

Jesus never had teenagers. I don't mean to be disrespectful, but he didn't! Raising two daughters required a commitment of time, energy and money that I don't begrudge.

Maybe my most serious conflict of interest

is that I took a salary from religious institutions for more than 45 years. I felt called and committed to nurturing and protecting the churches where I was investing my life. Often, that meant learning how to get along with people who did not seem to measure up even to the minimum standards of a faithful disciple. Was I wrong to maintain my loyalty to the church when the institution and the people were so flawed?

The Bible has some positive models of good old age: Abraham, Sara, Moses, Naomi, Dorcas and Gamaliel. But we will never know what Jesus would have been like at age 60, 70 or 80. All we can do is speculate. Reverently. Humbly.

We have nuggets of advice from the Apostle Paul and other early church leaders that are relevant to aging Christians:

“Be temperate.” Yet, I don't see a lot of moderation in a 30-year-old Jesus.

“Encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them.” Frankly, Jesus doesn't sound very patient in some of his sermons.

These kind words from the apostles came after the earthly ministry of Jesus. However, Jesus cannot be our personal model for how to live as a gray-haired elder.

We don't know much about him as a teen or young adult either. Did Jesus, young or old, have a hobby or was he always relentless about his father's business?

Did he ever work “within the system”? We have hints that sometimes he did. I am



Marion D. Aldridge

glad because my entire life has been within the ecclesiastical system. Did he change?

The Gospel of Luke tells us that, as a teenager, “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in divine and human favor.” The Evangelist tells of Jesus meeting a Canaanite woman and altering his point of view because of the conversation. How much might Jesus have changed, and in what areas, had he lived another 40 years?

Jesus was a critic of his culture and faith traditions. Labeled as a rebel, he was executed as a young man. I accepted my culture uncritically for much longer than Jesus. When I finally began to challenge the bad habits of my church and my world, I was fortunate to live when and where we do not execute dissenters.

I am not completely sure how to make Jesus my model for living into my later decades. So my decision has been to latch onto two huge biblical themes that seem consistent with the teachings of Jesus.

The first is that, whatever our age, we are a work in progress. There are family and friends still to be loved; strangers to turn into neighbors; gardens to be planted; injustices to fight; celebrations to be enjoyed; kindness to be shared; and good causes that need my time, energy and money.

The second is that I am surrounded by God's grace, no matter my age or station in life. The Bible tells us to “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Some of the saddest people I know are old people who have never discovered God's grace for themselves or others.

Jesus gave us plenty of reminders that God's grace is sufficient and never-ending. We have in one of Jesus' parables the words: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” Despite the failure I have been and still am at following the perfect will of God, I am forgiven and counted among the saints.

Jesus said so. **BT**

—Marion Aldridge, who retired as coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina, is the author of *Overcoming Adolescence*.

Check out Nurturing Faith — a new publishing venture from Baptists Today and Faithlab

nurturingfaith.net

By David M. Stratton

Did the founders support church-state separation?

Rick Scarborough is an ordained Baptist minister with undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees from Baptist institutions. In 1998 he founded Vision America, an organization devoted to mobilizing politically active pastors around the country.

In a sermon, available as an audio file at the Vision America web page, Scarborough said, "... The separation of church and state ... cannot be found in the Constitution. It's a lie on its face."

This notion has been broadcast repeatedly by many Baptists and other evangelicals in recent years. Scarborough and others of his ilk should look for another argument to attack church-state separation. The evidence indicates that the founders who adopted the First Amendment believed its language conveys strict separation of church and state.

The Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791, but it was adopted by Congress in 1789. One year after congressional approval, James Madison, the father of the Constitution, explained why he excluded a listing of those in professional occupations from an amendment to the census bill.

He did not think it proper to list religious professionals because *"the general government is proscribed from interfering, in any manner whatever, in matters respecting religion; and it may be thought to do this, in ascertaining who [are] and who are not ministers of the gospel."*

No one in the congressional body that adopted the Bill of Rights disagreed with Madison's reasoning. In the minds of the founders with the closest connection to the Bill of Rights, church and state were so far separated that the government could not even ask citizens what they do for a living because the question might be posed to a religious

professional — which was not allowed.

After he was elected president, in his first inaugural address, Madison promised "to avoid the slightest interference with the rights of conscience, or the functions of religion *so wisely exempt from the civil jurisdiction.*"

While Madison was president, the plight of a Baptist church in the Mississippi Territory came before Congress in 1811. The congregation had accidentally built its meeting place on federal land due to an error in surveying.

Congress addressed the problem by passing a bill granting what was considered a trivial piece of land to the church, but Madison vetoed the bill. He explained in his veto message that "reserving a certain parcel of land of the United States for the use of [a] Baptist church comprises a principle and precedent for the appropriation of funds of the United States for the use and support of religious societies, contrary to the article of the Constitution which declares that 'Congress shall make no law respecting a religious establishment.'"

In retirement, Madison wrote that "the appointment of Chaplains to the Houses of Congress" is unconstitutional because "[t]he constitution of the U.S. forbids anything like an establishment of national religion."

In Madison's mind, paying chaplains with tax dollars involved the principle of a "national establishment." Repeatedly Madison interpreted the language of the First Amendment to provide for separation of church and state in the strictest terms.

As Baptist historian Leon McBeth pointed out in *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*, the phrase "separation of church and state" "was not in common usage when the Bill of Rights was adopted." Yet it is clear that the founders who adopted the Bill

of Rights believed the language of the First Amendment conveys the concept of church-state separation.

Saying that separation of church and state cannot be found in the Constitution because that exact phrase is not in the document is an error akin to saying that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity because the word Trinity is not found in the scriptures.

Certainly Baptists of the period when the Bill of Rights was adopted were glad that it contained the concept of church-state separation. John Leland, perhaps the foremost Baptist leader of that time, contended for the strict separation of church and state as the means of safeguarding religious liberty.

Like Madison, he considered it "unconstitutional" and "inconsistent with religious liberty" to pay chaplains from the public treasury. Leland was against an attempt by Christians to stop the delivery of mail on Sundays because he said the move showed a preference for the "Christian Sabbath."

He also opposed a line in the Massachusetts constitution saying, "It is the right and duty of all men publicly, and at stated seasons, to worship the Supreme Being." Leland said, "This article would read much better in a catechism than in a state constitution, and sound more concordant in a pulpit than in a state-house."

Rick Scarborough is free to oppose church-state separation. But when he and others like him contend that the founders never intended the language of the First Amendment to convey separation, they are mistaken. Furthermore, Baptists of recent years who attack separation of church and state are at odds with Baptists of the day of the adoption of the Bill of Rights and with Baptist views for the bulk of their history. **BT**

—David M. Stratton is pastor of Woodhaven Baptist Church in Apex, N.C., and blogs at davidsdeliberations.blogspot.com.



David M. Stratton

"Repeatedly [President James] Madison interpreted the language of the First Amendment to provide for separation of church and state in the strictest terms."



Disciple Development Coaching

Christian Formation for the 21st Century

By Mark Tidsworth, Ircel Harrison

(2013, Nurturing Faith)

By Ginger Barfield

New resource is urgent call for change

This is an urgent call for the church to realign with the nature of the 21st century world of which we are a part. If for no other reason, this book is a significant read.

If you are looking for a “program in a box/book” to transform your Christian education and discipleship programs at the congregational level, you will need to rethink your presuppositions as you read and work through the ideas in this pivotal work. A 20th-century mentality will not carry you very far into the movement contemplated by Mark Tidsworth and Ircel Harrison.

The authors support their discussion with clear biblical and spiritual insights. The chapters also provide some good contemporary background from others who are writing and thinking about church development. Reading this book will help bring the reader up-to-date on leadership, church culture, change, and the general state of God’s church in the 21st century.

All around us we hear moaning about how the church has lost its place in the world. Disciple Development Coaching is a highly relational movement that has the potential to empower all Christians to find their places in the world. It also locates the responsibility for the church’s mission in the hands, hearts and minds of all disciples.

The chapters are set forth in a highly linear and logical manner as the authors explain thoroughly their proposal. It is a “working read.” The reader must place herself in the text and move through exercises in the context of a training manual. Yet, this is not a method or program. The entire foundation is relational, almost natural. One wonders why we didn’t figure this out a long time ago.

The relationship between the coach and the disciple is a movement through conversation as dialogue with a major emphasis on listening and empowering the disciple to develop

competencies already available in his frame of Christian reference. The coach and the disciple ask, listen, explore, design, commit, and support in a shared experience that has a natural move back and forth. There is no beginning or end; it is a relational process that is part of an intentional long-term way of life.

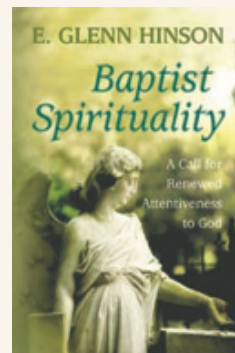
As the authors state in the opening chapter: “DDC is a way of thinking and relating that empowers disciples and focuses on change, growth, and transformation.” The book succeeds in defining, describing and outlining how this can happen across the boundaries of faith traditions. This is a movement that holds promise for God’s church. It is not something we should simply read and then put back on a shelf. It is a book we should read and then act upon. **BT**

—Ginger Barfield is associate dean at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

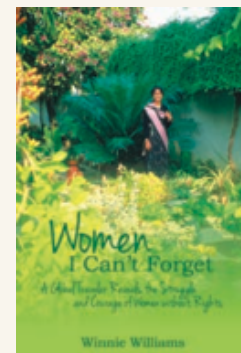
NEW FROM *Nurturing Faith* BOOKS



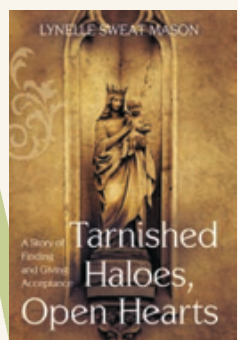
The compelling life story of a courageous Baptist journalist



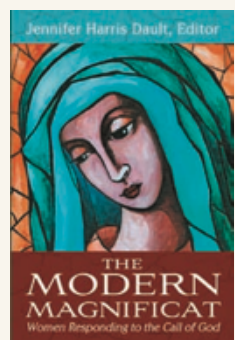
Sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Missional Congregations



Realities and lessons from the women of the world (ebook only)



ALSO AVAILABLE



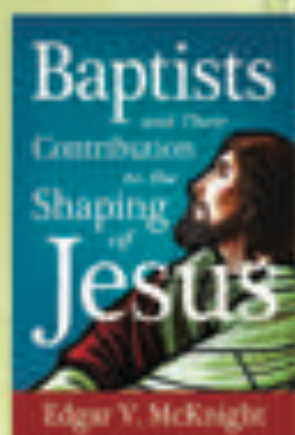
Visit the online store nurturingfaith.info

NEW

Visit Nurturingfaith.net for curriculum and publishing information.

Shop at nurturingfaith.info.

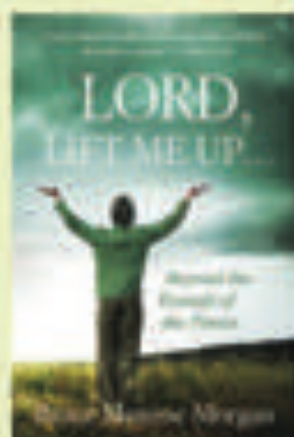
from Nurturing Faith



Available for Kindle, Nook or iPad — or in print — at nurturingfaith.info



Men who shaped a congregation
THIRTY BY WILLIAM POWELL TUCK



Well-crafted, thoughtful essays
BY BRUCE MONROE MORRISON



Preaching from classrooms to pulpit
BY WILLIAM POWELL TUCK



Prayers for every day of the year
BY MICHAEL L. RUFFIN



Our minister resigned. Now what?
BY MARK LIPPERT



A personal journey toward hope
BY TIM DANT



A compelling exploration of grace
BY STEPHEN W. JOHNSON

Order now at nurturingfaith.info

Nurturing
FAITH

Classifieds

Minister of Discipleship and Outreach: First Baptist Church of Clinton, S.C., is prayerfully seeking a minister of discipleship and outreach. We subscribe to the 1963 *Baptist Faith & Message* and support both CBF and SBC. The minister of discipleship and outreach will be responsible for coordinating the continued work and further development of essential discipleship, outreach, and educational programs of the church. This position will also assist in pastoral duties assigned by the senior minister and can best be served by an ordained minister with at least two years experience in ministry. A seminary master's level degree is preferred. Applicants should be dedicated to an educational, outreach, and discipleship ministry for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Interested applicants may submit résumés by July 31 to searchcommittee@clintonfbc.us or Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 925, Clinton, SC 29325.

Minister to Students: First Baptist Church of Anderson, S.C., (andersonfbc.org) is seeking a minister to students. The position is full time, salaried with benefits. The ideal candidate will be called by God for this area of ministry, have previous experience with student ministry, and be comfortable working with other ministers on staff to provide pastoral care to the church as a whole. Strong preference will be given to candidates who have completed a seminary education. First Baptist, a 192-year-old congregation in the heart of downtown Anderson, affirms women in ministry. The search team encourages qualified candidates regardless of gender to submit résumés to the Minister to Students Search Team at josh.hunt@andersonfbc.org.

Myron Madden shaped counseling, chaplaincy among Baptists

NEW ORLEANS — Myron C. Madden, a nationally recognized leader in chaplaincy and counseling, died June 4 in Slidell, La., at age 95. He was widely known for his groundbreaking book, *The Power to Bless*.

For 23 years he served as director of pastoral care at the former Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans where he built a

Pastor
Stanford Baptist Church
Stanford, Ky.
Job description and contact information:
stanfordbaptist.com

Minister of Music: Wingate Baptist Church seeks a part-time minister of music who will lead the church in planning and conducting a comprehensive music ministry. The church values traditional music while seeking to blend contemporary choruses into worship. The minister of music works with the pastor in planning worship and works closely with the church instrumentalist in choosing hymns, anthems, and music for the worship of the church. This person takes the role in leading various ensembles, training and supervising music leaders and university interns, and conducting a program serving the range of ages represented in the church membership. Please send résumé to Wingate Baptist Church, Attn: Minister of Music, P.O. Box 339, Wingate, NC 28174.

Preschool Ministry Associate: Trinity Baptist Church, a large multigenerational church established in 1954 and located in midtown Raleigh, N.C., is seeking a preschool ministry associate for the purpose of administrating well-rounded Christian education for preschoolers and their families. The candidate should have a college degree and theological education from an appropriate institution or willingness to attend. For a full job description, go to tbcraleigh.com. Please send résumés to jroberts@tbcraleigh.com.

highly regarded chaplaincy training program and counseling center.

Earlier he served as an Army chaplain in World War II and as pastor of St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, where members are seeking to create the Myron C. Madden Institute for the Study of Faith Communities in Health and Healing. **BT**

In the Know

Alabama Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has named its scholarship program for students from related churches as the Fisher and Caroline Humphreys Ministerial Scholarship Fund. The Humphreys are active members of the Church of the Covenant in Birmingham, and he formerly taught theology at New Orleans Seminary and Beeson Divinity School at Samford University.

Larry G. Dickens, a 1975 graduate of Campbell University who has been the minister of music at Snyder Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville, N.C., since 1999, is the first person selected to fill the Gay T. and Haskell A. Duncan Chair of Church Music at Campbell University Divinity School.

Beverly Greer has retired as missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina. She served in that role for eight years and earlier helped with the organization's formation. She is a member of First Baptist Church of Greenville, S.C.

