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The Founders Journal



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Deadly Evangelism

Tom Ascol

If there is one thing for which Southern Baptists long to be known it is evangelism. Concern for freedom to participate fully in cooperative world-wide evangelistic efforts provided the originating impulse for the denomination's existence. In the language of the Preamble to the Constitution of the SBC, the "propagation of the Gospel" is the "one sacred effort" to which the energies of the whole denomination should be directed.

Through the 146 years since their beginning Southern Baptists have, for the most part, resisted the many temptations to minimize the great work of evangelism. Consequently, zealous efforts to reach as many people as possible with the gospel are etched into our denominational history. If the methods have at times been questionable, the goals have been commendable. Genuine compassion for lost souls and enviable evangelistic fervor have characterized these various efforts.

What have been the results? Southern Baptists are widely regarded as comprising the largest (not to mention wealthiest--140 million dollars budget; 3.5 billion dollars in assets) non-Catholic denomination in the USA. In 1990, Southern Baptist churches reported a total membership of more than 15 million. At first glance this is an impressive statistic. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this figure is nothing more than an inflated distortion of far less glowing reality.

Roy Edgemon thinks so. As Director of Discipleship Training for the Sunday School Board of the SBC, he is certainly in a position to know. Fortunately for Southern Baptists, Dr. Edgemon's position of leadership in the denomination has not blinded him to the need to speak honestly and openly about our current membership mirage.

His address at the 1991 Louisiana Baptist Convention Evangelism Conference revealed some alarming trends. After lamenting the fact that only 50% of those who are identified as Southern Baptists can be described (even in the most charitable sense) as "active" members, Edgemon stated, "We are losing more people out the back door than any time in the history of our denomination." Further, he cited the results of research which indicates that "in 1980 Southern Baptists had to baptize 2.6 persons to gain one resident member. Five years later they had to baptize 7.4 persons to gain one resident member. In 1989 we had to baptize 19.8 to get one resident member."

The diminishing correlation between our baptism statistics and genuine church growth has become increasingly obvious even without the stark revelations of research analysis. The Sunday School Board reports that over the last several years Southern Baptists have added 35,000 members a year while watching their "non-resident inactive" roll swell by 55,000 a year. For some reason it seems that those we reach and bring into our churches are more likely to fall away than to persevere. Why is this?

The Apostle John directly addresses this issue in his first New Testament letter. Concerning those first-century church members who made a great start and then fell away he says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us" (1 John 2:19). They went out because they were never truly in. As the rest of his letter makes abundantly clear, the profession of such people is false and their faith is empty. They are the stony-ground hearers Jesus describes. They make a great start -- they "receive the word with joy." But they eventually wither up -- the root of the matter is not in them. (Mark 4:16-17).

Though cleverly devised, denominationally endorsed categories of membership may salve our consciences, the Bible offers no hope that people in such condition are at peace with God. They may have much evidence of their membership in our churches. But they will find no biblical evidence that suggests they are in Christ.

As long as the Church is in the world she will be plagued with the reality of false professors in her midst. Pity the local assembly that believes that church purity can be perfectly attained on this side of heaven. Such a perspective is biblically indefensible and will inevitably give rise to a legalistic, injurious administration of church order and government.

However, pity also the people who have been duped into believing that it is normal and acceptable for 50% of the membership to drop out completely from the life of the church. When desertion exceeds enlistment, evaluation of the means that are employed to gain new members is long overdue. Why do so many of our converts show no sign of spiritual life?

Roy Edgemon offers 2 primary reasons. First, he says: too much of our evangelism is "manipulative," "shallow," "abortive," "evangelism without integrity." Second: too many of our churches are concerned with "decisions rather than disciples." The consequences are both frightening and indicting. Edgemon states, "I really believe we lose thousands of people who are going to die and go to hell, thinking they're saved."

This diagnosis is grave but indisputably accurate. And the only hopeful prognosis is one which envisions a return to a God-honoring, biblically defined evangelism. Modern evangelism's methods as well as its message must be scrutinized in the light of the Scriptures, and contemporary church practice must be accordingly reconstructed.

