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The Tightrope of Church Leadership

— Les Lofquist —

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Being a leader in a church is never easy!

A church leader must overcome, by the Spirit's power, his own sinful impulses. Then he must have wisdom in the myriad of decisions to be made. He needs to be able to balance the demands of church and family and outside employment (if he's a volunteer leader not paid by the church). He attempts to be prepared to teach the Word regularly, pray fervently for the needs of the church, and help the congregation overcome differences of opinion and tensions. He is the object of Satan's attack, yet he must remain cheerful and Christ-like.

Leading in church seems to be like balancing on a tightrope.

Is this really so? Why? The reasons may be as numerous and unique as there are churches. However, it might be instructive to cite the following problem areas:

- The disparity between somewhat idealistic expectations and hard reality.
- The lack of clearly defined boundaries, goals, job description (“*how do I know I’m getting somewhere?*”).
- Tasks are never done.
- Compassion fatigue .
- The Peter Principle: feeling (or maybe being) incompetent while leading an army of volunteers.
- Feeling that other churches are competitors .
- Time management problems and multiplicity of roles (*teacher, counselor, comforter, visionary leader, administrator, husband, father, etc.*).
- Inability to produce “win-win” conflict resolutions.
- Difficulty in managing interruptions.
- Lacking the resources to minister as effectively as you think you should or could.
- Preoccupation with “playing it safe” to avoid enraging powerful parishioners.
- Administration overload—too much energy expended in areas of low reward.
- The wearying effects of constant criticism on you and your family.

So, what is the answer? Start by studying Paul in 2 Corinthians. There you will see your need to correctly understand the call to ministry and your role as a church leader (4:1-6). You then need to understand own weakness and God's power (4:7) and that you will have troubles in church ministry (4:8-10a). Then you need understand the purpose of troubles in ministry (4:10b - 15) and maintain an eternal perspective in ministry (4: 16-18). Lastly, you need to have the ability to “encourage yourself in the Lord” (1 Samuel 30:6).

Yes, leading in church sometimes seems to be like balancing on a tightrope. But with God's strength and enablement, your ministry will be blessed and you will be a blessing.

LES LOFQUIST'S ITINERARY

NOVEMBER

- 6-9 IFCA International Board of Directors Meeting, Grandville, MI
- 7-9 IFCA International Youth Committee Meeting, Grandville, MI
- 12-19 Democratic Republic of Congo Ministry Trip

DECEMBER

- 3-17 In Home Office
- 24-31 Home Office Closed

JANUARY

- 8 MI Regional, Flushing, MI
- 13 Kansas City IFCA Churches
- 14 Heart of America Regional
- 23-24 BMW Board Meetings, Atlanta, GA
- 28 Institute of World Ministry, Plainwell, MI

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CORRECTION

There was a significant error in the September / October 2007 edition of *VOICE*. The following is the correct sentence: "Finally, the whole matter has been brought to a wider audience through the writings of one of the main advocates of the NPP, namely N.T. (Tom) Wright. Wright is Anglican, the Bishop of Durham, former Canon Theologian of Westminster." The name of this man was incorrectly published in the September / October 2007 edition of *VOICE* as "New Testament Wright." We regret the error.



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The Tightrope of Pastoral Ethics

— Dan Fredericks —



“**T**his church is stuck in the past...” “The doctrinal statement and constitution of this church is in need of some serious updating...” “Times are changing, and we need to catch up with it...” “It’s time to take action and let the chips fall where they may...” “I’m the pastor of this church and I have pastoral prerogative...” These statements and the attitudes they convey are upsetting to churches and could perhaps be considered unethical.

The subject of ethics covers a broad and varying range of topics and issues. Most often resources and publications on ethics as it relates to the church and ministers concerns itself with such matters as moral fidelity in counseling and truthfulness in areas such as the stewardship of finances and material properties. Our concern has to do with other matters of great importance.

A MATTER OF THE HEART

Ultimately and essentially, ethics is a matter of the heart. It has been

demonstrated numerous times that even when so-called “accountability standards” are in place and enforced, unethical behavior seems recur with shocking regularity precisely because of the deceitful nature of the undisciplined heart. This is why Paul emphasized in 1 Corinthians 9:27, “I discipline by body and keep it under control.” He was not speaking of mere physical discipline so as to avoid becoming over weight; he had in mind a full understanding of the potential of his own heart satisfying the flesh (sin) over and above submitting to the Spirit’s control.

Unethical leaders tend to quickly become critical of a church’s history and begin to, intentionally or unintentionally, pick away at it.

The New Testament grace principle emphasizes internal control of the Spirit over mere outward conformity. Accountability standards

remain essential, because of man’s heart. But there is really no control over a heart that deceitfully refuses to come under control.

I am grateful that our Fellowship has not been marked by repeated instances of gross immorality, impropriety and mismanagement. The fundamental Bible and Christ-centered churches and leaders that comprise our Fellowship for the most part steer clear of such abuses, due to a genuine commitment to a high view of God’s holiness and the authority and sufficiency of Scripture which marks the nature of the fellowship. Nevertheless, there are other areas of ethical impropriety that need to be addressed.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP ETHICS

I don’t know how to describe this category of ethics other than to label it something like, “pastoral leadership ethics.” This has to do with how we conduct the affairs of the church at the leadership level. How we show regard and respect for a local church’s positions and philosophies of ministry, whether specifically stated or implied. How we make use of the Bible, how we make use of guiding documents and how we give honor and respect to established traditions of the church and its developed culture over its particular history.

Let me propose the following as a basic framework for considering this issue of pastoral leadership ethics. Pastoral leadership ethics should be guided by a high view of Scripture coupled with a high respect for a church's founding purpose as articulated in its organizational documents, its stated or implied philosophy of ministry, as well as its own unique traditions. Some may balk at this point, but please give it some consideration.

Unethical leaders tend to quickly become critical of a church's history and begin to, intentionally or unintentionally, pick away at it at one or all levels: doctrinal, philosophical and/or practical/traditional. The tactics of the unethical leader include isolation of one or more persons to win over to one's personal point of view and manipulation by building a case with the use of biblical and extra-biblical eisegesis. Another tactic involves constant criticism with the goal of withdrawal. In IFCA circles this comes in the form of a negative spirit devoid of the constructive input which attempts to better the Fellowship. This process leads to withdrawal from active participation in IFCA related events, including Regional gatherings (in a form of passive withdrawal). Soon there is sufficient inactivity and involvement to conclude that "there is really no benefit in being a part of IFCA," leading to eventual and actual separation and final withdrawal altogether. The pastor and the church "pull out" of fellowship with IFCA International, sufficient rationale being in place to legitimize withdrawal. Taking an IFCA church pastorate with the ultimate intention of withdrawing it from membership is unethical.

ETHICAL CHANGE

One of our faithful IFCA pastors carefully led the church he was pastoring through a period of careful change. Upon his arrival at the church it was doubtful that all the men in leadership were truly saved. Aside from that, certain long standing families in the church held influence over decision making simply because they were substantial contributors to the church for many years. However, the issue must

always be "what do the Scriptures say" (not what we have always done or who it has always been done for). Change took place patiently, persistently and deliberately around the nature of Scripture, not personal influence and pressure. Weekly Saturday morning doctrinal studies were implemented, and over the course of months and years, personal relationships were built around principles of and commitment to the authority of Scripture. This was not the work of a few manipulative leaders behind the scenes, but a corporate and open process of discipleship based on a mutual commitment to truth over personal authority and ambition. This process has taken decades, but it has resulted in long term and wide ranging spiritual impact.

We honor and respect the Scriptures not only by maintaining positions of sound doctrine, but also by maintaining standards of sound living – ethical behavior, if you will. We are to conduct ourselves honorably in the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15).

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With solid biblical foundation, local churches can have legitimate traditions. I'll be quick to agree that often a church can become "stuck in tradition" to the point that tradition trumps biblical truth. This, of course, is unacceptable. However, certain biblically consistent traditions are legitimate. They are not only inevitable, they are also necessary and healthy. They contribute to the stability and security of a local church when properly established on biblical precept and principle and flexible enough to accommodate natural change without compromise. Just as family traditions contribute to the

sense of security, stability and mutual affection over the years, so too the local church family needs to have healthy and well established traditions that mutually encourage everyone in meaningful ways.

We honor and respect the Lord and his church when we recognized long held and established traditions within a given local church. Attempts to critically and covertly make changes for purposes of personal preference and ambition is dishonoring to Christ (1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6). Local churches establish many traditions, biblically based and preferred, that ought not to be violated. Any change to endeared traditions should only occur by fuller biblical instruction and consensus of mutually respectful deliberations over time.

Leading a local assembly through change of any significance should carefully take into consideration its full impact on all aspects and persons of the fellowship. Note, the key word here is *leading*, not dictating nor manipulating. Unilateral decisions by "pastoral authority" serve only to undermine biblical principles of servant leadership, as well as the Spirit's mode of handling all things with grace and truth. The church is a family, not a peer group, and as such should be carefully and tenderly led and cared for with equal consideration for young and old alike. If there is to be any deference, biblically it ought to be on the part of the "younger to the older," rather than the other way around (1 Peter 5:5). Opportunism must be resisted and rejected at all levels. Because of our unique and privileged position, church leaders can fall into the temptation of rule by edict or coercion. Divide and conquer is never a Spirit inspired tactic.

There is always a reason why a church has established a doctrinal statement along with organizational ruling and guiding documents. These must be respected. They also should be thoroughly reviewed and reaffirmed on an annual basis. Ethical pastoral leadership must be up front, transparent and open hearted. If you accept a church with different personal and doctrinal convictions than yours, let it be known early on. Don't seek to change things

“after the fact” or in the back of your mind compromise your position, only hoping to change things later.

Many churches and church leaders get into unnecessary conflict simply because they neglect or disregard the ruling documents. Deliberately or not, such careless neglect will always lead to eventual disunity through confusion, polarization, and competition for control. This ought not to be, nor does it have to be. Such foolish neglect can be avoided when there is the disciplined desire to do so.

CONFLICT AND ETHICS

Avoiding conflict is not a matter of passively avoiding conflict; it is a matter of ethical determination and personal biblical discipline on the part of leaders in the church. We must humbly submit to one another, which will include humbly submitting to the work of those who have labored before us in composing and implementing guiding principles and documents for the church.

Unethical leadership will seek to

isolate one or more persons in an attempt to “win them over.” This is done through curious questioning designed to cast doubt, followed by a convincing argument with an aura of superficial humility, care and concern – all the while working for self-motivated change, often citing and using scriptural support in the process (badly exegeted via eisegesis). The only counter measure is openness and transparency through the incorporation of multiple levels of input and consultation.