Jimmy B. Lewis retired June 9 as pastor of First Baptist Church of Jasper, Ga. Earlier he served as missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia and as pastor of First Baptist Church of Morrow, Ga.

Kenneth C. Marsenburg Jr. is director of development for American Baptist Churches, USA.

Betty Pugh Mills is pastor of Hampton (Va.) Baptist Church. She served in various ministerial roles, including pastor, of Grace Baptist Church in Richmond for 22 years.

Jim Walls is associate pastor at First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga. He previously served as minister with youth at Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Ga. **BT**

Let the Gather 'Round curriculum help your church come together around the Bible! **Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News** is the Bible story-based curriculum that connects church and home. Gather 'Round nurtures children, youth, and parents in becoming thoughtful Christians — followers of Jesus who explore their faith and put it into action. Find sample sessions, Bible outlines and more at gather-round.org. Order a free preview pack now!

Children's Sermons from Nurturing Faith ...

for every Sunday by Kelly Belcher
... at nurturingfaith.net



Nurturing FAITH™ BIBLE STUDIES

The Bible Lessons that anchor the Nurturing Faith Bible Studies are written by **Tony Cartledge** in a scholarly, yet applicable, style from the wide range of Christian scriptures. A graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div) and Duke University (Ph.D.), and with years of experience as a pastor, writer, and professor at Campbell University, he provides deep insight for Christian living without "dumbing down" the richness of the biblical texts for honest learners.



Teaching resources at nurturingfaith.net

HOW TO USE THESE BIBLE STUDIES

1. Order a copy of *Baptists Today* news journal for EACH MEMBER of the class. The Bible Lessons are found only here.
2. Teachers can go to nurturingfaith.net to access all of the free resources needed for presentation. Simply click on "Adult" or "Youth."

Teaching the Lessons

After reading The Bible Lessons by Tony Cartledge starting on page 18, teachers can access helpful teaching resources (at no charge) at nurturingfaith.net. These include:

- * Tony's video overviews
- * Adult teaching plans by Rick Jordan
- * Youth teaching plans by Jeremy Colliver
- * Tony's "Digging Deeper" notes and "The Hardest Question"
- * Links to commentaries, multimedia resources and more

How to Order

The Bible Lessons in *Baptists Today* are copyrighted and not to be photocopied.

- * Orders may be placed at baptiststoday.org or 1-877-752-5658.
- * The price is just \$18 each for groups of 25 or more — for a full year — with no additional costs.
- * All **online** teaching resources are available at no charge and may be printed and used by teachers of the Nurturing Faith Bible Studies.

For **adults** and **youth**

August lessons in this issue

Reviewing the Basics

Colossians 3:1-17 - Packing for the Journey
AUG. 4, 2013

What God Really Wants

Isaiah 1:2-20 - How to Make God Happy
AUG. 11, 2013

Isaiah 5:1-7 - How to Make God Mad
AUG. 18, 2013

Isaiah 58:1-14 - Justice's Reward
AUG. 25, 2013

Youth Lessons are on pages 22-23.



Adult teaching plans by **Rick Jordan** of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina are available at nurturingfaith.net

Thanks, sponsors!

These Bible studies for adults and youth are sponsored through generous gifts from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (Bo Prosser, Coordinator of Congregational Life) and from the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation. Thank you!

Bible Study

with Tony W. Cartledge

Colossians 3:1-17

Aug. 4, 2013

Packing for the Journey

It's okay to admit it: Have you ever made a mistake? Have you ever made an error in judgment or had a brain accident or just missed something, and as a result you wound up in a mess?

Did you find yourself wishing more than anything that you could just go back and start over, but you could not? You could not take back the words you said, or get back the money you spent, or draw back the pain you caused someone else to feel.

In those situations you discover that the only positive way forward is to admit your error, ask for forgiveness, and hope you will be given the opportunity to try again.

If you have never had that experience, then you won't have any appreciation for today's text, because it is addressed to people who had goofed up, big time. They had sinned, every one of them. They had lived at odds with God.

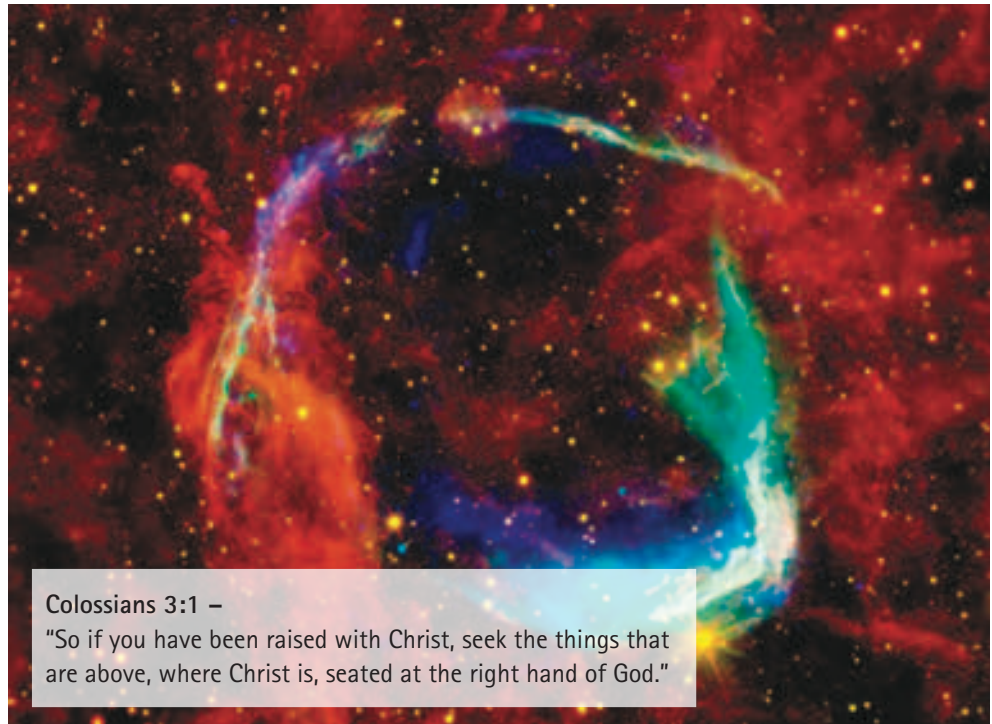
And so have we.

Heavenly thoughts (vv. 1-4)

The first-century church in Colossae – the people to whom today's text was first written – had something else in common, too. They had all come under conviction about their sin. They had repented. They had sought God's mercy through Christ. They had been baptized in Jesus' name and become members of the church.

Most of us know what that is like.

Believers in Colossae also had something else in common. None of them had been perfect since their baptism. They



Colossians 3:1 –

"So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

had stumbled along the way. They all needed encouragement and instruction so they could learn to develop the full potential of their new lives. They all needed to learn that Christian growth is not automatic, but comes as the result of a conscious process.

And all God's people said, "Again." We stand on common ground.

The Apostle Paul, who wrote the letter, knew what it was like to struggle with faith and to experience failure. From his own experience he offered advice to the Colossians that speaks just as clearly and cogently to contemporary believers.

"So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (v. 1).

Keep in mind that Paul was writing to people who were already Christians – who had been raised with Christ – who knew the experience of being forgiven, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised again to a new life.

That new life is the focus of Paul's encouragement. They are to break out

of the old molds that fashioned their former way of living, and to seek what is above, that is, to look toward Christ.

The best way to focus our hearts on Christ is to focus our minds on Christ. Thus, Paul adds, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (vv. 2-3).

How we act, how we feel, how we respond to others depends in large measure on how we think. Paul says we should redirect our thinking to focus on Christ because "you have died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God."

When we talk about the "new birth," we often fail to consider that a new birth must follow an old death. The symbolism of baptism is that we have died to the old self and been raised again to new life – precisely what Paul is talking about here.

If we want to discover our true life, we must think about the things above, because that is where our true life – our new life – is. "Your life has been hidden with Christ in God."

Additional background information
online where you see the "Digging
Deeper" icon



Resources to teach adult and youth classes

are available at
nurturingfaith.net

If we want to understand the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ, we have to focus our minds on Christ.

We can do that through reading the scriptures, through seeking the voice of Christ in prayer or meditation, through group Bible study and corporate worship.

We may sometimes think it is hopeless – this idea that we could understand the mysteries of God or truly come to know the mind of Christ. But there is hope for us, and not only for this life, but also for the life to come.

Paul wrote: “When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory” (v. 4). ☵

Earthly temptations (vv. 5-11)

If we are truly to live as if Christ is our life, there are some things we must leave behind (vv. 5-11). We can’t take everything with us.

Suppose some children in your neighborhood go out to explore the nearby woods, and they get lost. Those who go searching for them may take a flashlight and possibly a walking stick and enough clothing to keep warm, but that’s about it. They leave behind anything that would slow them down or hinder the search. So it is with the search for self in the fullness of Christ.

Thus, Paul uses graphic terminology to say we must “put to death” certain characteristics of the old nature. ☵ Paul lists specific vices in vv. 5 and 8. His concern in v. 5 appears mainly to be with sins of exploitation, as he provides a list of related vices (fornication, impurity, lust, evil desire, greed) in which one person objectifies another and uses him or her for personal satisfaction. This giving in to selfish desires is really idolatry, Paul said. ☵ It is giving earthly things a higher claim on our hearts than Jesus, and they lead one toward judgment rather than toward Christ.

That was the old way of life, Paul said (v. 7), a way also characterized by other vices that have no place on the journey into Christ-likeness. Paul first

mentions anger, rage, malice, slander, “filthy language” and lying to one another. We know that these characteristics are not in keeping with Christ’s call. Reality shows and other TV programs have brought a constant parade of angry, seething, cheating, lying characters into our living rooms, and their foul language has become increasingly acceptable to the censors.

That does not make such behavior acceptable to God, however, or in keeping with a Christ-like life. If we would grow in Christ, we must leave these behind and “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator” (v. 10).

In that new life the prejudices and injustices characteristic of this world will give way to a new understanding of others, a renewed life in which “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all” (v. 11).

Helpful supplies (vv. 12-17)

The lectionary text stops at v. 11, but to round out Paul’s thought, we should continue a bit further rather than stopping with a list of things to avoid or eliminate. The new life does not just derive from putting away negative behaviors: Paul went on to describe positive characteristics we should pack for the journey (vv. 12-17).

The vices Paul challenged the Colossians to eliminate had in common that they exploited or minimized the needs or feelings of other people. In contrast, the positive attributes Paul mentions all major on caring or consideration for others. Paul would have us express compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness and love (vv. 12-14). Can anyone argue with those or with how they express Christ-likeness?

As we move forward on life’s journey, Paul calls us to live in peace and gratitude, so centered on Christ and his teachings that we do all things, whether in word or deed, “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (vv. 15-17). Is there any question that these characteristics will make for a happier life than those enumerated in vv. 5 and 8?

Let’s review: Paul’s reminder that we have died to the old self demonstrates, in a graphic way, just how new and radically different our life in Christ is. In order to find and truly understand what it means to live in Christ, we must keep seeking it, keep thinking about the things above, keep thinking about Christ and his way. We must learn, in short, to discover what Paul means by “Christ, who is your life.”

When we buy a new computer or electronic gadget, we may be able to “plug and play” with its basic functions, but making maximum use of its features requires some real effort. There can be quite a learning curve if one seeks to become a power user, and becoming a “power Christian” is not automatic, either.

Every Christian is in a life-long search to discover all the riches of the new life we have in Christ, trusting that our path will lead us ever closer to experience the Christ-life in all its abundance.

We all know what it is to pack for a trip. We leave behind things that will weigh us down or impede our ability to travel. Instead, we take clothing, equipment, or documents that will be needed for the journey. ☵

To make progress toward the Christ-life, we must leave behind behaviors that harm relationships and alienate people, while taking with us those behaviors that build community. In doing this, we also find we are not alone, but find encouragement for the adventure within the larger community of faith. ☵

Take a look at the physical, emotional or spiritual luggage you carry around with you from day to day. Are there things you need to unpack? What do you need to add? **BT**

Bible Study

with Tony W. Cartledge

Isaiah 1:2-20

Aug. 11, 2013

How to Make God Happy

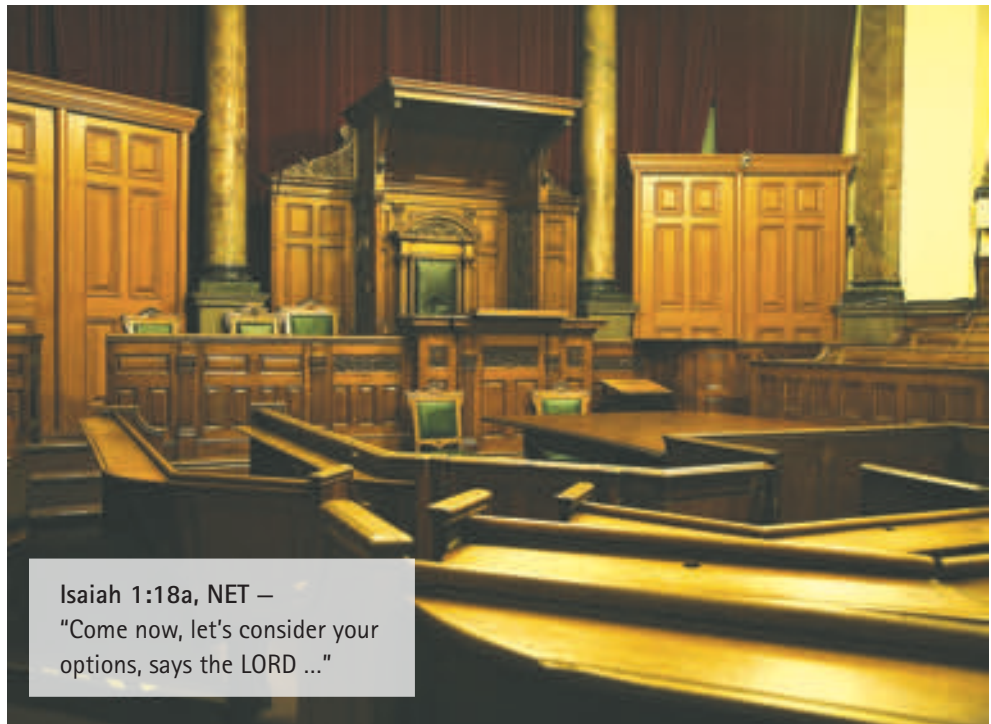
Do you like the idea of being taken to court? Would you like to be sued by your parents, or could you imagine hauling your own children before a judge? What a heart-churning thought that is, but it's precisely the picture Isaiah draws in today's text. Acting as God's prophetic bailiff, Isaiah called on Israel to enter the heavenly courtroom and hear the charges brought against them – by their Creator ... by their Father. 🇺

Children don't choose their parents, but as adults they can choose whether to continue having an ongoing relationship with them. The Old Testament declares that God, though the creator of all peoples, chose Israel to enter a special covenant relationship (see Exod. 19:1-6). God promised to be faithful in guiding and providing for Israel. Israel promised to be faithful as people and witnesses of the Lord's care.

But Israel was famous for breaking the covenant, renegeing on promises. Not once, but a thousand times Israel's people lived and acted in violation of their family ties with God. Even a Father's patience can wear thin, and finally the Lord chose to speak a clear word through Isaiah, to explain the alternatives, to urge the wayward offspring to return to faithful living.