The task will not be easy, quick, or painless. But it must be attempted. The glory of God and the integrity of His Kingdom demand it. The lost world has seen enough of the misguided, albeit sincere, religious huckstering of a truncated gospel at bargain-basement prices. Our churches have been blighted long enough with half-converted members who are comfortably deceived in their lostness.

May God never let us lose our zeal for evangelism. But may He be pleased to awaken us to the fact that zeal alone is not sufficient -- it must be grounded upon the sure doctrinal foundation of biblical evangelism. If we long to see the kind of sound conversions that characterized the ministries of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, and our early Southern Baptist churches, then we must learn as did they to base our evangelistic message and methods on biblical doctrine. May those who look back and write our history be able to say with the inspired historian of the first century, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).



Election and Evangelism

Election, so far from undermining evangelism, undergirds it, for it provides the only hope of its succeeding in its aim.

James I. Packer

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The Family and Evangelism

Ernest Reisinger

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5).

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

God has ordained three institutions: the home, the government, and the church. The clearest commandment in the New Testament for the people of God is to evangelize: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15,16); "Ye are my witnesses" (Luke 24:48); "As my Father hath sent me even so send I you" (John 20:20,21); and our Lord's parting words, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

Certainly the home is in the world and is, therefore, one of the first places of responsibility to evangelize. God has not left us without instructions and illustrations for family evangelization. One of the most vivid and instructive examples is the conversion of young Timothy.

Timothy's Conversion

Not every convert is converted from a careless, wicked life of outward sinful indulgences. Not everyone is converted from a self-righteous life and is a persecutor of Christians as was Saul of Tarsus. Not everyone is regenerated from the womb as appears to be the case of John the Baptist and Jeremiah (Luke 1:5; Jer. 1:5).

There is a wide difference as to when conversion occurs and the circumstances in which it is accomplished; however, regeneration itself is the same in all. Regeneration always includes the enlightening of the mind, the convicting of the conscience, and the renewing of the will. It is by the work of the Spirit that the natural blindness is removed, the natural enmity is subdued, and the natural man becomes a new creature in all his views, feelings, desires, affections, aims, habits, and hopes.

This change is necessary. Jesus said, "Except ye be converted... ye shall not enter the kingdom of God." Both children born in Christian homes and children born in pagan homes must experience this change. This is why "family evangelization" is necessary. Timothy's conversion is very instructive as an example of the **necessity**, the **means**, and the **results** of conversion.

From the biblical account of this servant of Christ, we learn that his first serious impressions of Divine Truth were from his early religious education in the family from the pious care, teaching and example of his mother and his grandmother: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

Here we get the sure clue as to the proper means and method for family evangelizing. If Timothy learned the scriptures, it is obvious that someone had to teach him. *Teaching* is the *method* and the *Scripture* is the *means*. Timothy came from a home that was divided religiously. His mother was a Jewess and his father was a Greek (cf. Acts 16:1).

Paul thanked God for his mother's piety (2 Tim. 1:3-5). Thank God for home piety and for domestic instruction which often lead to the salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The details of Timothy's experience are not recorded, but, by the things that are recorded in the two epistles addressed to him we can be sure that his experience corresponds, in substance, to that of every other child of God. For example:

1. Paul was persuaded that Timothy was in possession of true faith and said, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5).
2. Paul treated Timothy as a true minister. This may be drawn either implicitly or explicitly from the fact that he was a Christian evangelist, and nothing short of conversion would be sufficient for his own salvation or the work of the ministry.
3. Timothy must have been convicted of sin, so as to feel his need of a Saviour from sin and its consequences.
4. Timothy had to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ so as to perceive the all-sufficiency and suitableness of Christ to meet his need.
5. Timothy must have personally embraced Christ as He is offered in the gospel: a Prophet to teach and instruct, a Priest to reconcile and intercede, a King to rule, govern, and protect.
6. From the instructions to him we know that he must have endured the inward struggles, fears, and secret conflicts such as only a true Christian knows.
 - a. The terrible warfare (2 Tim. 2:3,4)
 - b. The fear that every Christian experiences at times (2 Tim. 1:7)
 - c. The tendency of a Christian to be ashamed of the Lord (2 Tim. 1:8)
 - d. The necessity of continuing to the end (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

These six things can be learned from the epistles addressed to him and they confirm the fact that he was soundly evangelized in the family.