This is not to conclude that personal and private discussions are never appropriate or necessary. In fact, such casual sessions are quite normal as a natural part of the process. However, when they become a repeated pattern in the planning and strategy sessions and exclude the broader body of legitimate decisions makers, the ethical line has been violated. Whether it is between the pastor and one elder, or pastor and a deacon, or an elder and deacon, or the pastor and the janitor....whatever the scenario, such

scheming is inappropriate and divisive. The Pharisaical tactic of putting forth a public persona of openness (falsely so) and then practicing private scheming is an abomination to biblical leadership.

Paul’s principled exhortation was, “O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open... Open *your hearts* to us” (see 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:4)

LOVE FIRST, LEAD THROUGH CHANGE LATER

You have a lot to learn from your congregation and historical leaders who have preceded you in the ministry. Your new ideas or personal convictions are not automatically accepted simply because you have been called to serve as a pastor of the flock. Trust must be earned over time. Time brings the clarity required to discern what could and should change, as well as what should be honored for tradition sake.

The apostle was very careful in the manner in which he handled the local church. As difficult as the church was at Corinth, he was careful not to lead by force of authority, but by truth declared by word, heart and life.

The IFCA International Home Office offers a simple suggested Standard of Ministerial Ethics that a local church may choose to consider for implementation within its ruling documents. Such a tool should never be implemented as a means of control, but rather as a guide to reinforce the Fellowship’s reasoned commitments to high biblical standards.

Dan Fredericks serves as IFCA International Director of Church and Pastoral Ministries.

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The Tightrope of Separation

— John Miles —



Recently I read an article which began, “Some time ago a man said to me, ‘I drink beer in the pub in my spare time. Some guys I know go out chasing women. So what’s the difference? Your hobby is Christianity.’ To think that a man could look at me and say that Christianity was just a pleasant spare time occupation like collecting stamps or yachting. Is that my definition of Christianity? Do I put it second, or do I put it first?”

This quotation points out the fact that if our faith does not change our lives, even the world questions the genuineness of our profession.

OUR FAITH MUST AFFECT OUR LIVES

We want to consider in this article the subject of biblical separation, particularly the thought of being wholly dedicated unto God. No issues become more clouded than those that surround the doctrine of separation. And I believe the fuzziness and fear that sur-

round this subject are brought about by Satan for at least four reasons. First, God in His program, by His very nature, is calling men and women out of the world, out of darkness and sin and guilt, into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son which is the kingdom of light and holiness and blessing. That is separation. This is the work of God; therefore, Satan hates it.

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Second, the whole program of Satan revolves around confusion, mixture, syncretism. Every plan of Satan involves mixing evil with good. The way he puts people in bondage is by means of this unholy mixture.

Third, Satan seeks to convince the Christian that there is a realm of satisfaction and happiness out there in the world. He seeks to glamorize the world system controlled by Satan and to make Christians feel they are missing much unless they get involved in his system.

Fourth, Satan seeks to convince the Christian of the lie that if they yield themselves to God, it will mean frustration and unhappiness rather than freedom, blessing, and joy.

THREE KEY WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

There are three words that must come into focus when considering this subject. The first is the word “holiness,” a crucial word that seems to frighten some believers. God is a holy God, a God of perfect righteousness. He says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). It is God’s aim and ambition to conform us to the image of Himself, to make us like Himself. Holiness is God’s directive for us.

The second word is “world,” or a similar form of the word, “worldliness.” This embraces all that Satan offers, the whole enticement of the devil to keep us from holiness. So on the one hand we have holiness; on the other hand we have that which is contrary to it: the world’s system, the devil’s program to keep men from being what God wants them to be.

The third word, which falls in between, is “separation.” This word portrays the concept that God urges us to be separate *unto* Himself and to be separate *from* Satan’s kingdom. Separation is always unto God first

(Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.”) That is positive and must be done first. 1 Thessalonians 1:9 expresses it beautifully: “and how you turned *to* God *from* idols, to serve the living and true God.” Notice that movement. They did not turn from idols first. They first turned to God to receive Jesus Christ, to give their lives to Him. That automatically cut them off from idols and idolatry and idol worship. Separation is not merely turning away from something; it is turning to Someone, and that One is God.

CAUTION, AVOID EXTREMES

People have gone to extremes on the subject of separation. By extreme I mean that people tend to go beyond Scripture, or stress one phase while ignoring another. It is just as harmful to go beyond what God says as it is to fall short.

There are people who believe concerning this subject that the harshest attitude is always the best one. But that is not always true. The disciples James and John, seeing some opposition to our Lord, said in Luke 9:54, “Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did?” In other words, “Lord, these people are opposed to you. Would it not be good that they should be destroyed by fire immediately?” The Lord’s answer indicated that their extreme position was out of keeping with the spirit of Jesus (vv. 55-56): “But he turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’”

On the other extreme, there are some who feel that the attitude of extreme toleration of sin is the correct attitude for Christians. But note that the Corinthian church was rebuked by the apostle Paul for a failure to deal with sin. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:2 concerning sin that was in their midst, “And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that has done

this deed might be taken away from among you.” The apostle ordered that the offender be separated from them.

The balance is perfectly demonstrated in the life of Jesus. The Bible says concerning Jesus that He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14); grace representing tenderness, mercy, love; truth representing righteousness, severity, firmness. These qualities do not contradict one another but must be kept in perfect balance. They were in perfect balance in the person Jesus Christ, our Lord. So it must be for us as we draw conclusions on separation. We must keep a perfect balance as to what the Scriptures say.

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One of the problems we confront in discussing separation is the temptation to lose an objective stance and to begin thinking in terms of personalities or organizations. Often proponents of names and movements and organizations assail other Christians and say, “Unless you take my position and associate with me and with my movement, you are a worldly brother and are not separated unto God.” At times their tone sounds a bit like that of John in Luke 9:49 when he said, “Master, we saw one casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us.” By His answer Jesus indicated there is a difference between following Christ and following us. Not everyone who follows Christ follows you or me. The important thing is that we follow Christ, obey the Scriptures, do the will of God. I am not concerned about movements or names. I am not concerned with judging you or with you judging me. I am concerned that all of us understand what the Bible says about separation that we might be wholly given over to almighty God.

Too often some preacher, wildly acclaiming ecclesiastical separation, has run off with another man’s wife or been caught embezzling church funds. His separation was only a facade. On the other hand, many preachers shun liquor and tobacco and certain amusements but enter gladly into worship with a Bible rejecting, Christ-denying liberal who is the enemy of God. His separation is non-existent. May God help us to be scriptural and to be free from hypocrisy and false motives while at the same time pursuing biblical separation unto God.

WORLDLINESS DEFINED

What is a definition of the term “the world” or “worldliness?” Romans 12:2 says, “Be not conformed to this world.” That passage of Scripture really describes the whole matter. In 1 John 2:15 we find, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” In both passages, God is saying there is something out there which we as Christians are not to love. A true Christian is contrary to it. We are not to love the world because we are contrary to it.

Different words are translated “world” in the New Testament. One word refers to the inhabited earth. Another refers to an age or time and it can have a wicked connotation. A third word is the one which is most frequently used. It is the the Greek word *kosmos*.

The world (*kosmos*) is that system organized by God’s enemy Satan. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer in his theology defined the world as “civilization functioning apart from God.” The unseen powers of spiritual evil, which have Satan as their head, are organized on a vast scale with great efficiency (Ephesians 6:12). This evil organization dominates the lives of unredeemed humanity and Satan rules this kingdom in opposition to God and everything devoted to God and everyone dedicated to God. As Dr. Chafer expressed it, this civilization is dominated by Satan, functions apart from God, does not recognize God, and has a philosophy of independence. People of this world’s system say: “I have a right to go my own way, do my own thing, be what I want to be. I don’t owe God anything, I

owe no allegiance to anyone.” That is the philosophy of Satan and the world. It is this world system which God says “do not love it, do not be conformed to it.” And so essentially we as Christians are to have no association with the world’s philosophies, ideas, pollutions or system. Because this world is functioning apart from God and in opposition to Him.

Jesus noted the line of demarcation between the world and the believer in His high priestly prayer in John 17. He used the term “world” many times in that prayer, differentiating us from unbelievers and projecting us into the holy of holies with Him in heaven. The Lord Jesus said in verse 14, “the world hated them” (i.e. the believers). The world (i.e. the organized system of Satan opposed to God) hates the true believers in Christ, those who are His own. Then Jesus added, “they (i.e. the believers) are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Jesus and believers have something in common: neither is of the world. Then in verse 15 He said, “I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil” that is, the evil of this world, the evil one who dominates the world. Our Lord was praying not that the believers be taken out of the world, but that the Father would keep them from the world, its influences, temptations, sins, wickedness, everything that Satan, who dominates the world offers.

A series of statements will help us get the perspective:

- Our contrast with the world arises out of who we are in Jesus Christ. You see, Christ is contrary to the world and we have been placed into Christ, so we are therefore contrary to the world. It says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” That is our position in Jesus Christ. We are also commanded “Be holy (i.e. you believers be set apart), for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). God in essence is saying, “I am set apart from all sin; therefore you be set apart from all sin.”

- Then He says, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19). People are prone to call a church building the temple of God, but it actually is not. The only sense in which a church building is the temple of God is that believers, who are the temple of God, meet there for worship. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Now, even as we are urged to respect places of worship, much more should we respect this place of worship which is our body, the temple of God. It is a place set apart, a place of holiness, separateness, devotion, worship, blessing—it houses God.

*There is a war on.
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- The Scriptures emphasize to us that there are opposing persons, God and Satan. There is a war on. The banners are light and darkness. We are in enemy territory, a dominion dominated by Satan. Recognize, therefore, that we are God’s soldiers, and we should always be opposed to Satan.

- God calls us pilgrims. What is a pilgrim? He certainly is not one who has roots in the world; his home is elsewhere. We are here just as ambassadors, pilgrims, strangers. This world is not our home. We are in the world, but not of the world.

These statements give us an indication of our relationship with this world system. We are the children of God, Christian soldiers, on the side of God, under His banner. We are His people, and He is saying to us, never allow your loyalty to be questioned in any way. Let no one ever identify us as the soldiers of Satan, as the children of the devil.

There is another word derived from the word “world” which needs to be explained. “Worldliness” is not a scriptural term, although it is certainly a scriptural concept. Worldliness is any human activity apart from God which does not consider God and operates with an attitude of independence from God. Worldliness seeks success in the world’s eyes. Yet the prime objective of the true Christian must be holiness, the glory of God, the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and the edification of other believers.

Whatever in this life occupies the place that God should occupy is worldliness, whether people identify it as such or not. Whatever dims our love, our loyalty, our view of God, is worldliness. Whatever comes between us and God, whatever Satan uses to accomplish this kind of attitude or condition is worldliness. Whatever denies our pilgrim character is worldliness. Anything that tends to root us in this world so that we say, “This world is my home, my objective, my final purpose in life,” is worldliness.