God's case against Israel (1:2-9)

Many parents know the grief and frustration of faithfully raising a child and then watching that boy or girl turn against every good thing they had



Isaiah 1:18a, NET –
"Come now, let's consider your options, says the LORD ..."

taught, and God could identify with that experience many times over (v. 2).

Isaiah used strong language to express the degree of Israel's desertion and unwillingness to return. A dumb ox knows who its master is, and even a jack-ass knows how to find its way back home, he said, but Israel didn't know (v. 3).

While traveling in Honduras, I once asked my local guide how people kept up with the livestock I saw foraging roadside grass. He answered, with a laugh, "The animals know to whom they belong."

An old story bears out that truth. Back in 1951, policemen in Haifa, Israel captured a caravan of donkeys loaded down with contraband goods. The owner escaped, but one of the officers, remembering the words of Isaiah, penned the donkeys without food for a few days, then turned them loose. They went straight to their owner's barn!

But sometimes people don't show the good sense of donkeys. When parents see their children going down the wrong paths, refusing to see the error of their ways, it is a time of grief.

The first half of the eighth century B.C. had been an unusually peaceful and prosperous time for Israel, with long and stable rulers in both the north and the south. The people had been blinded by their own prosperity, however, deafened by a kind of pagan sensuality common to their Canaanite neighbors. They had lost their sense of conscience – and they had lost their way home. 🇺

Hear the parental grief of v. 4, as God cried "Ah, sinful nation!" Israel's people had willfully, deliberately turned their back on God, whom Isaiah characteristically called "the Holy One of Israel." They had not been holy. And they had begun to pay the natural price for their rebellion.

In one way or another, wrongdoing has consequences. We may enjoy the delights of carefree recklessness for a season, but sooner or later, it catches up with us – or it hurts someone else. There is a hangover the next morning. There is an unwanted pregnancy. There is an empty bank account and a stack of bills coming due. There is an accident

Additional background information
online where you see the "Digging
Deeper" icon




Resources to teach adult and youth classes

are available at
nurturingfaith.net

caused by an impaired driver. There is a preventable disease that now won't go away.

Isaiah asked why the Israelites would continue to rebel and put themselves in a position to be beaten from head to toe (vv. 5-6).

For Isaiah's listeners, the consequences of their rebellion may have been pouring over their land in the form of Assyrian soldiers. Isaiah's prophecies are not in chronological order, and the setting of chapter 1 is often thought to have been around 701 B.C., during the eastern campaigns of Sennacherib, when Jerusalem came under siege and was left, Isaiah said, "like a booth in a field" (vv. 8-9). 

Israel's empty defense (vv. 10-15)

Despite the impending troubles, Isaiah saw no evidence of repentance. The people considered themselves to be quite religious, keeping temple rituals and bringing the requisite sacrifices and offerings. They may have wondered what more God could want.

What God wanted was worthy worship that grew from right living. But Isaiah insisted that their worship was worthless. It was the essence of hypocrisy, because it came from selfish hearts: Sabbath rituals are meaningless if there is no righteousness during the other six days of the week.

Isaiah may well have pronounced these words in the hearing of the gathered people on a day of worship. Since Jerusalem was besieged, it is likely that the altar would have been piled high with sacrifices as the people prayed for God's deliverance. The air would have been filled with a strange mixture of smells: the acrid odor of burning flesh, the sweet scent of incense, but God found no joy in it.

Speaking to the gathered religious and political leaders of Israel (whom he sarcastically called "rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah"), Isaiah asserted that their worship was worthless, their religion an abomination, and their piety a fraud – activities that brought no joy to

God, but only distaste (vv. 10-14). 

As a result, God would not hear their prayers, despite their frequency and their ritual trappings: "When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood!" (v. 15).

Have we ever tried to praise God while our hymnals were held in callous or bloody hands that served only self?

God's offer of pardon (vv. 16-20)

God refused to hear Israel's hypocritical praying, and allowed the people to experience the natural consequences of their rebellion, but never gave up on them.

In mercy that never fails, God held out the opportunity for Israel to return, find forgiveness, and begin anew if only they would repent and change their ways.

Isaiah declared this option with a string of imperatives that called for a change of heart and a change of behavior: "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (vv. 16-17).

Isaiah called for repentance in deed, not in word only, especially in the areas of social justice and ethical responsibility. When we make personal or political decisions, how often do we take into consideration the needs of others, as opposed to policies that line our own pockets with greater wealth?

Isaiah would have strong opinions about what we should do.

In some of the scripture's most memorable words, Isaiah speaks for God in saying "Come, and let us reason together ..." (KJV). God wants sinners to learn from the past and make appropriate changes for a better future. The words "Let us reason together" do not suggest that we enter a debate with

God and look for a mutually acceptable compromise. Rather, they instruct us to attentively hear the alternatives God lays before us. The NET translates it as "Come, let's consider your options, says the LORD."

There are times when a judge will call a first offender to the bench and lay out the options. The defendant can change his or her ways and avoid future trouble. Or, he or she can break the law again and pay the consequences for a long time to come. A decision is called for.

In laying it out, Isaiah declared that repentance and forgiveness were indeed possible. Sins like scarlet could become like snow; evil deeds as bold as a crimson robe could be made like fine wool (v. 18). But for either to happen, the people would have to make a choice to follow God's way.

If they chose to stay on their current path, God would allow them to reach the end of the way they had chosen – a road marked with ruin.

God is not vindictive, but compassionate. God does not wish for people to suffer, but allows us freedom to choose how we will live – and what consequences we might face.

Isaiah portrayed the alternatives with a clever wordplay: The obedient would eat from the best of the land, but the rebellious would be eaten by the swords of their foes (vv. 19-20).

We no longer live under the tit-for-tat covenant of punishment and rewards that characterized much of Old Testament theology, but that does not mean we should assume our decisions are without consequence, or that repentance and changed lives are no longer important.

Choices we make have the potential to bring either help or harm both to us and to others. Can we recognize at least some areas in which we pay lip service to God while doing what we please, and failing to take into account the needs of others?

Is this an appropriate time for us to come and talk it out with God, to admit our failures, repent of our wrongs, and start over on a new path?

God is waiting. **BT**

Youth

August 4 - August 25, 2013

Youth lessons are made possible through the generous support of the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation.

I've Never!

Colossians 3:1-11

Have you ever played the game where everyone but one person sits in a circle and the extra person calls out something they have never done? If you have done whatever was called out, you have to get up and find another chair. The real fun of the game isn't running around trying to find another seat, but watching reactions as people admit to sometimes embarrassing things.

Whether it takes a game like this to admit what we've done, or we share with someone we can trust, we all have done things we know we shouldn't have done. This game doesn't allow for much guidance or grace for those things we've done wrong, but there is a passage in Colossians written for all

of us who have fallen short.

Colossians 3:1-11 isn't written for those who haven't found Christ, but for those who are followers of Christ who continue to fall short in the way they know they are supposed to live. Paul is writing to the church out of a personal understanding of falling short with his own life.

As he writes, he tells the Colossians that to change their hearts, they have to change their minds. The thoughts and desires of these Christians drive their actions. Paul knows that for real change to occur they will have to abandon some thoughts and desires. They will have to take off the old to put on the new. In vv. 12-17, Paul focuses on the new things the Colossians need to put on that will lead to a life in Christ and for Christ.

AUGUST 4

Think About It:

What spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, service, etc.) do you practice to encourage your ongoing transformation in Christ?

Make a Choice:

We may need to leave some things behind in order to live for Christ. What might you need to leave behind?

Pray:

Help us to know the difference between those things we need to leave behind and those things we need to embrace.

Freedom

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Hear the following argument all too often: "I had the freedom to say that. Why am I getting in trouble for what I said?"

While we have the freedom to say or do or post, there are also consequences that go along with these actions. Many times there are positive consequences, but sometimes the consequences are negative. God has given each of us freedom to choose, but there are still consequences to what we say and do.

In today's scripture passage, Isaiah brings up things Israel has chosen to do, but also shows the consequences God has in store in response to their actions.

Isaiah begins this passage with a history

of the actions of the people of Israel. He questions what they have done (don't they remember they have a covenantal relationship with God?) and lets them know the consequences they face arise from the choices they have made. They are to blame, yet Isaiah sees no sign of them turning back and repenting. He points out that many of the laws they have created are really made to prop up their own selfishness, and thus lead to hypocrisy.

Even in the midst of the people's poor choices, God remains faithful. Isaiah reminds them of the mercy God has shown. Isaiah calls for the people to change, but it won't happen unless they choose to repent. God is waiting for his people to return.

AUGUST 11

Think About It:

How patient and forgiving are you with your friends? There may come a point when we have "had enough." However, God's mercy and grace have no such limits — we can always return to God.

Make a Choice:

God is always standing there with a hand outstretched with the open palm of grace ready for us to take hold, but we must choose to take it. Will you take it?

Pray:

God, we ask for forgiveness for those times when we have chosen something or someone other than you.

David Cassady and Jeremy Colliver



Planting

Isaiah 5:1-7

Have you ever planted anything? Perhaps not fields of crops or a large garden, but have you ever planted a flower for your mom on Mother's Day? It takes effort:

You have to get the soil ready, plant the seed at the right depth, provide plenty of water (but not too much), and place the plant in the sun (but not always in direct sunlight). And all of that work is simply to get the plant started. As it grows you have to watch it daily, caring for the soil and pulling the weeds. The more effort you put into each of these steps, the more fruitful your plants will be.

Isaiah 5:1-7 describes the garden God

has planted (the people of Israel) — and the description isn't pretty.

God put in all the hard work for the harvest to be plentiful, but instead rotten fruit grows. God isn't happy with what happened to the vineyard, and the prophet questions what should happen to it. Some of the people want to let the vineyard go because nothing good has come of it. Others wonder why the fruit turned out so badly when the preparation had been done properly.

In v. 7, Isaiah reveals that the vineyard represents the people of Israel. Their choices and actions have ruined the field God has given to them. The people have to wonder what judgment will result from their poor choices.

AUGUST 18

Think About It:

What choices and actions lead to good fruit growing from your life? How has God helped nurture your growth so far?

Make a Choice:

We are given gifts and talents. We can choose to use these gifts to build up the kingdom of God or to do harm. How will you put your gifts to work?

Pray:

God, help us to do good things with the gifts and talents you have given to us.

Motives Matter

Isaiah 58:9b-14

There are many reasons to do what is right. Some clubs and organizations require service projects and hours. Some people do what is right so it can be captured and posted on Twitter and Vine. Some people even do what is right just because it is the right thing to do.

Isaiah 58 starts with a series of five verses that ask this same question: "Why are you doing what you are doing?"

Just in case the people don't understand, Isaiah reminds them that fasting itself is not wrong, but their motives for fasting were wrong. He wants the people to know that God will endorse the practice of fasting,

but not the motives leading to the practice. Isaiah goes on to say that practices such as fasting should be done not to highlight one's own goodness, but to point to God. God wants his people to act so that justice and fairness might result. God promises that if his people satisfy the needs of others, he will satisfy their needs.

We often face the same temptation: to do the right things for the wrong reasons; to be seen serving or caring so that people will think well of us and perhaps even praise us. Isaiah tells us our motives matter to God. God wants us to love him and care for others and do good deeds because we are servants of God — to bring praise to God and not ourselves.

AUGUST 25

Think About It:

We have many reasons for the things we do. Sometimes they are selfish, and other times they are intended to help others. How do you keep your motives pure?

Make a Choice:

There are many people or things that we may be tempted to put first in our lives. Will you choose to keep Christ at the center of your life?

Pray:

Dear God, may I keep you as the center of my life. Help me live in ways that honor you.

Bible Study

with Tony W. Cartledge

Isaiah 5:1-7

Aug. 18, 2013

How to Make God Mad

Have you ever visited a commercial vineyard, watched a documentary about wine making, or listened to a sommelier describe what makes a certain variety of grape grown in a particular place so special?

The flavor of grapes can be strongly influenced by the type of soil in which the vines are planted, the amount of rainfall or dew, the average temperature both night and day, the amount of strong sunlight or morning mist ... any number of factors. ↓

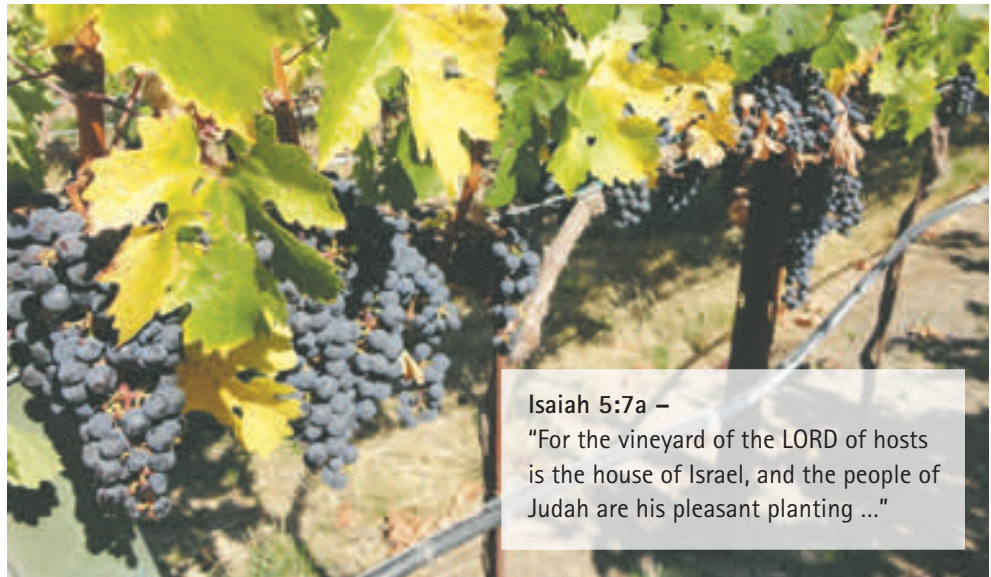
In similar fashion, humans often take on the tastes and characteristics of their environment – and not always for the good. The prophet Isaiah knew this.

High hopes and sour grapes (vv. 1-2)

As a prophet of God and a master of metaphors, Isaiah sought creative ways to convey God's message to the people of Israel. One of the most memorable of those occasions involved an original song.

Let's try to imagine the setting. It probably took place at a harvest festival such as the Feast of Booths. When the grain was threshed and the grapes were pressed and the new wine was fermenting in its skin containers – when the work was done until the rains returned and people had time on their hands – many pilgrims would gather the family and go up to Jerusalem.

Officially, the festival was a time to bring tithes to the Lord, to worship, to thank God for harvest blessings. But God is no spoilsport, and the Bible itself gives



Isaiah 5:7a –

“For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting ...”

instructions for the feast to be a time of eating and drinking and celebrating. ↓

Rural pilgrims may have gawked at the long climb into the city, the huge walls that surrounded it, and the impressive temple complex where tithes and offerings were brought.

Perhaps it was there, amid the noise and bustle of the crowded streets, that a sharp-voiced man in the guise of a traveling minstrel began to sing. And the people nearby stopped their talking, and those passing by stopped their walking, and curious eyes were focused on this wizened man with the booming voice.