Some Useful Lessons for Evangelizing the Family

1. Little children need to be evangelized.
2. Little children are capable subjects of Divine grace and we must not put off or neglect family evangelism because of improper and unbiblical methods that are sometimes used in seeking to evangelize children. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). On another occasion Jesus said, "Except ye be converted; and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). The great evangelist, Jonathan Edwards, gives a wonderful example of the conversion of a little girl, Phebe Bartlett, in *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions*.
3. From Timothy's conversion, we learn that a sound and serious Christian education is often blessed as the means

God uses to bring His sheep into the fold (cf. 2 Tim. 3:14,15). However, Bible knowledge alone does not always prove productive to conversion. Children can learn Bible truth intellectually, just as they learn English, history or mathematics. There must be the work of the Spirit. This calls for prayer. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). It is the Spirit and the Word. The Spirit alone leads to fanaticism; the Word without the Spirit leads to Pharisaism.

This parental teaching must be connected with exemplary faith and true piety on the part of parents--not just a system of lessons, but a course of training by practical examples in the family. Paul made such an appeal to young Timothy. "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience" (2 Tim. 3:10).

4. The fourth lesson for family evangelism from the case of Timothy is the importance of Holy Scripture. The scripture was delivered by holy men of God. The scripture contains holy precepts and deals with holy subjects such as birth, marriage, life, death, and, yes, heaven and hell. The scriptures are designed to make us holy and lead little children in the true way of holiness.

Two Different Classes

There are two different classes among those who are privileged to be born into Christian families. Being born in a Christian home does not make children Christians any more than being born in a cow barn would make them a cow or being born in a garage would make them an automobile. Yes, they are privileged, and it is a gracious providence to be in a Christian family, but, this providence and privilege does not exclude the absolute necessity of conversion.

There are some, like Timothy, who are made wise unto salvation. There are others who enjoy the same privilege, yet they are destitute of saving grace. No human being is able to discriminate between the two classes so as to determine infallibly which class each individual is in. Many who have made a profession have proved to be destitute of saving grace; thus, we must beware of two dangers in family evangelization.

The first danger is taking too much for granted, that is, assuming all is well when in fact, there is no spiritual reality, no saving change.

The second danger is mistaking some natural and common truth of Christianity and religious education for true conversion, for example: Bible knowledge, gentle manner, proper education, outward religious habits. These are all commendable and will accompany salvation, but the Bible warns us of a form of godliness that knows nothing of its power.

Peter tells us of those who are in this category: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:21,22).

Because of these dangers, it is important in family evangelization to ask some questions:

- Is there a conscious and sincere desire for God, such as leads to secret prayer and a welcome of family prayers?

- Is there a desire to obey parents in spite of many actual failures?
- Is there a desire to please God in spite of many falls and crooked steps?

We must not be satisfied with our evangelism in the family when those in our family cannot say that they have made the salvation of their soul a matter of personal concern--when they have never sought after God privately or publicly. Surely they have not been evangelized if:

1. They are unable to discover in themselves any hopeful signs of being born again.
2. There is a continual objection to the strict views of Christianity and a continual tendency to be weary with Christianity and the Christian life.
3. There is fixed longing to be free from Christian parents, the Christian home, and the church.

The great Apostle gave this young evangelist some instructions that are applicable to evangelization in the family (2 Tim. 2:24-26): "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

1. Don't strive with your children.
2. Be gentle.
3. Teach them.
4. Forbear with them.
5. Do it in meekness.
6. Correct them.

This passage teaches that our hope for their conversion is in God ("if perhaps God would grant them repentance").

Summary

Children need to be evangelized.