Worldliness covers all areas of our lives: our body with its appetites such as hunger, thirst, sleepiness or sex. Hearing, seeing, feeling and tasting all enter into the subject, as well as appetites of the mind and ambitions. Education, success, prominence, rival claims of career, home, family, money, comfort, all of our objectives enter into the area that we are discussing. Jesus spoke of it in Matthew 16:24 when He said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” What does it mean to deny one’s self? It means to say “no” to your own ambitions, desires, purposes, motives in life, and to say “yes” to God. You in essence say: “Everything belongs to you, Lord; I’m going to be devoted to you, I belong to you.”

FALSE STARTS

There are several false starts that we can make in the matter of separation. There is no doubt that God has called us to a position of separation. The question is how and in what way? There are several false responses that have been devised by man.

The first response is asceticism. There are those who have said that Christians are not of this world and so they must get away from the world completely. Those who advocated this are called ascetics and they became hermits, went to monasteries, caves, deserts and the wilderness. They said they had to get away from man and pleasures in order to be separate unto God. That however was a complete distortion of Scripture because we are commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Scripture has told us to witness to, live before, and seek to reach men for Christ. After ascetics got out in the deserts and caves they discovered they brought the world with them because the sinful impulses exhibited in the world were also in them. Satan appealed to their pride, self, and false motives even when they were alone, and the world manifested itself in them. Wherever we go we take the sinful impulses exhibited in the world with us. Asceticism is not the answer.

The second response of men has been a negative legalism. This is the idea of prohibiting certain practices not designated in the Word of God. The thought is that if we give up these certain practices, worldliness will be gone and separation will be achieved. The only trouble is that legalism merely creates a vacuum. Matthew 12 speaks about the man who by his own effort cast out certain things (most of us would be surprised what people can do by their own effort). But this man was empty and open to be possessed by worse things. People (empty sinners) can cast out certain practices, only to discover that along come other practices and sins, such as gossip and hatred and maliciousness, which enter and take over. Legalism will never answer anything, whether it is negative or positive. Getting rid of things may make an outward show, but it will leave the life empty and void and disillusioned.

The third response is compromise. This says that we must not only befriend the world, we must unite with

it, fraternize with the enemies of God. Someone has called this infiltration, but God never told you or me to infiltrate. We must be distinct from the world. Compromise says we must try to make Christianity appealing to the world by making it like the world, but the result will be that the world takes over. This is capitulation to the world.

THE O.T. COMMAND FOR SEPARATION

Separation is pictured in many ways in the Old Testament. If Eve had separated herself from Satan when he first went to her and projected doubts in her mind, everything would have been different. It is because Eve (and then Adam) refused to separate themselves from the lies of Satan that they fell into sin. The account of Noah and the Flood is a record of separation from an ungodly world. Abraham was called out of one land away from a pagan people to another land where God would establish him and all of his people after him. That is separation. Then cen-

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turies later Moses received the Law of God which very clearly established the differences between Israel and the pagan nations, differences which were to be distinct and unwavering. Yet the nation often failed to maintain those standards, instead choosing to compromise with the nations of their world.

There is a clear illustration of sin and compromise in the Old Testament that is important to note. It is the case of Jehoshaphat and Ahab. Jehoshaphat was the godly king of Judah and Ahab was the ungodly king of Israel. These two, who had nothing in common, made a military agreement as allies. Ahab and his wife Jezebel were worshipers of Baal, Ashteroth and other false gods. Jehoshaphat was a godly man, a worshiper of Jehovah, and one of the best kings of Israel, yet he went down and made that alliance with Ahab, saying, "We're going to join together in mutual enterprise." When they did so, it was all to Jehoshaphat's loss. Finally we hear Jehu in 2 Chronicles 19 saying to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked, and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore, there is wrath upon you from the Lord." That is God's indictment on the compromise of Jehoshaphat.

UNEQUALLY YOKED

With the Old Testament as background, the chief New Testament passage of Scripture on the subject of separation is 2 Corinthians 6: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." It gets its meaning from Deuteronomy 22:10, which says, "You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together." An ox and an ass are two different types of beasts completely. The ox is a big, ponderous animal that moves very slowly with tremendous strength; an ass (or donkey) is an animal that weighs perhaps a third as much as an ox and moves quicker, not at all like an ox. They are different in temperament, weight and movement. To harness them so that they plow together would be an impossible situation. They have nothing in common. God used an illustration of something which cannot mix or work together and applied it in Deuteronomy 7:1-11 with

such statements concerning Israel and the people of the land as this: "You shall make no covenant with them" (those seven nations that are wicked and rotten and corrupt, you will make no covenant with them) "neither shall you make marriages with them ... they will turn away your son from following me." Mark that in our thinking. What will unholy alliances and compromise do? They will destroy our children. We say it's nice to get together with the world, be like the world, adopt the practices of the world. Yes, but in the compromise we will destroy our children. That is what God said to the nation Israel. And that is what is said to us in 2 Corinthians 6:14. We may say we'll get away with it and do our own thing and be our own boss, but what about our children? They are the ones who will suffer, they are the ones who will adopt those compromising ways. God said to the nation Israel and to the Corinthians, "you are a holy people unto the Lord thy God... be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

What will unholy alliances and compromise do? They will destroy our children.

FOUR AREAS OF CONTRAST

In that crucial New Testament passage on separation in 2 Corinthians 6, God gives us four areas of contrast. Note that there is nothing in common in any of these areas.

The first contrast is the matter of principles and standards. In verse 14 it asks: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness?" What possible fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? If it is righteous, it is not unrighteous; and if it is unrighteous, it is not righteous. These utterly contradict each other. It is just like light and darkness: if it is dark, it is not light, and if it is light, it is not dark. It is just the same thing as

saying that God has learned to live in peaceful coexistence with Satan (which is impossible). Or that righteousness can stand unrighteousness—impossible. They cannot be together in any sense of the word.

The second contrast is the matter of allegiance. In verse 15 it asks: "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" Obviously He is saying that Christ and Satan have nothing in common; they have two opposing armies. Christ heads one army, Satan heads another, and they have nothing in common. They are at war with each other. A Christian cannot possibly be a friend of Jesus Christ and a friend of Satan at the same time. The moment you become a friend of Satan you are at enmity with Jesus Christ, who hates and despises everything that Satan is or stands for. He says in 1 Corinthians 10:21: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot be partaker of the Lord's table and of the table of demons." And in James 4:4 He says: "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" It makes you an enemy of God; it puts you in the enemy camp. There should never be any question about our loyalty to Christ. This second principle is extremely vital. We will have to make the decision regarding our allegiance to Jesus Christ. If we run around under the banner of Satan, are part of Satan's crowd and our loyalties are to Satan, we will have to answer to God for disloyalty and treachery.

By way of illustration, I am a loyal American, and it disturbs me greatly when anyone is disloyal to our country. It hurts when people side with the enemy and run down our country. Likewise, stop to think how it hurts God when we side with and become a part of the enemy and look and act like the devil's crowd. God is saying that our allegiance must be above question. Our allegiance must be to God alone.

The third contrast is the matter of people and faith. In verse 15 it asks: "What part has a believer with an unbeliever?" A believer believes in God and trusts in Jesus Christ as Savior. That puts him in a whole new area of life, having been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translat-

ed into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13). An infidel says, "I don't believe in God, I don't believe in Christ; I don't need your Savior, I have nothing to do with your Savior." That divides everyone into two camps: believers and unbelievers. So God says to us, "What part has a believer with an unbeliever?" The answer is, nothing. We have nothing whatsoever in common. Don't misunderstand. A believer is to seek contact with the world, love the people in this world, and seek to reach people for Jesus Christ. But he is never to go to the world for satisfaction or affirmation in his faith. Unbelievers have one basic need and that is to be born again. The only way we are going to help is to be concerned, to have our hearts burdened, and remain in a solid position as we seek to bring them out through Jesus Christ.

Someone recently asked, "Must we make the gospel relevant?" The preaching of the gospel has never seemed relevant to unbelievers, but it has to be proclaimed, not apologized for, or watered down, or twisted in the interests of immediate relevance, or half-altered to suit the time or disguised to get it past an unbeliever's guard. It has to be preached in all its seeming irrelevance, above the cat calls and sneers of those who hate or despise it, in the face of the amused contempt of those whose vanity leads them to feel superior to it. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." That is what God tells us to do.

The fourth contrast is in the matter of religion. In verse 16 it asks: "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?" Matthew 13 talks about a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while he slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. What were those tares? They were religion embodied in teaching and people. The Lord Jesus sowed the good seed of the Word of God, and immediately Satan came along and sowed his false religion in the midst, the purpose being to produce his false fruit and make that fruit look just as much like the true fruit of God as he possibly

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could. The devil has been doing that ever since. It also tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:14, "And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works." Believers who accept the Bible as the Word of God, believe in the blood of Christ, the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection of Christ, salvation through faith alone apart from good works, have absolutely nothing in common with an unbeliever who is religious but does not believe the same things. God never asked us to dialogue with them or see what we have in common, because we have nothing in common. He never asked us to get together in religious services with them so that we can show our good will. We should not hate them, but we hate the counterfeit religion of their belief because it is utterly false and is sending millions of people to hell because it rejects the biblical Christ. Someone may think that's awfully strong. Yes, it is strong but it is true to 2 Corinthians 6. There is only one true way to God, and that way is Jesus Christ and His shed blood. We cannot help anyone else unless we are sure of that, unless we make clear to them that this is the way, the only way. So as a consequence, Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:5 regarding men of the world, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; from such turn away." And in 1 Timothy 6:5 he says, "From such withdraw yourself." In 2 John 10-11 we read not to help them further their false teaching: "If there come any ... into your house, neither bid him Godspeed; For he that bids him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds."

A CHANGE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

In 2 Corinthian 6:16, Paul says, "For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This is the position from which we talk of separation.

We will never really believe in separation unless we believe that God has

changed us, made us a new creation, and indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit. We will never really believe in separation, never believe that we are to be given over completely to God, that our body is to be pure, clean and presented to the Lord, unless we really believe that we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God indwells us. As a consequence, we are commanded in verse 17, "Therefore [referring back to what he has just said in verses 14-16], come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." There is no doubt about the command, no doubt about why it is given.

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Listen to the wonderful promises which follow: "I will receive you" (v. 17). If we have accepted the Lord Jesus as Savior, He has received us for salvation. If you have not been willing to identify your loyalty with Jesus Christ and Him alone, there is a sense in which you are not received. Jesus says in this passage of Scripture to come out from among them, be separate, realize the distinctions that are there, and He will receive us with blessing as His own, to teach us, instruct us, multiply us, make us fruitful for Him. Then He gives another promise in verse 18: "I will be a father unto you." Some of us in the middle of frustrations and problems say, "I have almost lost the concept that God is my loving heavenly father." Let me say this, if we are not separate unto God, we won't know much about God as our father. We won't know much about

God as our shepherd, our sustainer, the One Who feeds us, the One Who blesses us. If there was ever a time when we needed to know God as our Father, the One Who loves and cares for us, meets our every need, anticipates our problems before they ever come, it is today.