He finished his first song, and the people nodded their appreciation. Slowly the man spread his hands for quiet, and again he began to sing:

*Let me sing of one I love,
a song about his vineyard.
The vineyard of my loved one,
was on a fertile hillside.
And he tilled the soil,
and he cleared the stones,
and he planted choicest grapevines.
He built in its midst a stone tower,
and even carved out a wine-vat.
And he waited for grapes to appear,
but all that it made was rotten.*
(my paraphrase of Isa. 5:1-2) ↓

You be the judge (vv. 3-4)

You can imagine the response. “Ah,” thought the farmers in the crowd. “I’ve had that happen to me, too. I’ve chosen a good spot – I’ve painfully dug up the ground with a pick, and built a wall from all the stones I had to clear out, and planted slips of those choice eastern grapes – I know what it is to work hard and hope hard, and still have a rotten harvest.”

And that’s the response Isaiah was looking for. He emphasized the heavy labor that goes into preparing the soil, clearing the stones, and building a wall to fence out foxes and other pests. He spoke of finding the best vines available and planting them with care, of watching over them to keep out thieves or animals, of laboriously chiseling out a vat from solid stone where grapes could be crushed and fermentation begun before the juice was collected and funneled into fresh goat skins that could stretch while the wine continued fermenting.

It was no easy job.

Raising grapes requires work and patience and decent weather. And after all of that effort, sometimes the crop doesn’t turn out so well. Isaiah said his beloved waited patiently for his

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



vineyard to produce good grapes, but it only produced sour and inedible fruit. The root of the word often translated as “wild grapes” means “to stink,” as in dead fish from the Nile or spoiled manna in the wilderness. Literally, it could be translated as something like “stinkers” or “stinkberries.”

The short of it is this: The grapes weren’t fit to eat, and any wine made from them would have been undrinkable. A great deal of effort and expense had gone to waste, which would have been immensely frustrating.

And that, of course, is exactly why Isaiah had composed his song. And that is why he continued to sing in lyrics that called for the gathered people to be the judge between the landowner and his vineyard (v. 3).

“What more could I have done for my vineyard?” he asked. “Why, when I looked for sweet grapes, did it make these stinkberries?” (v. 4, paraphrased).

A bitter verdict (vv. 5-7)

The implicit question the prophet posed is what should be done with a worthless vineyard. The people, no doubt, had ideas about what they might do, but Isaiah didn’t give them time to respond. Instead, he plowed ahead and declared his own solution to the problem:

*Now let me tell you
what I’ll do to my vineyard:
I’m tearing up its hedge,
so it will be laid open.
I’m breaking down its wall,
so all can walk upon it.*

I’ll cause its days to cease.

*It will not be pruned, it will not be hoed,
there will come up thorns and briars,
Upon the dark clouds, I’ll give a command,
don’t let any rain fall on there.*
(vv. 5-6, my translation/paraphrase)

The vineyard’s days were numbered, Isaiah insisted, and many in the crowd would have agreed with him. He had given the vineyard every chance.

Experience told them that the fruit was unlikely to improve in future years. He might as well leave it to the beasts of the field and see if they could stomach its bitter produce.

Perhaps the people would have laughed a little, or smirked a bit, and congratulated themselves for their good judgment – until they heard the old man start singing again, drawing them into his rhetorical noose:

*For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts
is the house of Israel.
And the people of Judah
are his delightful plantings.*

*And he waited for justice to grow,
but you gave him bloodshed.
He yearned for righteousness,
but heard the needy crying.*
(v. 7, my translation/paraphrase)

How do you think the crowd responded to that? There may have been some who cheered, if they had felt the hard hand of injustice. Some may have looked for a way to escape, for they saw themselves in the song, guilty as charged.

Others, though, may have been puzzled, for they kept the temple rituals. They didn’t worship Baal or Asherah, as some did. They thought of themselves as righteous. What could the prophet be complaining about?

The clues were there in Isaiah’s song, made memorable by alliterative wordplay.

God had looked for justice (*mishpat*), but they had shown him bloodshed (*mispach*). He had looked for righteousness (*tsedakah*), but heard only a cry (*tse’aqah*). ⚡

Isaiah went on in the next few verses to explain what was so rotten in the state of Israel. Rich landowners were buying up all the land around them, for one thing (v. 8), often using crooked means to get poor farmers into

debt and then seizing their land when they couldn’t pay.

The wealthy but unscrupulous might live in beautiful houses on large estates, but a time was coming when their fields would produce little for them (vv. 9-10).

Judgment was imminent, Isaiah predicted, and it was deserved. The land of Judah, and the houses of its people, and even the great city of Jerusalem would soon reach the end of the road they had chosen, the road named rebellion, the road to destruction.

Clearly, this was not God’s desire. Can’t you hear the compassion and the pathos in the prophet’s song? God did not wish to punish the people, but had allowed them freedom to choose their own way, even when it took them straight into trouble.

Fortunately, Isaiah was not without hope, however desperate. He never gave up on the belief that a faithful remnant would always remain no matter how hard-hearted the majority might become. ⚡

Later on, in a section of the book often called “the Little Apocalypse,” Isaiah sang another song about grapes, this one about a time when God would sing with delight over a productive vineyard that relished the life-giving water and protection God would provide.

“In days to come,” he said, “Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit” (Isa. 27:6).

Israel never took up residence in that idyllic vineyard where God is ever present and the vines are ever fruitful. But those who read the Bible from a New Testament perspective believe that Jesus Christ came to do what Israel could not. In fulfillment of Isaiah’s hope, Jesus called men and women to take root in his grace, to find nourishment in his Spirit, and to bear fruits of love that will fill the world.

If you could imagine your present life as a grapevine, what kind of fruit would you be producing? Does that suggest anything about where you need to go from here? **BT**

Bible Study

Isaiah 58:1-14

with Tony W. Cartledge

Aug. 25, 2013

Justice's Reward

What comes to mind when you hear the word “justice”? Often we think mainly of the court system and whether justice is being done when cases are decided. Did the accused really do it? If so, is the punishment he or she receives commensurate with the crime?

But justice is a far broader subject than case law and “the justice system.” It is entirely possible for an individual to live within the law, yet practice injustice. It is possible, indeed, for an entire society to be riddled with policies that are inherently unjust. ⬇

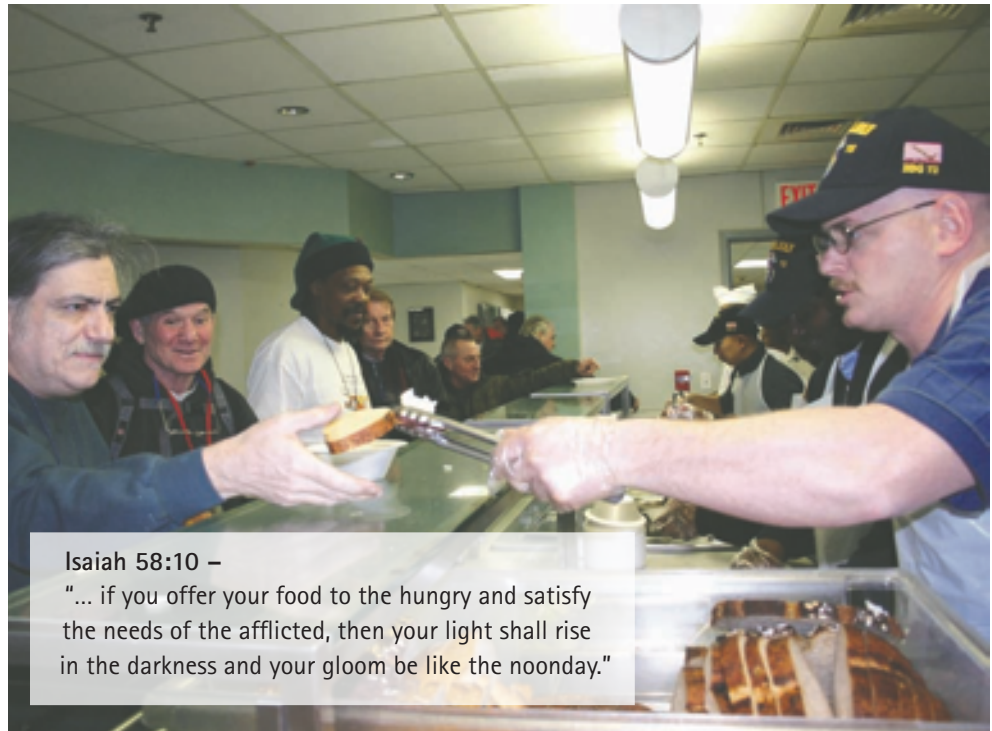
What would you identify as justice issues in our society? Christian believers of good may disagree on specific positions, but we have to agree that those who follow God are called to work for justice that respects the dignity and rights of all.

Futile fasting (vv. 1-5)

Today’s text comes from the closing section of Isaiah, a part of the book many scholars refer to as “Third Isaiah” (chs. 56-66), because it appears to be set in Jerusalem after the return from exile, and more than 200 years after the ministry of Isaiah of Jerusalem. ⬇

The latter prophet, however, was well schooled in the teachings of the original Isaiah, and he was in touch with the same God. When he saw similar conditions and behaviors, he responded with similar ways.

The setting of today’s text is the city of Jerusalem, possibly 50 years or



more after the ending of the exile, at some point after the temple had been rebuilt and Jewish religious rituals restored. ⬇

It was also, unfortunately, a time when the families who had returned from Babylon with considerable wealth had been able to consolidate their positions and expand their holdings by taking advantage of their poorer Hebrew neighbors.

The first five verses are a series of charges and questions. Some commentators imagine an elaborate drama playing out with as many as five speakers, but it is also possible to imagine that the prophet is speaking throughout, quoting both the God who called him to prophesy and the people who claimed to have believed they were living righteously. ⬇

The charge in v. 2 is tinged with sarcasm: Yahweh declares that Israel’s people “seek me and delight to know my ways, *as if* they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God ...” (v. 2).

The people act as if they really want

to know God, as if they delight in God’s presence – but they think God has ignored them: “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” (v. 3a).

Fasting originated in Israel as a means of expressing grief. In times of sorrow – including penitence – people might rip their garments or put on sackcloth, sprinkle ashes on their heads, and go without food for a period of time. Over time, however, fasting became a ritualized religious observance that often displayed outward piety without inner conviction.

Although many other circumstances were different, the attitude of many post-exilic Hebrews in the mid-fifth century was not very different from that of their pre-exilic ancestors, almost 300 years before (compare the charges here with those in Isa. 1:11-17, which we studied two weeks ago).

Yahweh’s charge was that the people fasted to serve their own interests rather than to honor God. They found comfort or a sense of satisfaction in an outward show of righteousness that

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



Resources to teach adult and youth classes

are available at
nurturingfaith.net

didn't really cost them anything more than a missed meal or two that could be made up with later feasting.

The problem was that their pious fasting was not accompanied by righteous living. While giving themselves religious pats on the back, many were simultaneously oppressing their workers and quarrelling, even to the extent of physical violence (v. 3b-4a).

Such fasting as that would win them no points with God, who took no delight in watching people bowing themselves before God while also pressing the faces of the poor into the dirt (v. 5).

Does any of this connect with us? Very few of us fast for religious reasons, but do we not have a similar tendency to practice aspects of religion that we like or that flatter our reputation, while ignoring the hard work of seeking justice for the oppressed and loving our neighbors as we love ourselves?

We may choose a worship service that suits our sensibilities and doesn't go on too long, for example, and contribute just enough to be respectable without making a sacrifice. Do we ever take time to examine our true motives in worship?

Faithful fasting (vv. 6-7)

The prophet declared in no uncertain terms that this was not the kind of fasting God would endorse. Rather, God desired to see justice unleashed and the oppressed go free, to see the hungry fed and the homeless housed, to see the naked clothed and family ties acknowledged (vv. 6-7).

Wealthy Hebrews had ways of putting poor people under financial pressure, loaning them money, and with the help of corrupt officials, seizing their land or even forcing them into indentured servitude when they could not pay their debts (Neh. 5:4-5).

Under the postexilic governor Nehemiah's administration, the problem reached such proportions that Nehemiah demanded an end to loans at excessive interest and declared an unscheduled Jubilee, ordering that fields and homes

should be returned to those who had lost them to unjust debt practices (Neh. 5:7-12).

Can you say "payday loans"? Such predatory practices remain in our own culture, despite the efforts of many states to outlaw them. God's desire is that God's people work toward a system in which all people have equal opportunity and the deck is not stacked against those who are poor, young, old or have minority status.

Every yoke that binds people – every thing that restricts or denies persons the dignity and rights every human should enjoy – should be broken, God declared: that is the fast God desires. ↓

From fasting to feasting (vv. 8-14)

This is how the world sees God at work in the lives of God's people, whether they find their spiritual home in a Jewish synagogue or a Christian church. The worship God wants is found in a caring humility that leads one to practice justice and compassion to others.

When God sees those things demonstrated in our lives, the spiritual community will see light breaking out like the dawn and healing spreading through the land (v. 8). Then people can call on God and expect a more sympathetic ear: "You shall cry for help, and he will say 'Here I am'" (v. 9a).

Notice the conditional character of vv. 9b-10: *if* the people would remove the yoke of oppression, stop pointing fingers and speaking evil ... *if* they would share their food with the hungry and help the afflicted, *then* their light would shine as a testimony of true righteousness, even amid the darkest of days.

Such care for others brings the promise of care from God. In vv. 11-12, the prophet declared that God would satisfy the needs of those who satisfied the needs of others. In a land constantly threatened by drought, God's people

could become "like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail" (v. 11).

Ancient ruins – probably a reference to parts of Jerusalem that had been destroyed but never rebuilt – would be reconstructed as a home for many generations of the faithful, and those responsible for such blessed work would be remembered as the "repairer of the breach" and "the restorer of streets to live in" (v. 12). ↓

With vv. 13-14, we find another string of conditions and promises. These return to the theme with which the chapter began: a sarcastic charge that the people "delighted" in Yahweh by outward religion with no inner basis.

Now the prophet returns to the discussion of religious practices, including the proper observance of the Sabbath. ↓ The Sabbath should be used to honor God and not just for "serving your own interests or pursuing your own affairs" (v. 13). Those who practice a Sabbath that truly delights in Yahweh would know what it is to ride high and know the blessings of food, clothing and presence that God had promised to Jacob (Gen. 28:10-21).

Christian readers should be careful in interpreting passages such as this. We no longer live under a conditional covenant in which success or failure is believed to be directly commensurate with obedience to God.

We cannot claim, based on this passage, that if we practice ethical living and proper worship, we will be repaid with material blessings. We can, however, be assured that such behavior will shine as a helpful beacon in the midst of a land darkened by greed that is sometimes masked behind self-righteousness.

And we must ask – this passage demands that we ask – what sort of motives we have in worship. Are we seeking only those aspects of religious practice that please us? Or, are we "fasting" in the way that pleases God: through ethical living that shows care for the poor, hungry, homeless and oppressed?

It's a question worthy of deep and careful thought. **BT**

Decades *of* dedication

Alabama church benefits greatly from couple's creative, long-term ministries

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — Evelyn and Jack Lucas, nearing age 90, have served superbly for more than six decades in Huntsville's two-centuries-old First Baptist Church.

They began serving in their specialized areas of ministry in 1951 when they joined the church. And while they have served broadly in many capacities through the decades, they never forsook their first loves in which they became widely known and considered virtually indispensable.

For Evelyn, it was as the compassionate leader of the cradle roll department of the Sunday school, ministering to young parents and their newborns. Her efforts fueled the rapid, space-age growth of the old congregation — the first and oldest missionary Baptist church in Alabama.

For Jack, an electrical engineer, it was the exercise of his technical knowledge in every aspect of electronics: radio, television, sound and lighting, and projection systems.