Children are capable of being evangelized.

The means of evangelism are teaching the Holy Scriptures with patience and prayer.

"Arise, cry in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children." (Lam. 2:19).



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The New Testament Meaning of "Witness"

Ernest Reisinger

"Witness." It is a word of great importance to the Christian Church. When I embarked upon a study of the word, I discovered, to my sorrow, that many Bible Dictionaries do not even list the word "witness." Some others give only limited consideration to the topic.

From respected commentators I have learned that there are basically three words in the Greek New Testament which are translated "witness." Two are nouns and one is a verb.

One noun refers to a person who bears witness. The verb means the act of bearing witness--the activity of witnessing. The other noun means the bearing of witness and, also, the witness that is borne.

The word witness comes to us from the legal sphere and is derived from a root meaning "to bear in mind;" "to remember;" "to be careful." Thus a witness in the field of law is one who has knowledge of something by recollection and experience, and who can tell about it accurately.

The implications of the word witness in the legal framework are obvious. The most common usage of the word witness in the Old Testament is in this legal setting and, therefore, is religiously neutral. When the term moves into the religious world its legal connotations are never completely lost. Thus God can speak of his "witnesses" (in a legal sense) in his great law suit against the world.

For example: Isaiah says, "Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled. Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear and say, 'It is truth.' 'You are my witnesses,' says the Lord, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he. Before me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no saviour. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, and there was no foreign god among you; therefore you are my witnesses,' says the Lord, 'that I am God. Indeed before the day was, I am he; and there is no one who can deliver out of my hand; I work, and who will reverse it?'" (43:9-13).

There are those who speak on behalf of the idols, and such witnesses are put to shame because their gods are impotent. Isaiah 44:8-11: "Do not fear, nor be afraid; have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one. Those who make a graven image, all of them are useless, and their precious things shall not profit; they are their own witnesses; they neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. Who would form a god or cast a graven image that profits him nothing? Surely all his companions would be ashamed; and the workmen, they are mere men. Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, they shall be ashamed together."

The noun that means "one who bears witness" is used 24 times in the New Testament. Some of these references are also religiously neutral. They simply refer to the person who is a witness to facts and who can speak about them from his own direct knowledge--especially in legal proceedings.

One example comes from Jesus' hearing before the Sanhedrin. Mark 14:63: "Then the high priest rent his clothes,

and saith, What need we any further witnesses?" Here it is used in a legal sense--not religious at all. It has nothing to do with the witnessing of Acts 1:8.

Confessional Witness of the Apostles

Now, in the New Testament an interesting development takes place as the word witness comes to be used religiously. That is, the term is employed to refer to those who were witnesses to the earthly facts and the resurrection facts about Jesus. Such individuals spoke about these facts from direct knowledge. Only those who saw Him alive qualify for this kind of witness.

At first this use of the term witness was restricted to the twelve apostles who, through first-hand knowledge, could bear witness to the facts of our Lord's history. This might be called a confessional witness. Examples include Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ" (Mt. 16:13-17) as well as that of Thomas, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Such was the usage of the term in the post-resurrection statement of Jesus in Luke 24:46-48: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are my witnesses of these things." Confession of the facts. This is the task of a confessional witness (cf. John 15:27 and Acts 1:21, 22).

This confessional usage is restricted to the apostles. We could call them "eyewitnesses." But if the term had been restricted to this usage then it would have easily gone the way of the term "apostle," that is, it would have been confined to the first century.

Post-Ascension Witness

With Paul the term took on another dimension. "Witness" was cut loose from the first-hand, eyewitness of the history of Jesus, and came to refer to the first-hand experience of the risen Christ (post-ascension witness). We see this very clearly in Acts 22:14, 15 at the time of Paul's arrest when he makes his defence to the people. He describes his encounter--his experience--with the Risen Lord on the Damascus Road and his subsequent meeting with Ananias. Paul quotes Ananias: "And he [Ananias] said, 'The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.'" This was a confessional experimental witness.