"Come out from among them and be separate ... I will receive you and shall be a father unto you ... you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord almighty."

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John Miles served as President of Grand Rapids (MI) School of Bible and Music for many years. He now teaches part-time at Frontier School of the Bible in LaGrange, WY. He is a long-time member of IFCA International.

Lessons in Preparing Leaders

— Gregory J. Miller —



In my thirty years of field ministry I have observed the development of churches from conversion to congregation to consolidation. Sometime during this process, church planters become anxious about the preparation of leaders to assume the care and feeding of the flock.

Let me state the ministry of mentoring and empowering national leadership from a different perspective. *"In truth, we do not train leadership. We cooperate with the Holy Spirit in preparing men and women to serve with the Body of Christ."* We prepare persons for service by bringing them into contact with the Word and the information for the development of ministry skills. Appropriate methodology for interacting with the learner requires a program that is culturally appropriate, financially affordable and geographically accessible.

Following are five experiences I have had and how they have caused me to reflect on this leadership preparation process.

GOD IS IN CHARGE

Jeremiah 3:15 *"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."* Our Lord Jesus is building His church. It is His and He will call and equip men of His choice to shepherd His flock. I would neither embark on a mentoring program nor invest in a person who does not evidence a divine calling to service. This can be expressed verbally, observed in service, or testified to by peers. I cannot recall exactly how many young candidates for the ministry have come to me seeking help for seminary entrance simply because they could not find secular employment or were refused entry into the state university.

GOD PERCEIVES DIFFERENTLY

1 Timothy 4:12 *"Let no man despise thy youth..."* Ricardo was a pest! He disturbed all the church meetings, scrambled in and out of the windows during the service, sang off-key, laughed at our Portuguese and generally upset our plans. Shamefully, looking back, we were delighted when he was absent! Months later into our ministry we discovered that every Sunday afternoon he canvassed the neighborhood and invited people to church. He was responsible for nearly all the visitors,

the children in our Vacation Bible School and "our" visitation ministry. Perhaps more souls came to the Lord through Ricardo's ministry than by our efforts. We despised his antics but the Holy Spirit used his genuine love for others to build that church. Ricardo finished high school, went to seminary, graduated and became a missionary among the indigenous people of our state. He now works among the street children of Brazil.

SERVICE WITH GODLY AUTHORITY

1 Timothy 4:14 *"...with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."* Samuel was a recent graduate of our Bible institute and I persuaded him to stay on as dean of men. We soon perceived that the men did not respect his authority and this was interfering with the operation of the semester's activities. I realized that we had not conferred authority to him but simply given him the position. We then officially installed him in a service appropriate to the river culture with the laying on of hands and designated him as the dean of men. Continually, I had to corroborate his authority as I deferred to him on all questions involving the men's activities. It is essential to empower and confer status, not just once but continually.

PLACE THEM IN GOD'S HANDS

Titus 1:5 *"For this reason I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting..."* Our Bible Institute had been managed by missionaries for thirty years. It was responsible for the preparation of 80 % of our national workers. In 2002 we initiated the process of transferring the direction to national governance. We organized a board and chose José to be the director. I had known José as a student and fellow pastor and as director of the national worker's program. Two years later the Bible institute was a seminary pending accreditation to confer the bachelor's degree. José invited me to teach one semester at the Amazon Seminary. When I arrived on campus I was struck with the realization that I was no longer in charge. I no longer chose the curriculum material, schedule or activities. I had no keys! Knowing when to leave is a gift. It is not if we leave but when and under what conditions we depart. It is easier to "turn over" a work if there has been mutual collaboration beforehand.

Knowing when to leave is a gift. It is not if we leave but when and under what conditions we depart.

GOD MAKES US ALL DIFFERENT!

1 Corinthians 12:4 *"now there are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit."* Pastor Lindomar was operated for intestinal cancer on the same day I had prostate surgery. We are survival brothers of cancer! Many felt that his ministry was finished as a result of his colostomy. Yet God has used him this past year to become the leader and mentor for our other pastors and seminarians. He is the elected president of the mission and uses his unique gifts to oversee the work here in Cuiabá, Brazil. When the foreign missionaries

leave it will be he and his team who will continue the missionary activities using spiritual gifts given to them by the same Spirit.

GODLY LEADERS GENERATE GODLY LEADERS

2 Timothy 2:2 *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."* Moisés is probably my best friend. We have worked together for the growth of his church and the initiation of several programs for teens, evangelism and missions. However the most significant aspect of the maturation of Moisés has been his ability to influence others. This is evident in his evangelism and community contacts.

A Christian leader is a person with a God-given capacity to influence God's people towards His divine will for them that His Name might be glorified through them. What incredible arrogance to suppose that we, as field

missionaries, are responsible for the work that God does in and through persons whom He has called, equipped and sent.

Greg Miller has been an IFCA member for over 15 years and currently serves with UFM/Crossworld in Brazil.

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No Greater Joy

Men Who Returned to the Pastorate

— Steve Johnson —



A little girl saw a man standing in line looking serious and sour. “Excuse me sir, are you a minister?” she asked. The man replied, “No, but I have been sick for about three weeks.”

No doubt it is possible for the stresses of pastoral ministry to have a negative impact on a man to the point that he appears to others to be either sad, somber, or sick. And maybe the image some pastors have projected to people is less than joyful. But I do not believe God intended the ministry to do that to us. I believe that if we recognize the privilege of our high calling from God we will be better equipped to face the demands and the difficulties of ministry with a better attitude. The Apostle Paul told Timothy, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” (1 Tim. 1: 12).

I was given the opportunity recently to correspond with three men who have left respectable positions in well-known Christian colleges and seminaries in order to return to pas-

toral ministry. I greatly appreciate the time each man took to graciously respond to my question regarding what led to their decision. It is my hope that their comments might encourage pastors who may be losing their “edge” or faltering in their passion for shepherding God’s flock. Perhaps the Lord may use these testimonies to ignite in all of us a fresh appreciation for our calling.

Three men who have left respectable positions in well-known Christian colleges and seminaries in order to return to pastoral ministry.

Dr. Joseph Stowell served in the high profile position as President of Moody Bible Institute for eighteen years. One would assume that such a position would be occupied until retirement. But in February of 2005 he stepped down from that role to become a teaching pastor at Harvest Bible Chapel in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. Dr. Stowell said, “I have always felt that my calling in life was

different than the ‘position’ that God has given me. Positions are just for a season, but my calling in life is that I am a follower of Jesus... If you are a follower of Jesus then you are free to move as He leads you. Getting yourself all hyped up about your position is a pride trap that will make you stay too long. Seeing yourself as a follower of Jesus no matter where you are and what title you have keeps you free and following.”

Dr. Robert Nienhuis left pastoral ministry in 1988 to pursue a doctoral degree. The years that followed took him into a series of positions in higher education, most recently as Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer for Cornerstone University and Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. He did not expect to return to the pastorate.

However, God had a different plan. While serving as an elder at his church, the Lord opened up an opportunity for Dr. and Mrs. Nienhuis to minister to a family in their care group who was facing a health crisis which eventually resulted in death. That experience of walking with a family through a critical time became a turning point. Nienhuis said, “I felt like God had awakened my ‘pastoral juices.’” As he and his wife reflected on the privilege that was theirs to minister to this family in special and significant ways, he wondered aloud if

he should think about a return to pastoral ministry. After spending a week in Florida in January, 2006, the Nienhuis' determined that if God wanted Bob to be a pastor, he was willing. Within nine months, he stepped into the role of Senior Pastor of a Liberty Bible Church outside of Chicago.

Dr. Johnny V. Miller served as President of Columbia International University from 1991 to 1999. But for the past eight years he has ministered as Senior Pastor of Calvary Church in Lancaster, PA. Dr. Miller confessed that after eight years as a college President he was "burned out on administration and longing to return to my first love, the ministry of the Word of God for the transformation of lives."

That deep longing to preach and teach the Word of God is a common thread woven into the decision of all three of these men. Upon announcing his resignation from MBI in August 2004, Dr. Stowell told the faculty and

students that his decision was guided by a growing sense of calling that the next season of his life should be focused more strategically on using his gifts to encourage the Church and advance the cause of Christ through the preaching and teaching of God's Word. In his statement he explained, "God has laid on my heart a calling that I cannot deny. Over the last few years I have had a growing and now unshakable conviction that God is calling me to give myself singularly to His Word and its lifechanging impact through the ministry of preaching and teaching."

Likewise, Dr. Neinhuis stated, "Each week I have the privilege of studying the Word of God and preparing messages for Sunday Given my gifts and my passion, I felt the church to be the place where I could make the greatest contribution preaching the Word in a way that would challenge and strengthen the hearers."

And similarly, Dr. Miller declared,

"There is no greater joy than to see lives changed by the power of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling Christ through the teaching of Scripture. And that seems to take place best through a consistent, longterm ministry in a church."

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Perhaps for many of us the week-to-week grind of study and sermon writing, coupled with the many other demands and responsibilities of ministry can cause us to lose some of the fire we had when we started out. Preaching can become a source of pressure rather than a privilege. Being a pastor can become more of a burden than a blessing. It is at this point that we must ask God to help us recapture our sense of passion for ministry. The Apostle Paul said in Col. 1:25, "Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God" (NASB).

If we can always be conscious that being a pastor is a "stewardship from God" and not just a job, it may give us a better appreciation for what God has given us to do. Paul goes on to say in Col. 1:28-29, "We proclaim Him,

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admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me" (NASB).

In that regard, Dr. Nienhuis puts pastoral ministry into proper perspective when he says, "The church is not man's creation; God has brought the church into being to be a place where believers are encouraged and strengthened and as the means by which His work is accomplished in the world. I have always believed in the church and wanted, by God's grace and to His glory, to do my part to help the church fulfill its God-given purposes."

Pastors, remember that we have been given by God both a stewardship and a power. We are privileged to teach and preach His Word for the purpose of helping believers progress toward completeness in Christ. And it is by His power that we accomplish it, not our own.

In his closing words to me Robert Nienhuis said, "Each week I am humbled by the thought that God, in His grace and love, has called me to this privileged position." I can only ask God to help me feel that same sense of humility and privilege every time I step into my office, my study, and my pulpit.

It has been rightly said that "success is finishing the work God has given us, and no one else, to do."¹

Truly, there is no greater work and no greater joy.

ENDNOTE:

¹ Derek Prime and Alistair Begg, *On Being a Pastor* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004), 307.