The Lucases are natives of Clay County in northeast Alabama, but did not meet until 1945 when Jack was home on Army furlough and met Evelyn in Anniston, Ala., where she worked as a secretary. They married upon his discharge in 1946 and he went directly to Auburn University, where he graduated in electrical engineering in just three years.

The Lucases came to Huntsville in 1951, just a year after the phenomenal growth of the city began as a result of the Army's placement of its rocketry headquarters here. Jack, a teacher of radar fundamentals for the Air Force at Biloxi, Miss., left to begin a new career with the Army's Redstone Arsenal, which ushered in a decades-long career in designing space exploration techniques and hardware.

A highlight of Jack's career was to serve on the team that designed, built, simulated and launched the first U.S. earth satellite, *Explorer I*, in 1958.

On their first Sunday at First Baptist in 1951, Jack found a staff member fretting over an uncooperative tape recorder. He stepped in and solved the problem, which led in short order to his being asked for advice and service in connection with the beginning of a live radio broadcast of the Sunday morning worship. He became the "go-to" guy for all things electronic



Evelyn and Jack Lucas are surrounded by Brenda Bounds, Joy Moore and Betty Pugh. These women, along with many others, were recruited by Evelyn for a creative and effective ministry to newborns and their families. Here they display a gift presented to Evelyn.

for the next 60 years.

Evelyn's entry into cradle roll work soon resulted in a ministry that brought her local fame and lasting satisfaction: making personalized "receiving blankets" for all of the church's newborn infants, as an endearing element of a broad ministry of lovingkindness.

In turn, in April of this year the congregation expressed its appreciation for Evelyn's six decades of service by presenting her with a larger version of the receiving blanket that was signed by an estimated 400-500 church members, many of whom had received such Evelyn-made blankets at their births.

The blanket-making and broader aspects of cradle roll work soon established Evelyn as an authority in this ministry. She wrote articles for denominational publications and made presentations at Baptist gatherings.

Also, Evelyn led her church to initiate a child-dedication ceremony in which she assisted the pastor (currently David Hull) in presenting newborns to the congregation and praying God's blessings upon their upbringing.

This personal endeavor of one innovative member became a community project involving several women who do the crocheting and embroidering.

Evelyn developed a penchant for approaching expectant women at the garden club, in the grocery store, or elsewhere, expressing pleasure

at the coming blessed event and offering the services of her cradle roll ministry. Thus, she was a prime minister and recruiter for the congregation.

The ministry multiplied. One day Elizabeth Whitten was crocheting in a doctor's waiting room when another patient asked what she was working on. The woman was so impressed that she started a similar project in her own Methodist church.

Evelyn's cradle roll department would meet for lunch at her house each month to prepare their work. After raising her three children, Evelyn became a real estate agent — opening new opportunities to meet expectant mothers.

Her signature square blankets were made of outing or flannel, either 36" or 40" in size, depending on the available bolt width. All four sides were crocheted; they were pink for girls and blue for boys.

In the early years it was necessary to keep a small inventory of both colors on hand since gender was not known before delivery. Then the blanket would be presented in the hospital so it could be first used in taking the infant home.

Eventually, the name and birthday of the child were embroidered on each blanket.

It was a personalized version of the "swaddling clothes" in which Jesus was wrapped at his birth.

When asked how many of the blankets had

been produced and presented over the years, a chorus of women laughed. Their responses could be summarized as: Only the Lord knows; about as many as there were babies born in the church in more than a half-century. The practice continues today.

The commemorative blanket presented to Evelyn is much larger and thicker — with most of the crocheted edges done by Joyce Freisen, another recruit who has employed her needle skills in this ministry over the years. It serves as a comforter for the now less active seamstress.

The making and presentation of the blanket to Evelyn was the brainchild of church member Becky Soutullo.

For Jack, his service through the church began without a title. He simply offered his wide-ranging and diverse gifts tied to his pioneering electronics work in the development of Army rockets and later NASA vehicles for the exploration of space.

A wall in Jack and Evelyn's den is adorned with citations and commendations from a dozen or more national space agency heads as well as the directors of the local Marshall Space Flight Center, which was formed from the Army unit Jack had initially joined. Prominent among those saluting his excellence was Wernher von Braun, the late center director and chief designer credited with the development of the *Saturn* family of moon rockets and the *Skylab* space station.

Jack's specialty was in the design of rocket guidance and control systems, as well as in flight control dynamics and simulation. He and his team designed and built the first analog computers.

In the early 1960s, when the church began to plan for a new facility on Governors Drive, Jack assumed the title of audio-visual director. He was consulted on the electronics needs of the new sanctuary.

In addition to amplification and live radio feeds, he requested a main booth from which several television cameras could be directed along with other equipment required for live broadcasting. He was ahead of the times.

The new building was occupied in 1966. But Jack's first move toward live television broadcasting in the 1970s was considered too expensive in view of the congregation's debt. (Actually, he recalled, the proposed expense was quite low when compared with current broadcasting costs, but it sounded expensive to those who didn't realize most of the equipment could be built in-house.)

Buoyed by the arrival of a new accomplice after a few years, Jack resurrected the idea. He introduced Steve Jones, also an Auburn electrical

engineering grad, as one who had the know-how to design and operate the system, with his help. Together they would build the bulk of the equipment in-house at modest expense.

Having pioneered local live radio broadcasting of services 30 or so years earlier, First Baptist in 1984 entered into feeding its main Sunday service to a new local TV station, WZDX Channel 54. It was soon moved to WHNT Channel 19, covering most of North Alabama and into Tennessee, the first church to offer such a service in the region.

The live radio broadcasting ended a few years afterward, but the TV signal continues — enhanced by the beginning of high-definition digital service in 2009. And now the church is computer-streaming its two Sunday morning services worldwide.

Retiring from his rockets and space pursuits in 1993, Jack has spent the past 20 years working virtually full time in all aspects of electronics at First Baptist.

When not carrying out their church duties, Jack and Evelyn spend time in their flower and vegetable gardens. They also invest many pleasurable hours with their three children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren, all close by in Huntsville.

Yet Jack is always available to assist with worship services and other events such as funerals and weddings, or making rehearsal recordings for the music department. The volunteer position he created and has filled so successfully may one day require a full-time professional.

But that is just the way Jack and Evelyn feel about their commitments of faith. As one of their daughters said of her parents: "They have lived long lives of love and service." **BT**

—Joe Jones is clerk and historian for First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala., and was director of public affairs for the NASA-Marshall Space Flight Center. Photos are by Bobby Saint, who was one of the first recipients of Evelyn Lucas' ministry following his birth in 1951.



Grow
Your Church

When looking for a church home, the web is the first place most people now look. How well does your website reflect your church?

Faithlab can create a polished site and keep it up-to-date for you.

Call Faithlab today.
478-238-4280
faithlab.com

faithlab
Inspired Creativity

BAPTISTS AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

For a few brief days, the hopes of the Confederacy soar as Gen. Robert E. Lee invades the North. Early in the morning of July 1, advancing Confederate forces enter Gettysburg, Penn., expecting no resistance. To their surprise, they encounter two Union cavalry brigades. Fierce fighting ensues; the original brigades on both sides are reinforced throughout the day with freshly-arrived soldiers.

For most of the day, Gen. Abner Doubleday — a Baptist and considered by some as the inventor of baseball — is the ranking Union commander. On the Confederate side, Lee arrives mid-afternoon.

The rebels slowly drive federal forces back, and by nightfall Union troops are fortified atop Cemetery Hill and Ridge southeast of the town, while Confederates claim high ground a mile to the west and north.

On July 2 the Confederates launch an unsuccessful attack on Union lines. The following day at 2 p.m., Lee orders an assault on the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. Fifteen thousand rebel soldiers march across a mile of open field and are decimated by Union artillery. A few breach the enemy's line, but are soon forced to retreat in what becomes a decisive Union victory.

The costliest battle of the war is effectively over. Lee has lost his first major battle. Some 51,000 are killed, wounded, missing or captured, including one-third of Lee's army. Gettysburg proves to be the major turning point of the war.

As the remnants of Lee's army retreat southward on July 4, a second major blow to the Confederacy comes as the southern stronghold of Vicksburg surrenders to Union forces following weeks of besiegement. Driven from the North and now divided east and west, dependency settles over the Confederacy and is reflected in the lamentations voiced in many Baptist churches of the South.

Yet while dented, public faith in the Confederacy seemingly remains firm. Three days after Gettysburg, the Elon Baptist Church of Virginia's Dover Association declares that Christians must "aid and encourage them [Confederate government officials] in every effort to secure our social and religious freedom" and resolves:



That the war which the U. S. government has forced upon us, involving as it does, our social and religious freedom, must be met with unfaltering determination and earnest cooperation of every Christian.

"Social freedom" refers to the racial arrangement of African slavery and white supremacy, of which white Baptists of the South give little indication of surrendering.

Meanwhile, Mary Beckley Bristow, a Kentucky Baptist and Confederate sympathizer, voices both the despair and remaining hope of many other Baptists of the South:

This very circumstance so painfully [occur]ing to me and ten-thousands of others of the oppressed and down trodden South may be for the benefit of our people in the All-powerful hands of Almighty God, as impossible as it seems to us short-sighted mortals.

Northward, the victory at Gettysburg, while cheered, leads to a need for more soldiers. Drafts enacted in New York City result in

150 YEARS AGO

July 1863

three days of rioting as mostly working-class Irishmen protest the common practice of wealthy northern men paying a \$300 commutation fee to avoid enlistment.

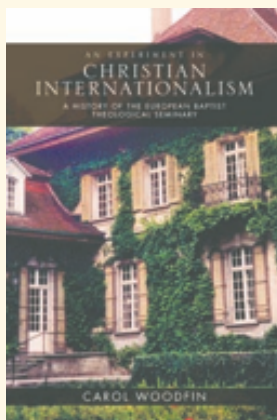
Remaining battles of this pivotal month of July include the Battle of Fort Wagner, Morris Island, which consists of a Union assault, led by an African-American regiment, against a coastal Confederate fort.

The Massachusetts 54th Regiment, the first black army unit to be raised in the North, attacks the heavily-manned outpost on July 18. In the heat of the battle the flag guard is wounded. Baptist and former slave William Carney seizes the flag, holding it high amid the fierce, bloody battle. Badly wounded, Carney crawls forward to the parapets of Fort Wagner, planting Old Glory in the sand.

Although the Confederates win the battle against a vastly outgunned foe, the bravery of the 54th Massachusetts shows the world that black troops can fight valiantly against overwhelming odds. (The story of this battle, with Hollywood liberties, is told in the movie *Glory*.)

The month of July thus reconfigures, but does not end, the war. Confederate hopes are dimmed, yet a dogged determination remains. The will of U.S. civilians is tested despite major battlefield victories. And the valor of free black soldiers points the way to a new source of military reinforcements in the North. **BT**

New Release!



The story of a unique academic center whose graduates now serve in 60+ countries

*An Experiment in Christian Internationalism:
A History of the European Baptist Theological Seminary*

By Carol Woodfin

\$45.00 (U.S.) / \$62.50 (INT)

Price includes shipping

Orders: Credit card, www.baptisthistory.org

Check/money order: Baptist History & Heritage Society,

151 Broadleaf Dr., Macon, GA 31210

Bulk discount info: jackie@baptisthistory.org / 406-600-7433

Much ado about zero

By Tony W. Cartledge

Recently, science writer Amir Aczel reported on “How I rediscovered the oldest zero in history.” People who aren’t math geeks might marvel that there was ever a time when the world had no zeros, but it’s true.

There’s more than one way to count and do math, and not all of them include what used to be called a “nought.” For reasons I won’t try to explain, zeroes are important, and they make approaches such as our familiar Base 10 numbering system work.

Aczel’s claim to have “rediscovered the oldest zero in history,” posted in the blogs section of the popular *Discover Magazine* website, reported on a Sloan Foundation-funded research trip he made to Cambodia, where he managed to locate a seventh-century stone inscription that had been discovered and described in the 1930s.

The inscription had dropped from sight during the Khmer Rouge regime’s reign of terror and mismanagement, which included the looting of countless ancient artifacts. It was feared lost.

But, in a cache of inscriptions kept at a location he does not fully disclose, Aczel managed to identify the lost inscription, on which a zero appears as a dot between Old Khmer symbols indicating a six and a five, making the number 605 in a dating system that began in 78 CE, rendering a date of 683 CE.



Aczel’s self-congratulatory article was quickly blasted by a number of math historians, who pointed out that he completely ignored the Maya numbering system, which had a zero in its Base 20 numbering system, with evidence stretching as far back as 37 BCE.

And, they said, he too quickly dismissed the Babylonians’ Base 60 system, which used a type of zero much earlier, though in a more nuanced way.

Wayne State University anthropologist

Selections from recent blogs at baptiststoday.org

Stephen Crisomalis used his blog to critique Aczel’s claims while congratulating him on tracking down the lost inscription and drawing it to the attention of Cambodian authorities, who plan to exhibit it in the Cambodian National Museum in Phnom Penh.

Aczel would have been more accurate in using the headline: “How I rediscovered the oldest stone inscription of a zero from the Indian tradition.”

That’s still significant, because the Southeast Asian numbering system was apparently adopted by Arab traders and became the foundation of what we know as “Arabic” numerals, the system on which most of the world operates today.

Who would have thought such excitement could be raised over zero? But then again, even these posts would not have appeared without the aid of computers, whose code is based on just two digits: ones and zeroes.

So, if you ever have one of those days when you felt like a zero, just remember how incredibly important you are. **BT**

Those who follow

By John Pierce

My daughter Abigail and I were enjoying hummus at Mellow Mushroom when she asked: “What African American became the next Major League player after Jackie Robinson?”

Now I’m no help with geometry and biology questions, but this kind of American history is well within my strike zone.

“Larry Doby,” I said. “He was signed by the Cleveland Indians and became the first black player in the American League.”

Always willing to give a bigger answer than the question, I added that his name is not well known outside of baseball circles. But he deserves more recognition.

Bill Veeck, owner and general manager of the Indians, bought Doby’s contract from the Newark Eagles of the Negro National League. Unlike Robinson, he did not go to the minor leagues first.

Doby joined the Indians on July 5,

1947, less than three months after Robinson’s appearance in Brooklyn. At age 23, he faced the same taunts, threats and discrimination, including teammates who refused to even shake his hand. He and Robinson often talked by phone to encourage each other as they faced daily trials.



Although an infielder, Doby moved to center-field the following season where he would become an all-star for seven consecutive years. Not only did Doby demonstrate courage and discipline, and help bring about needed social change, he was also quite the ballplayer. Along with teammate Satchel Paige, an aging but great pitcher, he put on a World Series ring as the 1948 season came to an end.

They were the first African Americans to become World Series champions, and Doby’s

series home run off the Braves’ Johnny Sain was the first for any black player.

As Robinson’s door of opportunity was opened by Branch Rickey, it was Veeck who brought the first African-American player into the American League and years later named him manager of the Chicago White Sox. Doby was second again — since Frank Robinson was the first black manager in the majors.

In retirement, Doby lived in Montclair, N.J., where his family enjoyed a close relationship with the family of Yankees great Yogi Berra. He once said that Berra was the first player in the American League to really talk to him.

But then he added: “Yogi talked to everybody.”

Doby died in 2003 at age 79. He left a good mark on baseball and the nation that he served faithfully in the Navy during World War II.