The Witness of Martyrs

We see the third step of development in the term witness in the life of Stephen. He was a confessional witness (though not an eyewitness) who dies for his faith. Stephen is not a witness because he dies, he dies because he is a witness. In his experience the ground is being prepared for the second century, and the following centuries, when, in the midst of persecution, the first Greek noun for "witness" comes to signify Christian martyrs. It retains no legal connotations at all. The book of Revelation uses this term to describe those who faithfully proclaim the truth of the gospel and who, by the sincerity of their witness suffered death. They are called faithful witnesses. In Revelation 1:5 we learn that our Lord is also called a faithful witness.

The Witness of the Gospel

The other noun meaning "the act of witness and the content of the witness" and the verb meaning "to bear witness" should be treated together. They designate the evangelistic confession of the New Testament. We are now thinking not so much of the historical, and factual data of our Lord's life, but rather the eternal nature and significance of his Person.

In fact, the entire written gospel assumes the character of a witness. See this in passages like John 21:24: "This is the disciple who is bearing witness concerning these things and has written these things, and we know that his witness is true." What is this "witness?" The written gospel of John.

The gospel is itself an evangelistic confession designed to bear witness and thereby win converts. This is expressed in John 20:30, 31. "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and in order that by believing you may have life in his name." The Evangelist, upon the basis of the witness borne in his gospel, wants his readers to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." In the gospel of John witness is borne to the eternal nature and significance of our Lord's Person and Work.

Six Specific Witnesses

Along with the development of the general idea of "witness," the New Testament also reveals some specific examples of different witnesses.

1st. **John the Baptist** confesses that he is not the Light, but has simply come in order that he might bear witness concerning the Light. "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe" (John 1:7).

2nd. **The scriptures** also add their mighty voice in witness to Jesus. "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me" (John 5:39).

3rd. Witness to the Son is also **borne by the Father**, as Jesus says in John 5:7, "And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me."

4th. In John 5:36, Jesus declares that "the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear witness that the Father has sent me." **His works** were a witness.

5th. There is also the **self-witness of Jesus** to his own divine mission and life. In John 8:13ff the Pharisees chide him, "You are bearing witness to yourself, your witness is not true" (N.I.V.- "Here you are appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid") Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness to myself my witness is true, for I know whence I have come and whither I am going. In your law it is written that the witness of two men is true; I bear witness to myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness to me."

6th. After Jesus leaves this earth, the witness will be made by **the Spirit**, in and through His followers, the disciples. As Jesus declares in John 15:26, 27, "But when the Comforter comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, He will bear witness of me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning."

Following His resurrection Jesus appears in the Upper Room, and there declares: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John

20:21, 22).

It is significant that in this passage as in Acts 1:8, the witness of the disciples is closely linked to that of the Holy Spirit!

It is also important to note that in all six who bear witness there is no salesmanship decisionism connected with witnessing.

Summary of New Testament Teaching

We turn now to a more general summary of what the New Testament teaches about Christian witnessing.

The word "witness" speaks of the nature and function of every true believer individually. Collectively, it speaks of the nature and function of the Church. This is the New Testament way a church is built.

This means that witnessing is first of all concerned with being, that is, it is embedded in the nature of the witness himself. You must *be* a witness before you can witness. As the words of the Risen Lord make abundantly clear, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

It would be a distortion of the New Testament to say that Christian witnessing does not involve the activity of witnessing. But it would also be a distortion to lose sight of the fact that prior to the act of witnessing there must be the change whereby one becomes a witness. The word becomes flesh! One becomes the substance of the gospel as well as a spokesman of it.

A witness is born when one is born again, that is, when he experiences the power of God in his own personal death, burial and resurrection. In this sense Christian witnessing is not optional, nor is it mandatory. It is inevitable. Perhaps the words of Emerson are appropriate, "What you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you are saying!" And in another way, Jesus affirmed the same idea: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." He did not say, *should not*, but *cannot*.

Let it also be emphatically noted that, in the New Testament, though being precedes doing, being does not exclude doing.