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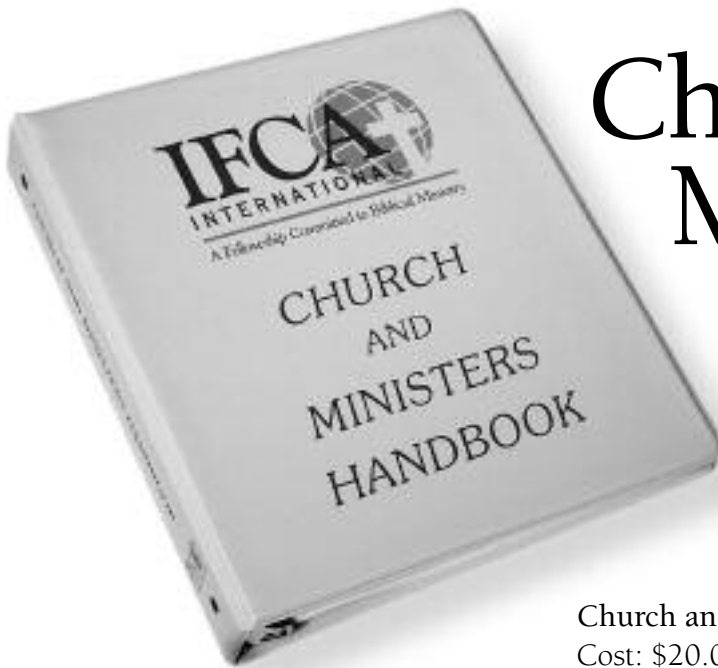
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The Cultural Significance of Shame in the Bible

— M. Scott Bashoor —



INTRODUCTION¹

As American readers we tend to be culturally unaware of the social dynamics of shame in the Bible, and this can diminish our appreciation of some Biblical dynamics. There are three different dimensions to shame (ethical, emotional, and cultural), but when Americans speak of shame, they usually only do so in terms of the first two categories. In most other cultures, the third category of shame is rather prominent, and shame acts as a cultural tool that determines the status of individuals and their ranking in society. Saving face and gaining honor become all important. These rankings may or may not have anything to do with real morality—that depends on how biblically attuned the society is.

To illustrate these differences more, consider how modern American culture differs from today's old world Mediterranean. In the small villages of Spain and Italy, townsfolk can be greatly concerned about their honor-ratings. We modern Americans are

much more concerned about our credit-ratings. Western society is more or less driven by economics while Mediterranean society is driven by familial relationships and societal honor. Societal honor depends upon the

Shame acts as a cultural tool that determines the status of individuals and their ranking in society.

recognition of others, and honor is very much dependent upon the eye of the beholder. One's honor is his reputation and his good name, and one will normally attempt to defend it at all costs. In the history of civilization, our culture is somewhat unique in its stress on autonomy and independence. We like to go it alone, and we consider the independent thinker to be principled. In most other cultures, such a person is considered a fool.

These are important clues for the interpreter of the Bible. The Biblical texts we study were written in a culture somewhat preoccupied with the

concepts of honor and shame. Unfortunately, these distinctions are lost on most of us in the West because our society has greatly truncated the use of shame as a social tool. Our most popular Biblical customs books have virtually no discussion of the importance of honor and shame, and many of our commentaries seem blind to these distinctions as well.

SHAME AND HONOR

Honor and shame are the two ends of a single socio-cultural dynamic. The presence of one negates or diminishes the presence of the other. So intertwined are these concepts that in some contexts they can be used interchangeably. A person with a sense of shame is a person who is careful to maintain his honor and status as a reputable person. A shameless person is one who is unconcerned about maintaining honorable status in the eyes of his peers. This illustrates an important point: it is possible for a person to be shamed yet not feel ashamed. In communities where honor and shame loom large, people often resort to extraordinary measures to keep and gain their honor. If their honor is stained by accusations, a response is required to maintain public esteem. If one fails to respond to a challenge to one's honor, his honor is diminished. The offended

party must exact "satisfaction" to cleanse his honor from public shame. This often leads to fights, duels, feuds, and wars.

SHAME IN ANCIENT LITERATURE

The preoccupation of ancient peoples with the topic of shame and honor is evident in their writings. For instance, ancient Akkadian texts (the language of Assyria) reveal that many parents named their children with the thought of protecting them from shame (e.g. A-ia-ba-as-i-li, a name which means "Let me not be put to shame, O my God"). Similar themes are found in the names, prayers, and writings of the Egyptians, Sumerians, Ugarites, and other ancient Near Eastern peoples.

The writings of the ancient Rabbis are also noteworthy. In the Talmud the Rabbis stated, "Everybody must be very careful not to abase another man in public, not to call him a name which puts him to shame, nor to say anything that might embarrass him." It is also stated, "What do people most carefully avoid in Palestine?... Putting others to shame."²

The ancient Greeks and Romans wrote about the cultural significance of shame. For most Greeks the highest good was to have a good name, and the worst evil was to be poorly spoken of. In Roman culture the level of one's honor was often a commodity that was inherited, and only in exceptional circumstances or with remarkable activity could one rise to a new level of social status.

SHAME IN THE BIBLE

There are hundreds of references to shame in both the Old and New Testaments. Shame words include "shame," "dishonor," "reproach," "revilement," "insult," "disgrace," and "byword," to name a few. When one adds to this list the terms found on the other end of the social spectrum ("honor," "glory," "fame," "reputation," etc.), it becomes clear what a dominant theme this is within Scripture. Examples of the experience of shame include lowering the head, hiding the face, blushing, growing

pale, and wearing sackcloth and ashes. Examples of shaming others include taunting, teasing, harassing, blaspheming, spitting, wagging the head, and hissing.

There are hundreds of references to shame in both the Old and New Testaments.

Social shaming takes place in three basic kinds of scenarios. The most common form is "informal social shaming." This sort of shaming takes place in the forum of daily interaction. Many of God's choicest servants endured this sort of street shaming, like Jeremiah who endured much taunting for his preaching (Jer. 20:7-10). The psalms often contain pleas for protection from informal social shame (Pss. 4, 22, 25, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 42, 44, 55, 57, 69, 70, 71, 74, 79, 80, 89, 102, 109, 119, and 123). The natural response was to retaliate against their enemies, but these godly Israelites were learning to trust God for vindication instead (Ps. 15; 35:4, 26). David, who wrote many of these psalms, knew much about honor and shame. Throughout his life he was a victim to his enemies' shaming techniques, but he sometimes utilized those tactics himself, often to his own shame.³ In the Psalms David models a more godly approach to dealing with the loss of honor.

A second form of social shaming is "political-warfare shaming." Military loss and exile is often described in terms of national shame (Isa. 23:9; Nah. 3:10; and Lam. 1:8). When Rabshakeh taunted the Jerusalemites, he was practicing a kind of warfare shaming (2 Kgs. 18:27-35). Hunan the Ammonite politically shamed David's ambassadors when he abducted them and sent them home half-shaved and half-naked (2 Sam. 10:1-5).

A third form of social shaming is "formal judicial shaming." In the Old Testament, God authorized instances

of this sanction. Corporal punishment was intended to have an element of public shame attached to it, but neither the corporal punishment nor the public humiliation was to be excessive (Deut. 25:1-3). A brother who refused to perpetuate the family name by marrying his brother's widow was to be publicly shamed by the widow. She would spit in his face and remove his sandal from his foot, and the stigma remained with the brother till death (Deut. 25:5-10). In the New Testament, the Bible authorizes shame as a sanction in the form of church discipline (2 Thess. 3:14). As with Old Testament sanctions, the shaming is not to be excessive, and if the offender repents, he is to be honorably reinstated.

THE SHAME OF THE CROSS

The most extreme form of formal judicial shaming in the New Testament was crucifixion. This exceedingly cruel form of execution added insult to injury in the worst way. The victim was progressively humiliated. The public trials leading up to the impalement served as degradation rituals, labeling the accused as a shameful person. Victims lost all their property including their clothing, leaving them nude during execution. The shame of nakedness was often compounded by the victim's uncontrollable defecation. The victim was laughably helpless with their limbs pinioned to the cross, and in many cases executioners affixed their victims to the cross in whimsical fashion. Most victims were deprived of honorable burial, their corpses left for scavengers or thrown into mass graves. Anyone who was crucified was deemed utterly devoid of honor and glory, and those associated with the condemned bore the shame of association with him.

With this cultural understanding in mind, the shame of the cross takes on a much more profound significance. When Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16), he was violating all conventions of decency and honor. To Paul's shame-sensitive,

honor-seeking audiences, his preaching about the divine glories of a shamefully executed criminal was utterly shocking. To suggest that God, the ultimate Being possessing ultimate glory, would so utterly debase Himself on a cross was to the ancient mind utter and ultimate folly (1 Cor. 1:18). In a culture wherein people struggled for honor, Paul shamelessly preached that the shamefully crucified Jesus was in actuality the very Lord of glory, the Son of God worthy of all honor. What a shock to the ancient mind! It's amazing that anyone at all in the first century believed the gospel. Truly, it must have been the power of God at work.

PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

There are many pastoral implications from this study, but space will only allow for a few. We learn that when we are wrongfully shamed, the proper response is not to exact revenge and defend one's honor at all costs. God is much better at maintaining and restoring our honor. God will ultimately reverse all misplaced estimations of shame and will vindicate His people. Like Jesus who, when he

was reviled, reviled not again, so we should rest in God to settle matters of our honor.

We must remember that there is a difference between being shamed and being ashamed. When enemies heap wrongful shame estimations upon us, we do not need to internalize them. The psalmists sometimes struggled to understand this and sought God's help to change their thinking as well as their circumstances. The perfect biblical example of refusing to internalize false shame is Jesus. He was shamed terribly, but he disregarded the shame heaped upon him (Heb. 12:2). Instead he internalized the Father's promises of glory and honor which he experienced when he sat down at the Father's right hand. Like Jesus, we must remember that God is the ultimate Bestower of honor and shame. When we're preoccupied with God's opinion, the illegitimate shaming of men will seem less significant to us.

Our study of the shame of the cross and Paul's ministry reminds us to minister for God's glory, not man's approval. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel though by all outward considerations he should have felt deep shame. While social shame is no longer a pivotal value in American society, it is not totally absent from the American landscape. The cross may no longer be a symbol of shame and reproach, but the gospel has not lost all sense of scandal. The gospel of Christ is an exclusive

gospel, the only way to a saving relationship with God. This heavenly claim contradicts the modern conventions of pluralism and ecumenism which view the doctrine of "Christ Alone" as narrow-minded and bigoted. Like Paul, we today need to stand firm, unashamed of Christ's gospel. Only the firm conviction that the gospel is God's power and wisdom will enable us to stand unashamed before the world, knowing that our honor is to come from the Lord of glory.

ENDNOTES

1 This article is an adaptation of Scott's M.Div. and Th.M. theses research on shame in the Bible. For more detailed references, contact Scott at sbashoor@biblechurchbp.org.