I know, Abigail simply inquired about a player’s name. But that’s what she gets for asking such good questions. History class resumes. **BT**

By Brett Younger

“Attention. Salute. Pledge”

Some people’s fondest Vacation Bible School (VBS) memories are the intricate Play-doh, sugar cube and popsicle stick replicas of Nazareth; the flannel graph robbers beating up the traveler on the road to Jericho (which led, on occasion, to inappropriate applause); or the bathrobes and beach towel dramas of Zacchaeus coming down from the balcony (which were far superior to the puppet shows that made Howdy Doody seem like Hamlet in comparison). The best memory for me is the liturgy. In the Southern Baptist churches in Mississippi in which I grew up, VBS was the most liturgical week of the year.

We had a formal processional into the sanctuary — preschoolers to 12-year-olds. We had elaborate, peculiar rituals such as the pianist playing what were known as “stand-up chords” and “sit-down chords.” To this day when the right combination of “da da da da” is played, some Baptists rise to their feet involuntarily.

VBS was the one week it was okay for young Baptists to read litanies as Catholics do. (My church gave up on two-week-long VBS when I was in the third grade. Some people are just lazy.) Children who could recite the Bible verses under pressure received praise, glory and the coveted “Books of the Bible” bookmarks.

We said pledges to the Bible, Christian flag and American flag. When I remember that rite, I am disappointed that we were Baptists



who forgot that some of our Baptist ancestors died rather than pledge allegiance to anyone but God in worship, but at the time all I felt was envy for whichever boys (boys carried the flags, girls carried the Bible, and no one asked why a girl could not carry a flag) got to carry the flags as we anticipated, “Attention. Salute. Pledge.”

On Friday we skipped the high-tech missionary slide show, because it was Decision Day. At the close of the assembly the pastor explained how elementary school students could change their eternal destination. (The 3- and 4-year olds were dismissed before they had this opportunity. The Baptist age of accountability — which biblical writers forgot to mention — was five.) The four points were:

- God loves you.
- God hates your sin.
- Jesus died for your sins.
- If you are certain this makes sense, then you are saved.

The pastor said, “Raise your hand if you believe this.”

Most years about half of us got saved. Some of the sixth graders raised their hands every year just to be sure they would not go to hell.

My last year in Vacation Bible School a smart-aleck child asked, “What about the Indians who were here before Columbus? Did they go to heaven?”

The pastor answered, “The Bible says that you have to believe in Jesus to go to heaven.”

The sixth grader replied, “But the Indians never even heard of Jesus. That’s not fair.”

The pastor, a bit defensive but still calm, said, “We have to believe what the Bible says.”

The sixth grader protested, “But the Indians didn’t even have a Bible.”

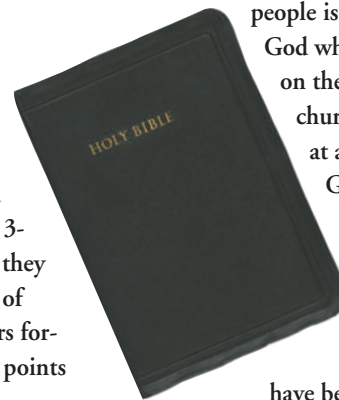
Finally my father said, “Brett, we’ll talk about this when we get home.”

Some version of “What about the Indians?” has been around a long time. The question goes to the heart of our faith. Do we believe in saving knowledge or saving grace?

It should not take a lot of thought to realize that if we had been born in India, we would be Hindus. If we grew up in Thailand, we would be Buddhists. If we lived in Iraq, we would be Muslims. (If we lived in Canada, we would think bacon is ham.) We would not get to go to Vacation Bible School and learn my home church’s four steps to being saved.

Ignoring the experience of billions of people is an insult to God. The God who would offer grace on the conditions that many churches present it is not God at all — certainly not the God of the Bible. God is far too great to act in the arbitrary manner that some churches suggest.

Salvation is not a question of whether we have been dunked, sprinkled or poured on. Salvation is the gift of God’s grace. There are not four steps to salvation; there is only the one word of grace. We are not saved by anything we hold; we are saved by the one who holds us. The best we can do is give ourselves to God’s grace and give thanks. We need to give God our attention, salute, and pledge. **BT**



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

THE LIGHTER SIDE
Serving Up Life Lessons with a Smile
Brett Younger

Available as a digital download (ebook) or in print at nurturingfaith.info

Congregations benefit from investment in young ministers' training

By Mike Queen

"The experience was foundational for my ministry," Jim Everette said of his participation in the first class of "Young Leaders" training back in 1994. "Discovering strengths and refining skills during the year of seminars and communications outside the class helped mold me into the minister I am today."

Having worked with Jim for 20 years, I can attest to what a wonderful minister he is. Young Leaders did not make him the minister and person he is, but it was a huge influence on both, just as it has been for hundreds of YL graduates.

Young Leaders is a program created originally by Bob Dale and built upon by David Odom and Chris Gambill of the Center for Congregational Health. It is designed for ministers in their 20s and 30s who have experience but who have not yet reached mid-career or mid-life.

Young Leaders focuses on leadership effectiveness and offers participants 65-70 hours of training. Three self-development projects beyond the actual training provide help to integrate the training into the participant's own ministry setting. Each participant is given a battery of tests, a reading list and the opportunity to work with a professional coach.

Three separate three- or four-day sessions are held in a retreat setting over a five-month period. Designed to be highly participatory, each session is led by a faculty with specialized skills. Seasoned ministers coordinate worship and are available as additional resources.

Youth Pastor Steve Cothran called the experience "What they didn't teach you in

seminary." He also celebrated the new friendships that have sustained and encouraged him across the years.

Courtney Allen, a minister of community ministry and mission, noted three take-aways: "One, it helped me understand that some things are not my responsibility. Two, it gave me tools for leadership and ministry ... especially when I am a senior pastor. Three, YL provided a cohort of peers and faculty from whom I drew both affirmation and challenge."

Lauren Deer, now pursuing military chaplaincy, called YL a "bridge" between seminary and church. It was also a time for her to learn from mistakes and to grow spiritually.

Associate Pastor Richard Wood said learning "how to lead change" had been very helpful in his ministry setting. YL, he said, affirmed some things he was doing well while pointing out areas of ministry that needed more attention.

One participant described the experience as "building his ministry tool box" while learning to be a patient and non-anxious presence during times of conflict and health.

Another of my former colleagues with whom I have worked, Monica Hix, a music minister, called YL a "safe space" and a place where enduring friendships developed. She said the reading and study taught her much about healthy ways to lead in a church setting. It was during YL that she developed a deeper sense of self and self-awareness, both in a practical and a spiritual sense.

Minister of Administration and Senior Adults Darryl Trexler, another ministry colleague, valued his time with peers who were at



the same season of life and ministry and with similar ministry experiences. He said he left every session more encouraged and equipped for ministry.

Those joining me on the current faculty include Chris Gambill of the Center for Congregational Health, Pastor Nelson Granade of First Baptist Church of North Wilkesboro, N.C., and Ka'thy Gore Chappell of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina.

Young Leaders requires a fairly significant investment of time and money. However, as a pastor who has worked directly with at least four YL graduates, I can attest that it is well worth the investment.

At a time when most churches have cut back on funds for continuing education for clergy, this is one place for a congregation to make an exception and give a young minister the opportunity to grow and learn. The payback to the church begins immediately.

As one who has been in ministry for 35 years, I am encouraged by this "next generation" of gifted ministers who are taking up leadership positions in our churches. Watching them bloom and have those "I get it" moments is such a blessing.

Both the young ministers and the congregations they serve profit from these intentional experiences of learning and growing. **BT**

—Mike Queen is an interim pastor and mentors young clergy through the Center for Congregational Health. He is pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Wilmington, N.C., where he served for 25 years. Information on Young Leaders can be found at www.healthychurch.org. Those interested in bringing the Young Leaders program to another state may contact Chris Gambill at cgambill@wakehealth.edu.

"Young Leaders requires a fairly significant investment of time and money.

However, ... I can attest that it is well worth the investment."

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN PIERCE



Will Campbell

remembered



An earlier conversation with an unconventional Baptist



MOUNT JULIET, Tenn. — Will Davis Campbell grew up during the Depression years in Amite County, Miss. He has been called a bootleg preacher, an agitator, a liberal and several things not fit to print. He generally describes himself as one who “writes rare books for a living.”

Campbell, who turned 80 last July (2004), does not seem to have lost sleep over what others think or say about him. He has never offered himself as a model for ecclesiastical excellence.

Yet Campbell’s unique ministry has touched the famous and the forgotten. His words — written, spoken or sung — knock the varnish off pretense and cause a re-examination of faith commitments claimed.

Campbell is best known for *Brother to a Dragonfly* (1977, Continuum Press), a moving account of his deep involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and of his close and painful relationship with his beloved brother Joe. An anniversary edition with a foreword by President Jimmy Carter was released in 2000.

Will’s late father, a longtime Baptist deacon, excused his son’s stark language in the book that some found offensive, saying: “My boy was writing about hornets’ nests.”

Although that book won the Lillian Smith Prize, Campbell considers his 1982 novel, *The Glad River* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), to be his best writing. The novella, *Cecilia’s Sin* (1983, Mercer University Press), was spun off of that book. These two works of fiction reveal Campbell’s interest in Anabaptist history.



.....
 EDITOR’S NOTE: Will Campbell died June 3 at age 88. In tribute, we are revisiting this feature story that appeared in the January 2005 issue of *Baptists Today*.

Other titles include *Forty Acres and a Goat* (1986, Peachtree Publishers), *The Convention: A Parable* (1988, Peachtree Publishers), *Providence* (1992, Longstreet Press) and *The Stem of Jesse: The Costs of Community at a 1960s Southern School* (1995, Mercer University Press).

Campbell’s most recent release is *Robert G. Clark’s Journey to the House: A Black Politician’s Story* (2003, University Press of Mississippi).

Baptists Today editor John Pierce spent a September (2004) morning with Brother Will at his writing cabin on the spread of land near Nashville that he and his wife Brenda have shared for more than four decades.

The conversation was rambling, often off subject and simply delightful. The following exchange is pulled from that interview.

BT: How did you first meet Waylon Jennings?

WC: Right here in this cabin. A fellow named Johnny Darrow, who never had but one big song and I forgot what it was, wanted me to do his wedding. Waylon was his best man.

I got to the part about “Who brings this woman to be married to this man?” and nobody said anything. The girl’s daddy was here, but he was nervous.

So Waylon said, “I do.”

We just kind of hit it off. I married everybody in his band at least once and all of their kids. I baptized [his son] little Shooter when he was about six months old.

I asked: “What are we doing here? I’m a deep-water Baptist, and we baptize by dunking adults — or we call them adults, though they may not be any more aware than this baby.”

Now [Waylon’s wife] Jessi [Colter] was a United Pentecostal; her mama was a big-time Pentecostal preacher, and Waylon was an acapella Campbellite from Littlefield, Texas.

I asked Waylon, “How are we doing this?” About that time, Mohammed Ali came by. He was a friend of Waylon’s.

I said, “I want to do it the way he wants it done.” He’s even more formidable in person.

He said, “I’m a Muslim; I don’t want it done at all.” I said, “Then I’m not going to do it if he doesn’t want it done.”

Waylon said, “Oh, we can handle him.”

So that’s how I met Waylon the first time. He liked to come out here and sit in this cabin.

He would just get a chair and sit over there and wouldn’t say anything for maybe 45 minutes to an hour. He said he got renewed here.

One day he came in here and sat, and it wasn’t the same. Finally, Jessi said, “Waylon, what’s the matter with you?”

He said, “I don’t know but something ain’t right.”

After awhile he said, “I know what it is. Remember two Christmases ago when [Johnny] Cash took us over to the Holy Land and we were riding out in the desert, and we saw a big light way out in the distance?”

Jessi, who is very, very religious, kept saying, “Waylon, that’s the Star in the East.” And Waylon would say, “Yeah. Sure.”

But he said he started getting a little spooked because the closer they got, the bigger the light was.

“Finally,” he said, “we got up there and it was Bedouin, a shepherd, in a tent watching CNN News on a satellite television.”

Then he said to me: “It’s your computer; it doesn’t belong in this cabin. You ought to get it out of here, Will.”

BT: No wonder you stay in trouble with some Baptists.

WC: Yeah, there’s a fellow up at the seminary who attacks things I’ve written about baptism. I made the big mistake of baptizing my 6-year-old grandson by sprinkling — which was no offense to me, and it didn’t bother the kid.

I knew this was not the “orthodox” way to do it, but my daughter was not involved in any church — whatever church is. She asked me at Christmas if I would christen — I believe that

“[Will Campbell] operated out of a love frequency that few of us ever imagine. There are a lot of people who have compassion, but Will wasn’t afraid to go where compassion would lead him.”

—Nashville civil rights leader Bill Barnes, who visited Campbell each Wednesday during his illness (*The Tennessean*)

“We finished our interview and drove to Gass’ Restaurant and Bar for dinner. When I locked my doors, Will commented: ‘That’s mistake number one — locking your doors at a redneck bar.’”

—Mel Hawkins, who teaches at Carson-Newman University and is the author of *Will D. Campbell: Radical Prophet of the South* (ABP)

“Campbell turned the gospel of Jesus on its head, at least where standardized, predictable concepts and actions, leftwing and right, were concerned. Just when you thought he had confirmed all your sacred cows and reinforced your sociopolitical ‘enemies lists,’ he jumped ahead, taking the ax to the roots of your own ideological forest.”

—Church historian Bill Leonard of Wake Forest University (ABP)

“It is impossible to know what the civil rights movement would have been like without his counsel. It is impossible to know if he saved lives with his advice. But it is also impossible to conceive of the success of the movement without his profound contributions to it.”

—Andrew Cohen, contributing editor of *The Atlantic*



is the word she used — Harlan who was about six.

I said, “Sure.”

My daddy was visiting us, and he had been a Baptist for 60 years by then. I was a little sensitive about that. But he said, “Baptize your grandson; don’t be silly.”

When I got through, little Harlan was sopping his eggs with his biscuit and said: “Papa, what did you put on my head?”

I said water. He asked why. So we talked about it a little.

I said: “You know that big lump you get in your throat when you and your mama fight and fuss? Well, you don’t have to have that. That’s called guilt.”

We talked about being free from guilt. When we got through, he jumped down and looked up. In the throes of a deep-down belly laugh, he said: “Well, Papa, thank you then.”

I felt that was the most appropriate response to any sacrament I’d ever heard. Of course, Baptists don’t have sacraments. Well, I do.

[A Southern Baptist leader] who read about that referred to me as the “poet laureate of the Baptist left” and then talked about my daddy. I wrote him a long letter but threw it away.

They call themselves conservatives, but they are not conservatives... I’m conservative. I’m an old-fashioned Baptist because I go back to the Anabaptists.

Even the more enlightened say we’re not related to those folks. Well, we are related to those folks. [William] Estep of the Fort Worth seminary — which is not known as a hotbed of radicalism — proved conclusively in his writings that we are related to the Anabaptists.

[Judge Paul] Pressler wouldn’t even have been permitted to join the group, by virtue of being a civil magistrate.

And they were hunted by armed horsemen like rabbits and drowned in the Amstel River because they wouldn’t go to war — any war, civil war or religious war. And they wouldn’t run for public office.

I’m more like the Anabaptists than any faction of the current Baptist movements. Now, I realize there is not a direct connection between us back to Amsterdam and the people being drowned in the Amstel River.

It is so odd. More of them were women preachers than men, but [Southern Baptists] say man was first in creation and woman was first in sin. The “edenic fall,” they call it.