We are called upon to add the dimension of actually witnessing to our being witnesses. And this too should be inevitable. "We cannot help but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Peter and John could speak with such boldness to the Jerusalem officials because they (though "uneducated, common men") had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Where this fact is absent, you have nothing to say! The question, then, is this: Have you been with Jesus?

One commentator underscores this need of the verbal witness when he says, "There has to be a verbal witness because there cannot be communication of important convictions without language. We must use words because our faith must be something vastly greater than ourselves. We make a witness by telling not who we are but whose we are."

Further, it should also be noted that both the being and the doing of Christian witnessing are inseparable from the effective working of the Holy Spirit. That divine power makes the witness.

First, in the being: "You shall receive power after which the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8). "Shall be" is the inevitable.

Then in the doing: "And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:10, 11), and "When the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13, 14).

The Spirit makes one a witness (being). The Spirit empowers one to witness (doing). Further, it is only by the Spirit that the goal of the witness is achieved. Speaking of the Spirit, Jesus says, "when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16:8). Only through the power of that Spirit are men "born again" and resurrected from "death to life." That is the end of Christian witnessing, and it is also the beginning!

Jesus stood before Pilate and said, "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). It was the vocation of Christ to bear witness to the truth; and it is our vocation to bear witness to Him.

The three things needed by the apostles for carrying out their mission to the world, are also needed by every Christian and Church to carry out their mission to the world:

1. Assurance that He is alive (Are you sure that He is alive?)
2. Instruction (Have you sat at His feet for instruction?)
3. Empowerment (Have you been empowered from above?)



The Gospel Appeal

In presenting the Christian gospel we must never, in the first place, make a *direct* approach to the emotions or the will. The emotions and the will should always be influenced through the mind.

-D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

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Revival and the Sovereignty of God

[Lewis Drummond](#)

[On Wednesday night, June 5, during the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, Ga., the entire evening was given to prayer for spiritual awakening. This article originally appeared in the Florida Baptist Witness in anticipation of that Convention prayer meeting. It is reprinted here by the author's permission]

A call to prayer for revival may be a profound turning point in the spiritual lives of Southern Baptists. It could be a historical moment. But do we really know what we will be praying for in such an effort? What is the meaning of a spiritual awakening, or its historical equivalent--revival? That is the question!

Revival, particularly, is an ambiguous word in Southern Baptist life. Ideas range from the annual "vociferous preaching time the third week in April," to the 1734 awakening in Northampton, Mass., when the dynamic ministry of Jonathan Edwards saw multitudes won to Christ in a matter of days. But a precise definition based on the Bible, and manifest in history, is vital if we are to pray and seek God intelligently.

A good description of a revival, or spiritual awakening, from a biblical and historical perspective is given by H. C. Fish:

Revivals, then, are seasons when Christians are waked to a more fervent prayer, and to more earnest endeavors to promote the cause of Christ and redemption; and consequent upon this, seasons when the impenitent are aroused to the concerns of the soul and the work of personal religion. They are times when the Spirit of the Lord again moves on the face of the waters, and the freshness and beauty of the new creature comes forth. Nature itself seems more full of God; the very words of Scripture seem thereby invested with a new light and glory and fullness and meaning. As Edwards says: "All things abroad -- the sun, moon and stars, the heavens and the earth appear as it were with a cast of divine glory and sweetness upon them."

Such a definition of revival or spiritual awakening immediately points up a most important and foundational truth. Real revival comes only from God. He alone is the fountainhead. A spiritual awakening cannot be scheduled, worked up or humanly engineered. If we are to experience a "refreshing time from the Lord," it will be because God's sovereign hour has arrived. God grants revival blessings when and where he pleases.

All history attests to this fundamental reality.

Why did God come down in power to the church in Northampton, Mass., in 1734 and touch the ministry of the brilliant Jonathan Edwards to spawn America's "First Great Awakening?" Because God chose to do so!

Why did our Lord reach down to a little Bible study group of Moravian brethren meeting on London's Aldersgate Street in 1738 and transform John Wesley, who then was used by the Holy Spirit to birth the 18th-century revival in England? Because God chose to do so!