2 Yad, De'ot 6:8; Baba Mezia 58b.

3 See Gary Stansell, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives," *Semeia* 68 (1994): 55-79. Consider for instance, 1 Sam 18:23; 1 Sam 15:26-30; 1 Sam 25; 2 Sam 6:16-23; and 2 Sam 19:1-9.

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Messiah's Right to David's Throne

— Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum —



Many modern Rabbis have made special effort to prevent the Jewish people from accepting Yeshua (Jesus) as the Messiah. Many teachings have been developed in an attempt to answer some of the difficult passages that believers often use in evangelism. As we study Scripture from a Jewish perspective, we are able to uncover some of the faulty reasoning used in the Rabbis' teachings. Understanding the perspective of the Jewish leaders in contrast with a Messianic perspective will provide you with a greater ability to share your faith effectively, and will enhance your understanding of the Scriptures.

The legitimate Messiah needed to be a descendant of King David and he needed to be appointed by God. The following Rabbinic account attempts to dispel Yeshua's right to David's throne and, therefore, the legitimacy of His Messiahship. In contrast, the Messianic interpretation is a fascinating study proving that Yeshua truly is the rightful heir of David's throne.

Was Yeshua the Legitimate Messiah ? Modern Rabbis Teach:

Because of the New Testament claim that Jesus was born of a virgin birth, it would have been impossible for him to have been a descendant of the House of David. According to Numbers 1:18, the tribal lineage was traced through the father only. Contrary to Christian teaching, the New Testament, therefore, does not give an account for Mary's ancestry. The accounts in both Matthew and Luke, which are extremely contradictory, demonstrate that Joseph was from the House of David. Because Jesus was claimed to have come from a virgin birth, it would be necessary for Mary to also have been a descendant of the House of David. The real Messiah will be a legitimate heir to the Throne of David; however, this could not have been possible if Jesus had a human Jewish father.

In order to uphold the argument that Jesus was from the House of David and born of the virgin birth, Christians have claimed that Luke's genealogy is really of Mary, not Joseph. This also clears up some of the contradictions between the two accounts; however, it is a false view, which contradicts Jewish tradition.

Was Yeshua the Legitimate Messiah ? Jewish Believers in Messiah Teach:

Of the four Gospels, only two give us a genealogy, the same two that deal with the birth and early life of Jesus. While both Matthew and Luke give us the story of the birth of Jesus, they tell the story from two different perspectives. Matthew tells the story from Joseph's perspective while Luke tells the story from Mary's perspective.

Matthew's genealogy (Matt. 1:1-17) traces the line of Joseph, the step-father of the Messiah. The line is traced from Abraham (v. 2), and continues down to David and Solomon (v. 6), and then to King Jechoniah (v. 11), who was one of the last kings before the Babylonian Captivity. It is the person of Jechoniah that is significant in dealing with the genealogy of Matthew because of the special curse pronounced on him in Jeremiah 22:24-30.

Jeremiah 22:30 says of King Jechoniah:

Thus saith Jehovah, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah.

In the Matthew genealogy, it should be noted that Joseph was a direct descendant of Jechoniah (v. 16). This means, then, that Joseph, having the blood of Jechoniah in his veins, was not qualified to sit on David's throne. This would also mean that no son of Joseph would have the right to claim the Throne of David. In essence, Matthew's point is this: if Jesus were really Joseph's son, He could not claim to sit on David's throne because of Jechoniah's curse. Then Matthew proceeds to show that Yeshua was not truly Joseph's son, for He was born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18-25).

If, by Jewish law, the name of a woman could not be mentioned in a genealogy, but you wished to trace a woman's line, how would you go about doing so? The answer is that you would use the name of her husband. However, if the husband's name were used, that raises a second question. Suppose somebody picked up a genealogy to read; how would he know whether the genealogy is that of the husband or that of the wife because, in either case, it would be the husband's name that was used?

The answer to that riddle lies in a problem with the English language which does not exist with the Greek or Hebrew languages. In English, it is not good grammar to put the word "the" before a proper name. We do not use a definite article before a proper name; such as, the Matthew, the Luke, the Mary, the John. However, this is quite permissible in both Greek and Hebrew grammar. The Greek text of Luke's genealogy is very interesting because of this. In the Greek text, every single name mentioned in the genealogy of Luke has the definite article "the" with one exception, and that is the name of Joseph. His name does not have the definite article "the" in front of it. What that would mean to someone reading the original is this: when he saw the definite article missing from Joseph's name while it was present in all the other names, it would mean that this was not really Joseph's genealogy, rather, it is Mary's genealogy. So, in keeping with Jewish law, it was the husband's name which was used. We have two examples

of this in the Old Testament: Ezra 2:61 and Nehemiah 7:63.

Luke's genealogy traces the line of Mary and portrays how Jesus could claim the Throne of David. The line is traced until it returns to the family of David (vv. 31-32). However, the son of David involved in this genealogy is not Solomon but Nathan. The important point here is that Mary was a member of the House of David totally apart from Jechoniah. Since Jesus was Mary's son, He, too, was a member of the House of David, totally apart from the curse of Jechoniah. In this manner, He fulfilled the first Old Testament requirement for kingship.

*Luke's genealogy
traces the line of Mary
and portrays how Jesus
could claim the Throne
of David.*

However, Yeshua was not the only member of the House of David apart from Jechoniah. There were a number of other descendants who could claim equality with Yeshua to the Throne of David, for they, too, did not have Jechoniah's blood in their veins. At this point, it is important to note the second Old Testament requirement for kingship: divine appointment. Of all the members of the House of David apart from Jechoniah, only One received divine appointment.

We read in Luke 1:30-33

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

The final question is: On what grounds can it be said that Luke's account is actually Mary's genealogy? While there is much evidence to support this, it will be necessary to limit it to only three lines of argument.

First, the Talmud itself refers to Mary as the daughter of Heli. It is obvious, then, that in long-standing Jewish tradition, Mary was recognized to be the daughter of Heli as mentioned in Luke 3:23.

Secondly, although most versions translate Luke 3:23 as follows:

... being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli ...

That same Greek phrase could easily be translated in a different way. While all of the names in Luke's genealogy are preceded with the Greek definite article, the name of Joseph is not. Because of this grammatical point, that same verse could be translated: "being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) the son of Heli." In other words, the final parenthesis could be expanded so that the verse reads that although Jesus was supposed or assumed to be the descendant of Joseph, He was really the descendant of Heli. The absence of Mary's name is quite in keeping with Jewish practices on genealogies, and it was not unusual for a son-in-law to be listed in his wife's genealogy.

The third argument is the obvious viewpoint of the two genealogies. Matthew is clearly writing from the viewpoint of Joseph. Luke, however, is obviously writing from the viewpoint of Mary. So from the context alone, it would appear that Luke is giving Mary's lineage, because his whole perspective is focused on Mary.

Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum is the Director of Ariel Ministries and a long-time IFCA International member. For a more complete study, visit www.ariel.org and view the Ariel Catalog.

Sowing Seeds for Gospel Harvest

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. Acts 11:19

It has become a growing observation of mine that in talking with believers about evangelism, many times they feel hindered or fettered in the process of communicating spiritual things with lost people. The shackles are perhaps attributed to a sense of incapability, a sense of ignorance in saying the correct message, or a sense of intimidation. Such senses either prevent a presentation of spiritual things altogether, or they at best cause a tentative presentation which instead ought to be a confident one.

We need the reminder that it does not require a specialist to participate in

the Gospel harvest. The verse above is proof positive of this. It speaks of believers moving from Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen and arriving at various places. When they got to places like Phenice, Cyprus, and Cyrene, they preached the word. On closer examination of the Greek concerning their activity, we find that the word preached is not the word we would expect. It is not the celebrated words for preaching like *kerusso* (to herald) or *euangelizo* (to preach the Gospel); rather it is the very generic word *laleo* (to speak, talk).

What this indicates to us is that the scattered believers in turn as they traveled scattered the truths of Scripture to lost people. Speaking the Word in the text of this verse has no specificity as to the content of the

speaking. It is simply stated that they shared the word. This activity was not accomplished by a specialized, indoctrinated, trained body of people carefully and professionally articulating the message of the Gospel; instead it was the typical body of believers, unnamed and “un-specialized,” talking about any potential number of spiritual things with lost people.

We must remember that sharing anything of God’s word with lost people constitutes sowing seed toward a Gospel harvest. When we meet people over a cup of coffee and share what we have read in our devotions, what we heard last week from our pastors, or what in Scripture that might be pertinent to a given discussion, we are sowing seeds by talking about the Word. This should liberate believers to share spiritual things, and throw off the senses that would hinder or make us tentative. If we have learned anything at all about the Lord from His Word today, we have something spiritual to sow, to talk about with lost people. All anyone has to do is spread the seed! “He that goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Psalm 126:5

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Piedmont Baptist College

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Fellowship News



Liberty Baptist Church of Alanson, MI recently graduated to self-supporting status. They began as a church plant of Independent Bible Mission. The congregation is pictured here.



Les Lofquist recently visited Washington, D.C. He is pictured with IFCA Washington Liaison Officer Matt Lloyd.



On Graduation Sunday, the leaders of Liberty Baptist Church of Alanson, MI gathered for this photo. Pastor Pete Kroll is pictured here with IFCA Director of Church and Pastoral Ministries Dan Fredericks, and IBM Board members Lee Buer and Jim Dake.



IFCA member college Piedmont Baptist College of Winston Salem, NC hosted IFCA ED Les Lofquist. He is pictured here with Piedmont President Charles Pettit and faculty/administration member Paul Holritz.

Congo Report

Dr. Florimond Kabanda continues his ministry in the Democratic Republic of Congo with IFCA member organization Congo International Ministries. He recently arranged for a shipment of theology booklets in French to be sent (via ship) to 500 pastors in Congo. These theological studies were produced by IFCA member organization Source of Light in Madison, GA. They included 30 booklets on such basic studies as Christology, Bibliology, Pneumatology and Practical Christian Living. The 500 Congolese pastors are thrilled!

The cost of each set of 30 booklets was \$10. We raised over \$3000 to purchase the booklets, but we still need \$2000 to finish payment. If you would like to donate toward this project, please send to: IFCA Congo Books Project, P. O. Box 810, Grandville MI 49468. Make your check payable to IFCA International. A tax-deductible receipt will be issued.



Pictured here is one congregation in Congo. Imagine trying to teach them God's Word if you were their pastor...but you had no books.



Here is one church near Kisangani, Congo. On the blackboard is the Sunday School lesson, prepared without help from any other books other than a Bible.



This Congolese pastor is studying at his desk. His only book is a Bible. He will prize the 30 theological booklets in French sent over by IFCA International. Can you help send more?



Pictured here is a group of pastors and wives at a training session in Kisangani, Congo taught by Les Lofquist. About 250 were in attendance. None of those pastors had any theological tools.