OK, I’ll go with that logic. Therefore, women ought to be the first to be ordained if they were the first to sin.

BT: How did you get so connected to the country music community?

WC: Well, living in the Nashville area, you have to know two chords on a guitar to get a driver’s license. It wasn’t that I went out looking for them.

I was telling you about Waylon. Then Tom T. Hall sent word that he had somehow read my stuff. Tom is maybe the best songwriter to ever come through Nashville.

BT: He wrote “Harper Valley PTA,” I believe.

WC: Yeah, he wrote “Harper Valley PTA” and made enough money to buy a Cadillac. Then he wrote “Little Bitty” and made enough to buy a house.

I got to know him, and then I worked for Waylon one summer. And Bobby Bare was out here last week just wanting to talk.

Some of them think I know something they don’t know. If they only knew how little I know.

BT: What did you do while working for Waylon?

WC: It had been a long time between book royalties. Brenda indicated one of us had to get out and get a real job.

I could tell from her tone of voice that she had a preference in the matter. So I went to Waylon and said I needed a job.

He said: “You got it, Hoss. Be on the bus. We’ll be leaving at one o’clock Thursday morning from my house.”

After a couple of days I still didn’t know what my job was. I said, “I thought you gave me a job.”

Waylon said, “I did.”

“Well,” I said, “maybe it’s none of my business, but what is it?”

Jessi said: “If Waylon gives you a job, just look around and see what’s not being done that you think should be done. That’s your job.”

I noticed I was the one that opened and closed the microwave the most, so I said: “I’ll be the cook.” So that’s what I was.

His band used to call me “Hop Sing.” But I didn’t do much cooking. I would decide whether we could stop at Hardee’s or McDonald’s.

Once Jessi wanted me to talk to Waylon [about his spiritual life]. But I always felt like an ecclesiastical peeping tom talking to someone about the state of their soul.



So one night about two o'clock in the morning — that's when Waylon still had his drug problem that he overcame without going to a drug center — I said, "Waylon, what do you believe?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "Yeah? What is that supposed to mean?"

He said, "Uh-huh."

And that was the end of witnessing to ol' Waylon.

But he remembered that and years later wrote a song, "I Do Believe." It begins with, "In my own way I'm a believer."

He told people that story many times. It was an affirmation of faith.

BT: In a sense, you have been a chaplain to these people.

WC: I think that is a fair statement, but it's not on my bio sheet. They have come to me.

A lot of them call about doing weddings. And, of course, when Waylon died I did his funeral out in Arizona and his memorial service here [in Nashville]. It's just one of those things that just happened.

Also, I'm sometimes introduced as "the chaplain to the Klan." I wasn't the chaplain to the Klan. I just got to know a number of people.

The Klan is probably not as racist as, say, the government is. It is not a bunch of pitiful, largely uneducated, largely poor people marching around burning a cross who keeps people in poverty and ignorance. It's the "good people" — the social institutions of government.

Somebody would hear that I did a wedding or a funeral of a Klan family in North Carolina, or that I visited the grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in prison. But at the same time I was there, I visited Dan Meredith who was there for protesting the Vietnam War.

Some of my friends like to say, "Here comes ol' If-you-love-one-you-got-to-love-them-all Campbell." But that's about what it boils down to.

Some say [of the Klan]: "I wouldn't speak to those people." But you speak to your next-door neighbor and your husband. Some of their views can be more imprisoning than these silly rituals.

When you say "the Klan," you haven't said anything. There is more brokenness there and more different Klan units. They are worse than the Baptist movement. They get into a fight and just form another branch.

BT: Is it true that you were fired as chaplain at the University of Mississippi in 1956 for playing Ping-Pong with a black man?

WC: This black minister was a young fellow who was new in town. I'd gone by his office and brought him over to the YMCA building where my office was. We *were* up to something.

But as we were coming out there was a Ping-Pong table in the lobby. He said he had played Ping-Pong all through college and seminary, so we played a couple of games.

I saw this fellow who was on the staff watching from a distance. Then we finished and went on out to my car.

But this thing wound up in the Sovereignty Commission papers in Mississippi. The Sovereignty Commission was a legislative organ [set up] to investigate and report on any suspicious activities that would bring down the racial barriers.

Now I have never gotten my Sovereignty Commission report, like I've never gotten my FBI report. I have no idea what's in it, but I know there's a lot of stuff in it. But I don't care.

A friend of mine got the report and one of the articles said that on such-and-such date in 1955, "Will Campbell was seen playing Ping-Pong with a well-dressed, nice-looking Negro man. After the game, Campbell took the Negro in his car and drove him leisurely around the campus."

The reason for the wording of "well-dressed, nice-looking man" was to say he was not a janitor. He didn't belong on campus.

"His belief that Christ died for bigots as well as devout people prompted his contacts with the Ku Klux Klan, and he visited James Earl Ray in prison after the 1968 assassination of Mr. Campbell's friend Dr. King. He was widely criticized for both actions."

—Robert D. McFadden, writing for *The New York Times*

"He used the force of his words and the witness of his deeds to convey a healing message of reconciliation to any and all who heard him."

—President Jimmy Carter (*The Tennessean*)

"Will Campbell was a part of our family for years. He married those who were in love, tried to reconcile those with hate, buried our dead and tolerated the rest of us."

—Singer-songwriter Tom T. Hall, one of many within the Nashville country music community who made visits to Campbell's Mount Juliet farm (*USA Today*)

"He believed deeply in the Bible and its inclusiveness. Not some inclusiveness — but for everyone ... He gave hope to a multitude of Baptist preachers in particular that were trying to be faithful in a difficult time."

—Roger Lovette of Clemson, S.C. (Head and Heart blog)



As far as “driving leisurely around campus,” there was a speed break every 15 feet. Of course I was going to drive leisurely.

But that was over a Ping-Pong game. Now I watch a basketball game, for example, and I think there is one white starter, maybe, and the coach is black. Football is the same way.

BT: Growing up in Mississippi at the time you did, who were the influences that shaped your thinking about race?

WC: It’s difficult to pin down, but I can point to some “for instances.” But why those things would stick with me, I don’t know.

When I was about 5 or maybe 6 years old, all of us Campbell boys lived in a little cluster. That was back when the old man would get older and divide the land.

We young boys would go to Grandpa Bunt’s on Sunday afternoons and play barefooted. We’d play sticker races to see how far you could run across the land with those little stickers before you stopped and pulled them out.

We were taunting an old black man walking down this old country road: “Hey nigger; hey nigger.”

Grandpa Bunt chewed Prince Albert tobacco — the only person I’ve ever known to chew it. I tried it, but couldn’t wad it. He was so neat, people didn’t know he chewed it.

He called everybody “Hun” — men, women, boys and girls. He didn’t have all these Freudian hang-ups we have now.

He called us all around him and said, “Now, hunns, there ain’t no niggers.”

We said, “Yes, Grandpa; John Walker is a nigger.”

“There’s so such thing,” he said. “He is a colored man,” that being the accepted term then.

And I never forgot that. It obviously made an impression on me.

I went off to Louisiana College, which was all white, of course. But then I went into the Army and immediately paired off with a couple of black guys.

I don’t know why, but something just didn’t seem right about the whole segregated system. In the Army I was associated with people from all over the country.

I read a lot of stuff, like Frederick Douglass’ books. And my brother sent me the book *Freedom Road* by Howard Fast. That made an impression on me.

Why those things made an impression on me, I don’t know. Why Grandpa Bunt’s little lecture stuck with me and not with my brothers and cousins, I don’t know.



I can’t explain it. I was not any smarter than them and we went to the same school, same church, same Sunday school. But I never forgot that little lesson from Grandpa Bunt and other experiences.

BT: Was there a time when it dawned on you that this was your life’s calling?

WC: It was in the Army. Then I went back to college, transferring to Wake Forest — thinking wrongly that it was a bit more open. Then I went to Yale Divinity School because Liston Pope was there teaching social ethics.

BT: How did you end up at the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Atlanta?

WC: That’s a story that has been exaggerated. It was just a meeting of black clergy from the South to talk about the Montgomery bus strike.

I was working for the National Council of Churches then. My boss in New York was black, but wouldn’t come to the South. He asked me to go and represent the National Council of Churches.

I got there and Martin (Luther King Jr.) and Ralph (David Abernathy) had both gone back to Montgomery because one of their houses had been firebombed or something. When I got to [Ebenezer Baptist Church] where the meeting was being held, the person in charge told me, “Mr. Campbell, we don’t want to offend you, but this is a meeting for colored preachers only.”

Bayard Rustin was there — one of the unsung heroes of the movement. He did

“I took my freshly signed copy of *Brother to a Dragonfly* to a picnic table in Zilker Park where I laid in the shade of a pecan tree and didn’t move until I had read every word. When I finished I could barely move. I felt pinned to the ground by his words, by the convictions rising up inside me.”

—Roger Paynter, pastor of First Baptist Church of Austin, Texas (Facebook)

“*Brother To A Dragonfly* is one of the most remarkable Christian testimonies I’ve ever read. Foundational for any Christian who wants to understand what St. Paul meant when he used ‘reconciliation’ to describe the work of Christ.”

—Charlie Johnson of Bread Fellowship in Fort Worth (Facebook)

more than anyone to influence Martin toward nonviolence.

Bayard had heard the conversation and said, “Look, before this thing is over we are going to need help from any source. I know Mr. Campbell, and he is on our side.”

I’d met him in Montgomery during the bus boycott. So they said, “You come on in.”

It is sometimes reported that Will Campbell was the only white person present — and it’s true. But it’s not like Martin Luther King Jr. called his old friend Will Campbell — though he was a friend by then — and said, “I want you to represent the white race at the meeting.”

BT: Are you doing some writing now?

WC: Well, yes and no. My last book was the one about Robert Clark (*Journey to the House*), the first black person to be elected to statewide office [in Mississippi] since Reconstruction.

He was elected from Holmes County, one of the toughest counties in the state. He was treated most shabbily, as you would expect in the ’60s in Mississippi.

They challenged his credentials. But he eventually became speaker pro tem of the house, a very powerful position. He is still a powerful figure in the state.

In fact, I’ll be with him in a couple of weeks. The University of Mississippi, where I was run off from in 1956, is going to make me honorary chaplain of the university for life.

I said, “I don’t think I want to do this.” But they said, “You talk about reconciliation and forgiveness. We thought you were serious.”

So I’m going to go.



BT: You have always said that true soul freedom cannot be found in any institution. Is it possible to institutionalize Christianity and be faithful?

WC: I doubt it. It depends on the level of institution.

You take something like Koinonia that Clarence [Jordan] and his little group did. I think they were faithful to the point of rather harsh persecution.

But they did not succeed really. Koinonia Farm failed so far as changing the culture; they never did do it. And there's never been a tougher human being born than Clarence Jordan. He was totally without fear.

I met him right after I got out of the Army. I was at Wake Forest, and he was just an angel from heaven. I went to his group during Religious Focus Week and he was talking about Koinonia. I really took to him.

But the nature of institutions will simply not allow for the kind of radical faithfulness that the New Testament really does mandate.

BT: Why did you paste your ordination certificate over your degree from Yale Divinity School?

WC: It was a symbol, I think. And there was a period when I was more critical of Yale and higher education in general than I am now. Yale was a good experience for me.

But it was a matter of priorities. I think it was appropriate that I do that.

There was a time when they were going to take away my ordination, but they didn't know how to do it. One of the beauties of the Baptist movement is they didn't know how to do it.

The other reason was there were two guys there [in Mississippi] who had been in the Navy that sent word: "You try to take Will Davis' ordination away from him and ..."

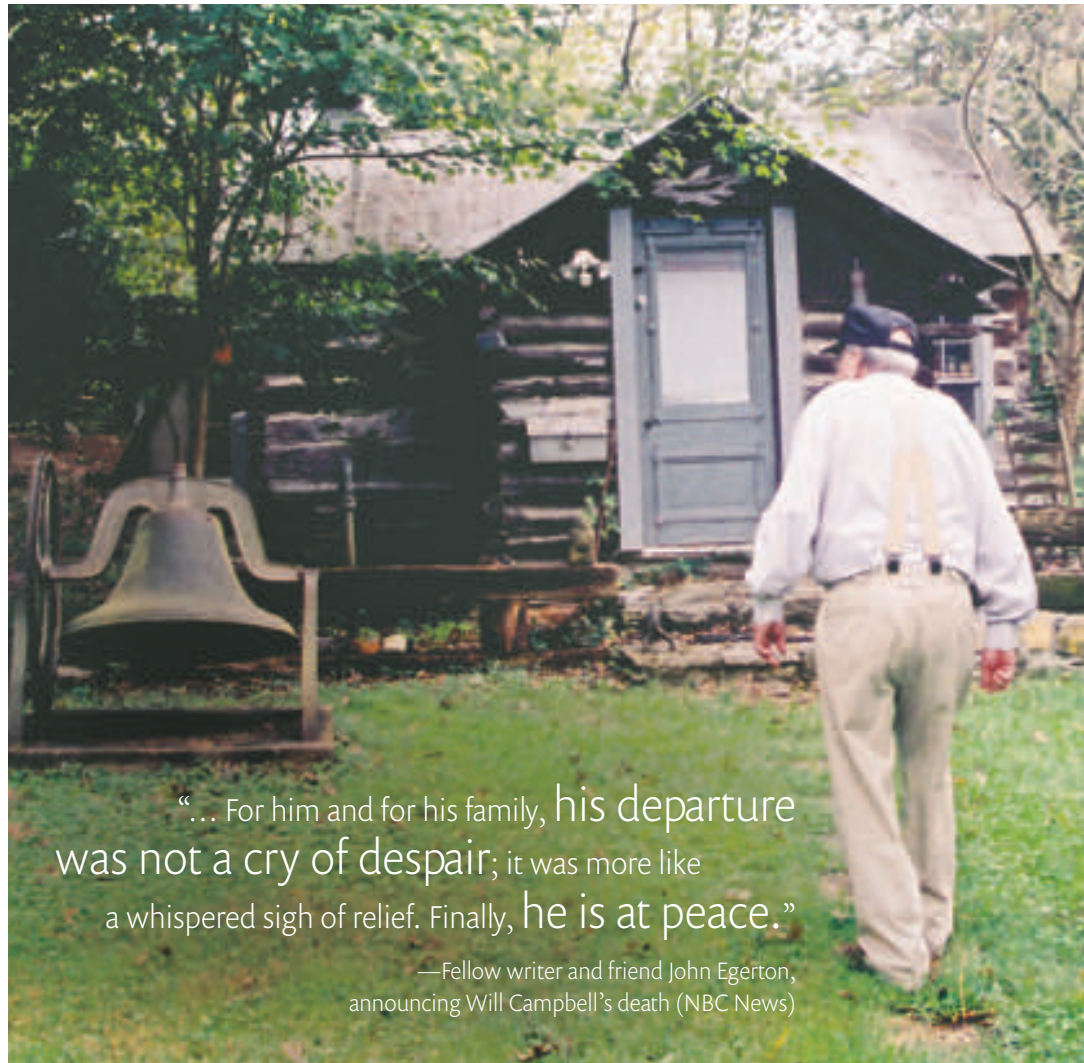
That ordination certificate — pasted on top of my Yale degree — was signed by a country preacher, my daddy, my uncle and my cousin. They were the ordaining council.

They misspelled even the name of the church. But that's my orders.

BT: Are there things over the years that you've changed your mind about?