Why did the Holy Spirit come mightily on Barton Stone in 1801 at the Cane Ridge Meeting House in Bourbon County, Ky., that July weekend and explode into America's "Second Great Awakening," which wove the deep south

"Bible Belt?" Because God chose to do so!

Similar historical accounts of awakenings can be repeated almost endlessly, recalling God's sovereign mercies in revival power. But why does he move as he does? Why does God act in such a manner? There is no final human explanation of why God moves when, where and how he does to grace us with revival blessings, only that in his sovereign love he does. Therefore be done with what has been called "evangelical humanism." We must rest in God's sovereign grace and wisdom alone.

Of course, it is true that God pours out his Holy Spirit on his people in free grace because they need a fresh touch. Without revival times the church inevitably strays away from the cross and grows cold, slipping into the Laodicean Syndrome. There is that much explanation. But the when, where and how of revival rests in God's sovereignty.

Yet, God never works in a vacuum. He always uses his people in spiritual awakenings. That leaves us with the inevitable paradox of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. But even that paradox means there are things we are to do if God is to bless in revival. Responsibly seeking revival should never be de-emphasized.

Nonetheless, we must view God as the sole source of all awakening grace, prostrate ourselves at his feet and simply trust him for sovereign mercies. If we do that, it just could be God will bless us with that "one divine moment" when it will be said, "God revived his people." Let us seek him to that divine end.

May we earnestly, humbly and in resignation cry out with the Psalmist: "Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation" (Ps. 85:6-7). It just may be this is God's sovereign hour.



Preparing a Church for a "Revival Effort"

R. F. Gates

"What can we do to prepare for the upcoming week of 'revival' effort?"

Over the past 25 years I have had that very question asked of me scores of times. Should our Heavenly Father be pleased to give me a few more years of itinerant ministry, I shall, I am confident, be asked it many more times.

Before attempting to answer this question, there are two things I need to state at the outset: 1) the question itself implies that even though we are cast solely upon our sovereign Lord for awakening, we are responsible to seek Him personally and corporately for quickening grace, and 2) it is especially necessary in these beguiled days to seek to assist God's people in coming to a proper distinction between genuine "revival" and what is commonly termed in our day a "revival effort." The former is a work of God while the latter is, by definition and common practice, best defined in terms of human activity and effort.

Therefore, I place before any pastor and church who is serious about getting ready for a "revival effort" the following guidelines.

Before all else, ready the church by preaching clearly and repeatedly the scriptural picture of genuine revival.

The contemporary concept of revival is anything but revival in reality. In biblical terms revival is not a scheduled series of services. It is not an evangelistic effort. It is not securing an outside evangelist and music man to lead out in the attempt to stir things up spiritually. It is not simply publicity and special events and good preaching and heart-warming singing and fervent appeals for the lost to be saved. It is not decisions nor additions to the church, nor even renewed enthusiasm. Some of this or all of this may be present and yet true revival be absent indeed.

Therefore, preparation involves setting forth the truth from both scripture and church history that revival is, before all else, a sovereign work of God among His people (thus the prophet prays, "Revive *Thy* work," Hab. 3:2). It is an invasion of fresh spiritual life (Lu. 15:24), a turning back of His own unto Himself (Lam. 5:21), an outpouring of His Spirit upon His wilting vineyard (Isa. 32:15). It is an extraordinary work of God producing extraordinary results among both believers and dead, careless sinners. One would do well to read and study *Lectures on Revivals* by W. B. Sprague (Banner of Truth Trust) along with Lewis Drummond's article elsewhere in this journal for further analysis of this point.

May the Lord be pleased to use His heralds far and wide to destroy false notions regarding "revival" and to establish in their place the biblically warranted and historically exemplified vision of revival as a sovereign, gracious work of God. This in and of itself would signal the first showers from on high.

Further, appeal urgently to the church to look only to the Lord for quickening and awakening grace.