✧ DEATH OF HIS SAINTS ✧



REV. ROBERT ISBELL
Robert Isbell stepped into glory on July 9, 2007. He

was born October 4, 1919 in Pennsylvania. He graduated from The Bible Institute of Pennsylvania where he also met and married his wife, Edna in 1944. They served together at Christ's Home (PA) for dependent children and older adults for twenty-seven plus years. Robert served for seventeen years as the President of the Board and Executive Director of Christ's Home.

He was ordained to the ministry in 1959 and served as Chaplain in two retirement communities. He also served as Visitation Minister at the Church of the Open Door, Fort Washington, PA. He joined IFCA in 1981. In 1992, he and his wife Edna entered a retirement community in Fort Myers, FL. He is survived by his wife, Edna, four children, eleven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.



MARION W. HARTZLER
Marion Hartzler was born April 29, 1923, in Alberta,

Canada. He entered his eternal home on August 3, 2007. At 10 years of age, he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. He loved to read his Bible and the importance of this he often impressed to others so that they would also come to know the same joy of the Lord. Marion was an Army veteran of World War II. In 1946 he was united in marriage to Velma Ruth

Anderson and she preceded him in death in 1957. In 1958, he was united in marriage to Eldora Zook. He joined IFCA in 1992. Marion served as school board chairman for Muncie Christian School and was a member of Gideons International. Shawnee (KS) Bible Church licensed him to the ministry. Marion enjoyed sharing gospel magic under the name of Oscar (Only Serve Christ And Rejoice).

He is survived by his wife, Eldora, four children, fourteen grandchildren, six great grandchildren, two brothers, and a sister. Many relatives and a host of friends mourn his departure. However, we sorrow not as those who have no hope, for they know that for Marion he is "absent from the body and present with the Lord."



RODNEY M. WARD
Pastor Rodney Ward, 86, passed from his earthly

home to his heavenly home on Tuesday, July 24, 2007, surrounded by family. He was a faithful husband, a loving father, a true friend and a man of integrity, love and compassion. He was loved by all who knew him. His hugs will be greatly missed by friends and family alike!

Rodney Charles McClellan Ward was born in Lansing, Mich., March 24, 1921. He met Mabel Jensen in Walloon Lake and they were married on Feb. 10, 1942, and settled in Walloon Lake, Mich. In 1951, they gave their lives to the Lord and began a lifetime of serving Christ. They operated a Christian Book Store in

Petoskey until it burned in 1968.

After a brief time of living in Albuquerque, N.M., they returned to Michigan to pastor at the Berean Baptist Church in Good Hart. In 1974, they accepted the pastorate at Walloon Lake Community Church and served together until Mabel's death in 1976.

In 1978, he married Cynthia Falvey from Cinnaminson, N.J., and she joined him in ministry until his retirement from Walloon Lake Community Church in 1986. He joined IFCA in 1984. Most recently, he served as pastor emeritus at the Walloon Lake Community Church.

He is survived by his wife, Cynthia; children, Steve (Sharon), Chris (Ann), Tim (Marie), Karen (Fred) Troup, Thomas (Gayle) Falvey, Mary Kay (Steve) Drennen, Robert (Michele) Falvey, Nancy (George) Deutsch, James (Eileen) Falvey, Anne Marie (Paul) Nelson; daughter-in-law, Ann (Ron); son-in-law, Dave (Ginny) Longman; 36 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews; sister, Marilyn Burdick; and sisters-in-law, Ida Mae Jensen and Dorothy Jensen. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife Mabel; a son, Ron; daughter, Ginny; sisters, Evelyn and Monesia; and half brother, Lloyd (Butch) Bailey.

REV. MILTON ACHEY
Rev. Milton Achey of Bensalem PA went to be with the Lord on July 25, 2007. He pastored Albion (NJ) Presbyterian Church, Mountainside (NJ) Chapel, Church of the Open Door, Philadelphia, PA and Calvary Baptist Church, Bristol, PA. He also was a former professor at Philadelphia Biblical University. He joined IFCA in 1952.

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Vision America

— W. W. McEad —

A man took his friend for a ride one day way out in the country. They drove off the main road and drove through groves of trees to a large uninhabited expanse of land. A few horses were grazing, and a couple of old shacks remained. The man, Walter, stopped the car, got out, and started to describe with great vividness the wonderful things he was going to build. He wanted his friend Arthur to buy some of the land surrounding his project to get in on the ground floor.

But Arthur thought to himself, “Who in the world is going to drive twenty-five miles for this crazy project? The logistics of the venture are staggering.”

And so Walter explained to his friend Arthur, “I can handle the main project myself. But it will take all my money. But the land bordering it, where we’re standing now, will in just a couple of years be jammed with hotels and restaurants and convention halls to accommodate the people who will come to spend their entire vacation here.” He continued, “I want you to have the first chance at this surrounding acreage, because in the next five years it will increase in value several hundred times.”

“What could I say? I knew he was wrong,” Arthur said years later. “I knew that he had let this dream get the best of his common sense, so I mumbled something about a tight-money situation and promised that I would look into the whole thing a little later on.”

“Later on will be too late,” Walter cautioned Arthur as they walked back to the car. “You’d better move on it right now.”

And so Art Linkletter turned down the opportunity to buy up all the land that surrounded what was to become Disneyland. His friend Walt Disney

tried to talk him into it. But Art thought he was crazy.¹

As IFCA International was preparing to leave the 20th Century behind, a significant document was published in which was set forth a list of recommendations and goals designed to serve as guideposts to the Fellowship in the pursuit of its vision for the future. Some of the items listed under Church Extension appeared as follows:

We are committed to aggressive involvement in planting, establishing, and nurturing biblical, local churches in the United States of America. In order to accomplish this task we make the following recommendations:

- *Surveying areas of the next state, county, city or town for the purpose of assessing the need for establishment of sound, biblically fundamental, reproductive churches*
- *Emphasizing evangelism of the lost, not taking away members from existing Bible-believing churches*
- *Reaching out to people in their own language and culture*
- *Using a variety of methods in church planting*
- *Including a sponsoring church or churches whenever possible*
- *Providing a vehicle whereby churches planted and served may be brought into a member church relationship with IFCA International*

Shortly thereafter, as we were

poised at the threshold of the 21st Century, one of IFCA’s church extension leaders wrote: “... *IFCA International fellowship is approaching some pivotal times ... we have before us an opportunity to advance our fellowship forward into the 21st Century with a renewed spiritual commitment to being the most effective and powerful witness God can create us to be. If we choose to dismiss these opportunities, we choose instead to enter a decline. Rather than needing to be rescued as a fellowship at some point in the future, should we not choose to powerfully assume a place of leadership as effective witnesses in our land and our world?*” The writer then went on to say that part of that place of leadership “... will be the advancement of churches in to areas not yet reached by IFCA International.”²

I think it is likely that, on a Fellowship-wide level, those seemingly lofty goals and recommendations did not penetrate very deeply into the consciousness of more than a small fraction of our brethren who “are” IFCA International. Many of us were like Arthur; we looked at the landscape and just could not see what the visionaries among us seemed to see, and if we could see anything at all it seemed out of reach.

Something significant happened, however, in 2005 when the Louisville Launch was proposed at the Convention in Baltimore MD. Suddenly, people began catching the vision of just how powerful the direct and cooperative involvement of a network of churches and individuals can be in the successful planting of one church. Scores of churches and individuals came together in forming a network capable of offering assistance in significant ways to achieve the goal

of establishing Jeffersontown Bible Church in conjunction with the 2006 Convention in Louisville KY. Remarkably, apart from the prayer involvement of untold hundreds, perhaps even thousands, the establishment of J-town Bible Church was accomplished with the direct and cooperative involvement of a relatively small number of participants. The fact is that the potential exists, within our Fellowship, for several such efforts to be carried out, in different regions of the country, all at the same time ... all of the time. Instead of one such cooperative effort added to the churches that would already have been planted in the normal course of the ministry of the Church Extension Agencies, it is possible to add several, perhaps even a dozen or more!

Now, in 2007, God has brought about the circumstances that have given birth to VISION AMERICA. He has again "taken us out into the field of America" and is saying to us

again, wherever "our field" is, "*Look around you. I'm building my Church in this field. I want you to buy up the opportunity around you so that you can have a part in the blessing that is going to come as I build My Church.*"

By encouraging the direct and cooperative involvement of local churches in the ministry of taking the Gospel to the next community through the ministry of church planting, VISION AMERICA will broaden the base underlying IFCA Church Extension. Historically it has been the Church Extension Agencies of IFCA International that have served, primarily, as the "engine" which powered the ministry of church planting. While some of those agencies have done a remarkable job on the one hand, others have been hindered in the work by lack of resources, personnel and in some cases even a leader to guide the agency. Indeed, there are some areas of the country where there is no church extension agency at all. By cre-

ating a climate in which local churches are encouraged toward church planting and by equipping them with the resources for networking with other churches, the church extension agency, or even for doing it on their own when they are able, VISION AMERICA has the potential of multiplying the number of "engines" which drive the ministry of IFCA church planting.

We have a saying in church planting circles. We say, "Living things reproduce. Dead things do not reproduce ... only living things do. And so it is true as well of the local church." It is the nature of a healthy church not only to grow, but to reproduce itself. The Body of Christ is genetically designed with the capability of reproduction. Missions and outreach are not optional activities for the local church. More pointedly, a church which is not focused on reproducing itself so as to reach the unreached in the next community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a contradiction. VISION AMERICA is about helping churches to be involved in doing that great work in the field right around your local church.



SENIOR PASTOR OPENING

Well-established Bible church seeks a senior pastor. We seek a man of the Word, a man of prayer, and a man committed to serve God and others. We desire to exalt Christ and the Father, to be edified by the clear teaching of Scripture, and to share Christ with others.

The church has been affiliated with the IFCA for decades, and desires to continue that affiliation. Church governance is based on the New Testament model of elders and deacons, referenced in 1 Timothy and Titus.

The senior pastor should be experienced as an expository preacher and teacher. We desire to extend a call to a man who clearly understands that it is God's will for him to serve. The pastor's wife and family should share in this response to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The acceptable candidate will have earned a minimum of an undergraduate degree, and will have had senior pastor experience of more than three years.