WC: I'm sure there are. Obviously, the nature of institutions is one. When I decided to "enter the ministry," I must have assumed something.

I wasn't as developed in my social views of race and labor and war and so on. I volunteered for the war, though I was already



“... For him and for his family, his departure was not a cry of despair; it was more like a whispered sigh of relief. Finally, he is at peace.”

—Fellow writer and friend John Egerton, announcing Will Campbell's death (NBC News)

ordained. I didn't have to go. So I'm sure that has changed somewhat.

When I got overseas they were assigning us to a division that lost 50 men the day before. You were just cannon fodder.

Some of those soldiers had been together 10 years or longer. I was in line to be assigned.

When they got to me, he said: "Campbell, you from Mississippi?" I said, "Yes."

He said, "You know anybody from Louisiana?"

"Yes."

"From Shadow, Louisiana?"

"Yes, my Uncle Clifton."

"Your Uncle Clifton is my best friend. We were in the Lions Club together, went hunting and fishing together and taught school together," he said. "You're going to the 109th hospital station."

I almost cried. Here were my buddies that had trained together.

I said: "No, I want to go into combat with my buddies."

He said: "Well, you're not going. And not only that, I can get you out of this Army and have you on the next ship to the States because

you are an ordained Baptist minister."

So I went to the hospital. I didn't know how to take a temperature, and they put me in the operating room.

The first day a little Chinese sergeant in charge of the operating room told me to "scrub up." I thought that meant to mop the floor. But he kindly taught me names of the instruments.

That was one of those things that just happened. I could claim that was the hand of the Lord, but what about all those others that went to the front lines and didn't come back?

BT: You told the Whitsitt Baptist Heritage Society several years ago that you never heard a more profound lecture on social ethics than the prayer your father gave at every meal. What was it?

WC: "O Lord, look down on us with mercy. Make us thankful for these and all other blessings. Pardon and forgive us our sins. We ask for Christ's sake. Amen."

I quoted that at his funeral. He was a good man. **BT**

Tourists or *pilgrims*?



Journeying toward the sacred center of faith

JERUSALEM — As the tour bus neared the end of a long climb from Jericho, its Arabic driver pressed a button and strains of music joined our Jewish guide's running commentary. He explained that we were nearing Jerusalem and suggested we join in singing "The Holy City."

We warbled our way into the relative darkness of a long highway tunnel before emerging to find late afternoon sunlight glinting from the Dome of the Rock on the Old City's Temple Mount. The music reached a crescendo, and the bus rocked with the chorus: "Jerusalem ... Jerusalem!"

It's predictable — and a little cheesy. I know exactly what's coming.

Yet I cry every time.
Why?

Arriving in Jerusalem is always special, even for veteran visitors.

For most of the 36 students and friends of Campbell University Divinity School (CUDS) who came with me on a study tour of Israel and the West Bank, however, it was the first time. Many had long yearned to visit the places where Jesus walked. There were tears in the seats behind me, and the pilgrim longings are contagious.

What is it that happens when Protestant

believers visit the Holy Land? Are we tourists or pilgrims — or some combination of both?

Ask an anthropologist like Victor Turner about pilgrimage, and he'll describe a boundary experience in which participants push past the ordinary to transcend space and time in journeying toward the sacred center of their faith.

Ask most Baptists why they want to visit the Holy Land, and they'll likely speak of a desire to experience the land of the Bible first hand and to find a sense of spiritual renewal on the dusty paths of Capernaum, by the rolling waves of Galilee, or in the quiet Garden of Gethsemane.

It hardly matters that the grounds of Capernaum are being renovated, the Sea of Galilee turns out to be a manageable lake, and the Garden of Gethsemane can only be viewed from behind a fence.

Moments of spiritual intimacy are more likely to come in surprising places many visitors don't expect: hidden spots such as the *Lithostratos*, where one finds the stone floor of the Antonia fortress to which Jesus may have been taken after his arrest, as well as grooved paving stones of the same first-century road on which he may have begun his long walk to Calvary.



Editor's note: For a more academic approach to understanding pilgrimage from the Protestant perspective, including a look at modern Israel's courting of evangelical pilgrims for political purposes, see Tony Cartledge's article, "Walk about Jerusalem: Protestant Pilgrims and the Holy Land," in *Archaeology, Bible, Politics, and Media*, ed. Eric Meyers and Carole Meyers (Eisenbrauns, 2012), 139-160.

It is common for visitors to remove their shoes or kneel to touch such holy ground where the presence of Christ is almost palpable.

Protestants are less likely to be enamored with destinations more dear to Orthodox and Catholic pilgrims, whose Holy Land visits focus on commemorative churches. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, for example, is built over a small cave that tradition holds to be where Jesus was born. The church strikes visitors as an unappealing

amalgam of sooty buildings, built and rebuilt over the past 1,500 years, controlled by three very territory-conscious sects.

After passing through a hobbit-sized doorway, visitors join a long line that leads through a tall sanctuary dark with soot from scores of rococo oil lamps, enters a small chapel of blackened icons and filigreed crosses, and descends by a narrow stair to an elaborate 14-pointed silver star set into a semi-circular slab of marble and surrounded by heavy brocade: the traditional site of the nativity. A tiny grotto said to have contained the manger is similarly adorned.

The only thing reminiscent of a stable is the sense of being herded like cattle from one room to the next.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is likewise a jumble of buildings, some parts beautiful and some not, governed by six ecclesial bodies that sometimes feud. The church is routinely filled with Orthodox pilgrims lining up to venerate spots identified as the place where Jesus was crucified, a marble slab where some believe his body was prepared for burial, and an ancient tomb claimed to have been Jesus' temporary resting place. Some visitors kneel in fervent worship as others jostle for a closer look or to take pictures.

For the Orthodox and for Catholics, the value of pilgrimage comes largely from the history of veneration. It is not just what happened in the Holy Land that's important, or even whether it happened at any precise spot, but the awareness that countless other pilgrims through the years have come to that same place with similar intent — that they have prayed the same prayers, touched the same oily marble or kissed the same age-old icons of faith.

Meaning comes from the sense of shared community with saints and sinners over hundreds of years, thick with prayers for intercession and hopes of imparted grace.

Protestants, for the most part, prefer to bypass ecclesial accretions and want to see the land beneath. They feel more at home with the bare landscapes of the Judean hills or verdant valleys of Galilee than with the overgrowth of shaped stone and objects of devotion.

This is why our study group found little company on the excavated mounds of Hazor, Megiddo, Sepphoris, Dan, and Beth She'an. There are no churches there, but inspiration aplenty.

To stand on the foundation of Jeroboam's rebel temple in Dan or ponder a gate from the time of Abraham, to look down on the quilt-squared Jezreel Valley from Tel Meggido or Nazareth's Mount Precipice, to climb through



En Gedi's cave-pocked mountains where David eluded the pursuing King Saul: these bring pilgrims into the space where stories of faith were first played out.

Many believers have a strong familiarity with the Bible stories, but a much weaker understanding of their settings. Visiting places such as Caesarea Philippi and reading the story of how Jesus brought the disciples there to talk about his identity help travelers put the story in a contextual frame, appreciating the presence of temples to Greek and Roman gods in the background as Jesus asked the disciples "Who do you say that I am?"

Likewise, recognizing that many ancients considered a deep grotto there (above) to be a gateway to the underworld helps visitors appreciate Jesus' affirmation to Peter that "the gates of Hades" would never prevail against the church (Matt. 16:13-18).

Eye-opening experiences like these can be repeated at every stop along the tour, providing a visual and sensory orientation in which the familiar biblical stories are newly written across the face of the land — and the heart.

Seeing the landscape is more difficult at sacred sites in Jerusalem or Bethlehem, where city growth and layered churches mask the ground that Jesus knew.

Protestants may find ritual practices there more common to Catholic or Orthodox tradition to be meaningful, if not without difficulty. Cameron Jorgenson, who teaches theology and ethics at CUDS and served as faculty co-leader of the tour, encouraged our group to walk the full Via Dolorosa and pray at all 14 "Stations of the Cross."

We saw irony in discovering that the streets of Jerusalem, where Jesus walked a painful road and the commemorative practice originated, offers one of the most challenging places in the world for devotional practice.

Jesus' scourging can be recalled in the relative quiet of the indoor *Lithostratos*, but most of the stations are found along busy streets and bustling alleyways that twist and turn through the Arab quarter of the Old City. Spoken litanies, prayers, and meditations had to compete with automobiles and pedestrians, power tools and pushcarts, as well as shopkeepers and customers haggling in open stalls.

Five of the stations are found inside the sprawling Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was beyond the city walls in Jesus' day but deep in the heart of modern Jerusalem. The church stays packed with pilgrims and is not amenable to devotional practice by a group, so we had to observe a condensed version of the last stations in the buzzing plaza outside the entrance.

In later reflections, group members observed that the quotidian distractions made it difficult to hear or fully participate, but also served as a valuable reminder that Jesus' long walk to Calvary would have taken place along similar streets, trudging past disinterested bystanders and hawking merchants as well as the angry crowds who shouted their disappointment.

There was no quiet meditation on the first Good Friday.

Remembering that Jesus' crucifixion and burial took place outside of the ancient city, Protestant pilgrims consistently find that the less developed site of Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb "feels more real." There, part of a rugged hillside bears a strong resemblance to a skull and a hillside tomb calls to mind clear images of Easter.

While some adore the churches, for countless Protestants who have longed to see the Promised Land with their own eyes, it is the land itself that fires holy imagination and turns tourists into pilgrims. **BT**

Unconditional *love*

At 94, Helen Brown still reminding inmates of God's wide embrace

OPELIKA, Ala. — Since 1989, Helen Brown has been packing up Bibles and lesson books once a week and heading to the Lee County Sheriff's Administration and Detention Center.

While there, she leads Bible study with the women inmates who choose to join her. Helen, a deacon at First Baptist Church of Auburn, Ala., as well as a Sunday school teacher for 47 years, taught business education at Auburn University many years ago.

Helen, now 94, is joined by other women for her weekly visits. In May, she and her friends met for lunch at McAlister's Deli before heading off to do their jail ministry.

It is a fascinating group. Mary Jo Howard taught voice at Auburn, and Julia Morgan taught piano. Mary Virginia Moore is a speech pathologist, and Betty Smith was a social worker for Auburn City Schools. Ann Crance traveled the world.

"Helen is very organized and she organizes us," said Julia.

It is obvious that the women love each other and think very highly of Helen. Their



(Left to right) Julia Morgan, Mary Virginia Moore, Helen Brown, Ann Crance, Betty Smith and Mary Jo Howard make weekly visits to inmates in Opelika, Ala.



words stumble over each other in praising the others' gifts and accomplishments.

"I was fixing Christmas boxes one year and Helen convinced me to join her to take them to the jail," said Mary Jo. "I've been going ever since."

Helen, who led the jail ministry by herself for many years before inviting others to join her, said: "It is such riches to have a group."

Ann said it is the most rewarding thing she has ever done.

"The blessing and the comradery are beautiful," she explained. "I feel blessed to be there."

After an enjoyable lunch together, the women headed to the jail with flexibility in their expectations.

"We never know how many women will show up," said Helen. "It's volunteer participation for the women."

The total population of the Lee County Detention Center is around 400 inmates, with the majority of those being men who are held in an area separate from the women.

"They're just people," said Helen.

"They've just made mistakes."

Over the years, as she's talked with the women, she's discerned that many of those mistakes have been a result of drug use.

"I'm guessing 80 percent are here because of something related to drugs," said Helen. "And some of them are offered an opportunity for drug treatment programs while they're in."

For many of the women, jail is part of a hard-to-break cycle tied to money and delinquency. Some have children cared for by grandparents or other family members.

"We have a wide age range of inmates," said Ann, "from teenagers to grandmothers."

The volunteers sign in at the guard entrance, go through a security checkpoint, and are given name badges. Then they walk down a long hall to a large room known as the library. It is bare except for stackable chairs and one row of bookcases with paperback books.

"We often collect paperbacks to be put in here for the inmates to read," said Helen.

In January, the volunteers arrived for their regularly scheduled Bible study and were greeted by Helen's family and local media.

Jail officials had decided to rename the room as “The Helen Brown Library.”

Lee County Sheriff Jay Jones had been approached by some of the volunteers from Auburn First Baptist Church about the possibility of doing something special for Helen. It was an easy decision for him. Thirty years of ministry speak volumes in a place like the Lee County Detention Center.

About 20 inmates, wearing white baggy pants and shirts with “LCDC” stamped on their backs, entered the room. Some brought Bibles.

After Helen took the roll, the volunteers provided new inmates with Bibles as gifts from the church.

As the hour continued, Mary Virginia helped some inmates look up Bible verses to read aloud. Julia played keyboard while Mary Joe led singing from song sheets they had brought along.

Finally, Helen taught a lesson on freedom — from guilt, fear and worry — that comes from a relationship with God.

Helen wrapped up her lesson with these words: “You will hear me tell you every week, and if there’s nothing else you hear but this one thing, I want you to know that God loves each of you unconditionally and just the way you are!”

She asks the women, “How does God love you?”

Some respond, “Unconditionally.”

Everyone stood and joined hands to pray before they left. Inmates grasped each other’s hands and the hands of the six lovely, retired women who had come to share the love of God with them.

After the prayer, many walked out the door while others lingered to talk with the Auburn First Baptist women. Some shared news about leaving soon to go home or to be sent to a larger prison.

Mary Joe watched Helen engage these inmates with deep compassion and whispered: “It’s such a beautiful love that she shares with them — and us too.” **BT**

For many of the women, jail is part of a hard-to-break cycle tied to money and delinquency.

Baptists Today has received gifts:

IN MEMORY OF ...

JAMES H. BUNTON
From Helen W. Bunton

IN HONOR OF ...

BAPTISTS TODAY STAFF
From Ruth Anderson

HARRY and MARGARET ESKEW
From Bill and Doris Hartley

JIM and JOYCE PAGE
From Tommy and Elaine McCulley

Gifts to *Baptists Today* in memory or honor of someone are greatly appreciated and may be made at:

(credit card) baptiststoday.org/donate/

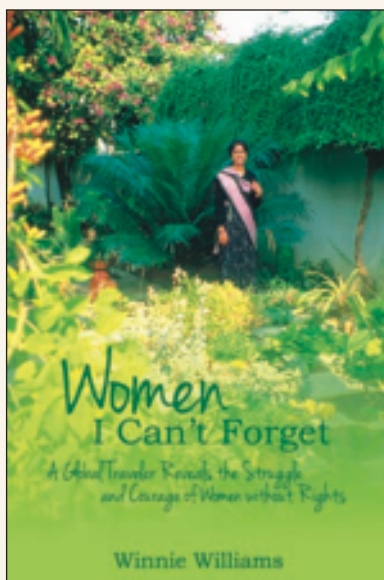
(check) *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318
Macon, GA 31208-6318

NEW FROM *Nurturing* Faith BOOKS



Available
as an ebook

Download your digital
copy for just \$9.99 from
nurturingfaith.info



Educator and Baptist lay leader Winnie Williams has traveled the world from Albania to China, Peru, India, Haiti and South Africa to discover the daily challenges of women affected by oppressive cultural, economic and social conditions. In these remarkable women she also found life lessons in courage, perseverance and faith.

Visit the online store nurturingfaith.info



Building Lives by the Book

What is Sunday School?



It's a spiritual development plan for the **ENTIRE** church.
RBP can help cultivate growth through every age group!



A trusted source of Biblical life-building for over 60 years
RegularBaptistPress.org/curriculum