Compensation will be competitive, and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

To request a candidate packet (Senior Pastor Profile, Calvary Bible Church Constitution, Application) please contact:

Mr. Ken Anderson, Chairman
 Calvary Bible Church Board
 kanderson@centralchristianschool.net

Calvary Bible Church, 220 S. Handley, Wichita, KS 67213 • www.cbewichita.info

ENDNOTES

- 1 James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 389.
- 2 *Landmarks & Milestones*; Vosburgh, Henry (p.95)

Report from Iraq

Chaplain Ken Bolin is a West Point graduate and former Army infantry commander in the Iraq war. Ken graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary and via our IFCA International | Bible Churches Chaplaincy endorsement has entered once again the active duty Army as a chaplain. Drawing on his experience as a line officer and now as a chaplain, Ken shares with prayer partners his experiences and insights in ministry while deployed to the Baghdad area of Iraq with a Military Intelligence Battalion. Ken has been reporting throughout his deployment. Here are selections from several of his reports. You can read all his reports on our website: www.ifca.org/Chaplain

Warren Dane, Ch, Lt Colonel, USAF (Ret.) BCC Director of Chaplaincy

My friends,

Our prayers have been very evident, and very important, especially over the last few days. After over nine months of really nothing happening to my unit, we got hit. On Monday, one of our convoys got hit by an IED, and another one got hit on Tuesday. Both could have been catastrophic. Instead, I had one of my Reserve soldiers lose part of his left leg, and another Reservist had a severe concussion. We could have easily been preparing a memorial ceremony for eight soldiers right now. Instead, we're sending one home for a prosthetic, and we're just checking up on another. It's enough to remind you how good and gracious God really is. Then yesterday, we received the official notice that our extension got approved. So, we will be coming home in early November, instead of early August.

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Things keep progressing here, and I thank God for that, and for the prayers that I know you have been sending to the Lord on our behalf. We've gone far over the one year mark, and we are still safe and protected here in Iraq, with no combat-related deaths and only one partial leg amputation (and that man is actually doing remarkably well).

On the personal side, I am doing very well, though more than ready to be back at home with Sharon and the kids. The ministry here is draining me more emotionally these days, as family problems for some of my Soldiers are picking up. It's amazing how such a thing as an extension here will be enough of an excuse for some spouses to just give up on their marriages. People are always looking for excuses it seems to do something wrong to each other. It's really very sad. So, I find myself pouring more into some Soldiers now than I have in the past, and some days, it just sucks the life right out of me. Fortunately, I have a God who turns around and fills me right back up again.

I continue to travel to see my Soldiers. I tell them that I'm on the farewell tour. Each place that I go now, it's the last time that I'll visit that location here in Iraq, even though for a few places, it's still the first time that I've been to that location. I can honestly say that I love to travel over here, as hot as it gets at times. For some helicopter rides, we have the doors closed and windows in, and for others, we have the windows out. I can say that being up there with wind moving quickly inside the helicopter is better than being on the ground when it hits 100 degrees at

0830 and is still 100 at 8 at night. It makes for some long, hot days.

As I noted a few weeks ago, maybe even a couple months ago, the longer we are here the more conversations turn to spiritual things. I've found a few more atheists around (there actually are atheists in foxholes). I have no problem with them on a personal level. I would ask you to pray for their salvation, though. As Soldiers, they are closer to death than many other people and I am concerned for them. I've seen the seeds of faith planted in different circumstances over here, but the Lord has not yet allowed me to see any of those seeds sprout and bloom into a new believer over here. I do know that three of my Soldiers did actually come to faith and get baptized, but they were far up north, detached from us and working for another unit. I praise God for their experience here. It's an amazing blessing sometimes to be pulled away from all of the distractions of Western culture. It helps one to focus and think about true priorities.

The chapel programs here continue to grow. We typically have 25-30 in our morning chapel service and about 20 in our evening service. To be honest, we're nearly at capacity. It's an encouraging thing, with civilians worshipping alongside Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine personnel. Frequently, we also have Iraqi-born US citizens who have returned here as interpreters. I am meeting more and more of them these days, Assyrian Christians and Chaldean Christians. Many of the Assyrians were born up north, in the Kirkuk or Mosul areas, while the Chaldeans were born down south, normally near Basra. Their cul-

tures are so ancient, and I love talking with them. As much as I love my family and miss them, I am thankful for the opportunities and experiences God has given me over here.

Well, we have less than 50 days to go. Our replacements are in their final stages of preparation back in the US. I speak with my replacement over email once or twice a week, and he seems to be grateful for all of the information that I've passed to him. I do pray that I've done everything I could to adequately prepare him, and that God will protect them as they leave friends and family for their 15 months here in Iraq.

I will sign off for now. I do thank you again for your love and friendship. Your prayers have been invaluable, and I covet them still. May God continue to bless you all and guide you in His will, for your joy and for His glory.

GOD'S APPOINTMENTS... OUR APPOINTMENTS

Chaplain John Goble

John Goble is the retired Pastor of Quail Valley Bible Church and has also served as Chaplain at the Menifee Valley Hospital located in Sun City, California. He shares one of many very moving accounts of God at work in changing lives through keeping His appointments.

God gives us time to make contacts. He also set up some real special divine appointments on which we must act.

At the hospital, I walked into the room of a patient who was upset and going through a real deep battle. Our first reaction sometimes is to charge ahead, feeling this is God's appointed time to be of service. I introduced myself and my duties as a chaplain. Instead of a warm greeting I experienced a frigid "I don't need any help from you" attitude.

When this happens, we can walk away in defeat feeling that this is a lost opportunity. However, I think that we should be very much aware that God's appointment time might be for a different hour. A person going through deep waters wants to travel alone at times. That road often leads to a complete area of hopeless danger. That leads to deeper waters.

After the aforementioned patient asked me to leave in an angry manner, I replied that I was there to help. I calmly said "I'm sorry for bothering you - but if there is a time that I can be of service, please let me know."

Hours later, after seeing another patient on the same floor, I walked by the angry patient's room. She called out "Could I ask you a question?"

Our ensuing discussion led to the basic problem that had caused her to "lose her faith." She was distressed by health issues and the flood gates opened as anger poured out. I believe the most important part of a chaplain's job is to listen for 90% of the time and to speak 10% of the time. The word speaks for itself. For the next hour, we shared the beautiful promises of God such as Hebrews 13:5b "I will never leave you or forsake You" and verse 8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever." Philippians 1:5 says, "For I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."

The tightness in the patient's face began to disappear and the love of Christ began to flow through her once again. I had prayer with her and left.

Months later, I received a call from an unknown woman. She asked if I was a chaplain at the hospital. She asked me to describe myself. Then she asked if I used a cane. When I said "yes" she began to cry. She told me that it was her mother who had been the angry patient with whom I had dealt. She said her mother had her faith restored and also her walk with Jesus Christ.

She also told me that because of her mother's bad attitude, the children would rotate nights to visit her. When she came in that day, her mother was sitting up in bed and smiling. She asked if her mother was okay.

Her mother died a few days later. The daughter wanted to thank me that the family got to see their mother with a restored faith, depression gone and with family relationships restored also. They loved visiting her during the mother's last few nights on earth. Then the daughter said, "I am so glad that my Mom is in heaven and we will see her someday."

I think as Christians, pastors, servants of God, we must be ready for God's appointed time. We must never be early and never be late.

BLESSINGS IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPLAINCY

Pastor Dan Nave

Dan Nave is now serving in a wider ministry as pastor of a local church in Remington, Indiana and serving as Chaplain for the local fire department.

God opened the door for me to serve as chaplain of our local volunteer fire department. It's a small department (about 20 people), and has been an awesome experience. They have accepted my ministry with open arms. We had a special outreach event at the church, and about half of the fire department attended. One couple, Eric and Tracie, continued attending. Last night, my wife Cheryl and I had the privilege of praying with them at their kitchen table as they BOTH accepted God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. They have almost no knowledge of the Bible and are very eager to begin learning. Another fire department member, who is a member of our church, told me afterward that Eric and Tracie would have been among those he least expected to come to Christ. Our God Is a Powerful God!!! God is bringing revival to our church one person at a time.

If you are looking for a way to broaden your ministry, consider the above opportunities. Give me a call for more information.

*Warren Dane, Director of Chaplaincy
951-247-0410 or chaplain@ifca.org*

Thrifty Beauty

— Joy Chipchase —



Does your car automatically swerve at yard sales? Sorry... ours does. I love the penny-pinching home decorator who saves dollars and yet creates pure pleasure for the eyes.

When we began in the ministry, our furniture consisted of donations from other people's attics and garages. We were blessed. It was a delightful challenge to get it all to go together.

Today many young people going into the ministry are making a little more money to start out with than we did and yet there is a tendency to want right away what it took their parents years to accumulate. Those desires often cause frustration and strain on relationships or a wrong perspective of what is due us.

Along the road of life, our house took on a noticeable theme or two. You will find various darling angels smiling from their perches on oak wooden shelves (purchased at garage sales, of course). I don't have to bring the winged host out at Christmas because they grace the house all year round.

Yard sales must be contagious because our grandkids love to do it with us! All we have to do is ask, "Yard Sales on Saturday?" And they can't wait to go. It has become a

bonding, fun-time entertainment. This summer one granddaughter bought an 18 gallon plastic container of Legos for \$10.00 for her younger brothers (worth several hundred dollars if purchased retail). They are learning thrift and that not everything has to be new to be appreciated.

Recently, Pat Miller, Dean of Women at Calvary Bible College, encouraged the staff and faculty to take a tour through the dorms. I was so impressed! Talk about Thrifty Beauty! We entered the kitchen-lounge in the girls' residence and immediately oooooed and ahhhhed. One wall was painted with huge colorful daisy-like flowers. Multicolored flower shaped pillows accented a white painted love seat. On the floor were pink, purple, and light green throw rugs also in the shape of daisies. The dorms needed over 170 throw rugs at the beginning of each year, and Pat bought them for one and two dollars each at yard sales. This gal knows how to shop!

Various painted birdhouses were nestled along one wall on a hot pink shelf. Written in beautiful scroll across the whole wall was *This is the day the Lord has made!* and *Taste and see that the Lord is good* was in the kitchen. This place looked as cute as an ice cream parlor with its glass topped, wrought iron table and chairs. Oh what treasures are found when your car swerves!

Bible verses containing the words "press", "iron" and "wrinkle" in bold black hung on another wall. You guessed it! Below sat the ironing

board. Those girls, preparing for the Lord's service, will be uplifted as they smooth things out.

I could describe more, but the Dean's comment caught my attention, "We did all this by shopping at summer yard sales. And I added, "What fun!" They truly set a financial example. I have heard it said, "How you manage your money, shows your spiritual heart."

As a small kid I remember my great aunt teaching my parents how to work a budget. She had envelopes labeled groceries, rent, etc. She had a system of dividing the dollars after every paycheck. When the money was gone from a particular envelope, there was no more spending in that category. (Delayed gratification never hurt anyone).

On one of Dr. Dobson's programs, he said he learned to share with God because his grandmother gave him a dollar when he was 4 and instructed him that a dime of it was to go into the offering for Jesus. I was amazed to hear that only "seven percent of born again Christians have a Biblical World View related to giving." There is freedom and power in defined limits. A good book I would recommend regarding teaching your children about money is: *Your Kids Can Master Their Money*, by Ron Blue.

Joy and her husband Elwood serve at Calvary Bible College in Kansas City.

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