True revival, like salvation, is of the Lord. Individually and corporately, it comes not except He "rend the heavens and come down" to us in restoring mercies (Isa. 64:1). Tell it more than once that "it is not by might nor by power but by My Spirit saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:6). I fear that in these days of man-centered revivalism and carnal promotions even many of God's own people slight the truth of John 6:63: "the flesh profits nothing, the Spirit

quickness."

So then, when facing a series of "revival services" the local church is best prepared when hearts are shut up to the Father as their sole hope for awakening. God uses human instrumentality in restoring His work among His people, but in and through it all it is the Lord's doings and it is marvelous in our eyes. He alone is the source of vital revival. He alone is the One in whom we must hope. It is to Him alone that all glory must come. As Richard Owen Roberts writes: "The purpose of revival is to make God, not men, famous; to focus the eyes of the people, not upon human leaders, but upon the Divine Leader; to give glory not to great men, but to a great Savior" (*Revival*, p. 104).

Let the weeks before a "revival meeting" be weeks of turning minds Godward. Preach . . . teach . . . think: "O God, restore us and cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved" (Ps. 80:7). Pray for any guest ministers that shall labor among you, and know in truth that "all is vain, unless the Spirit of the Holy One come down." Trust accordingly! Prepare accordingly!

Pastor and people must seek God in private and public prayer.

When it is made obvious to the heart that we can never experience true revival unless our God is pleased to bear His arm in arresting and convicting, awakening and saving power, then we will be quick to seek His face in prayer.

Come aside, dear brother, and retire daily to your prayer closet. Give attention to the "Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplication with fasting, sackcloth and ashes" (Dan. 9:3). Let all else be set aside for a season. Think not even of the other brethren and their collective need for a fresh touch. Deal with yourself for now. Use the very plea of Daniel (9:4-19) for your own callings--the confession of personal sin, the appeal to His covenant mercies, the open avowal of shame and deep need, the cry for God to let His "face shine" again on His "desolate sanctuary," the burning zeal for the Father's glory. Let your appeal be grounded solely upon His mercy "O my God, incline Thine ear and hear! Open Thine eyes and see our desolations . . . for we are not presenting our supplications before Thee on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Thy great compassion . . . O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay" (18-19). Come pastor, come people, pray for your own souls first. Wrestle alone with God for the needed blessing. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

But again, prayer must be stressed for the whole assembly. Not simply in the weeks prior to the scheduled meetings must prayer prevail, but let prayer for a great awakening be the atmosphere and practice of each and every gathering of the church. "Prayer for revival must also become a major part of the prayer life of the local church. It ought to find its way into the public services of worship. It ought to dominate the prayer meetings of the congregation . . . A mighty concert of prayer is needed" (Roberts, *Revival*, p. 147).

It would be good to make the very words of scripture the united intercessions of the church. Plea back passages like these:

"Lord, revive Thy world in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3:2).

"Revive us, and we will call upon Thy name. O Lord of hosts, restore us; cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved" (Ps. 80:18-19).

"Wilt Thou not Thyself revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee" (Ps. 85:6).

"For the sake of Thy name, O Lord, revive me" (Ps. 143:10).

"Restore us to Thee, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old" (Lam. 5:21).

"Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down that the mountains might quake at Thy presence" (Isa. 64: 1).

To prepare for a "revival meeting," pray for genuine revival--alone and together. "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7).

Revival in a church can never be scheduled. If it could, we would have long ago and with seasonal regularity experienced such holy visitations. Rather, if and when revival comes, it shall be the gracious work of Him "Who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11). However, we must never be sluggardly in our duties to strive for revival in the biblical sense--both in our own lives and in the church at large.

What then? It is not wrong to set up special times and meetings for concentrating on revival in our local assemblies. While we do so, however, we must recognize that this is never enough. We must do more, much more:

1. We must cast ourselves wholly upon God.
2. We must heatedly and humbly seek the Lord and pleadingly call upon Him for all that He alone can do (Isa. 55:6).
3. We must desire and ask for divine illumination respecting our spiritual standing (Ps. 139:23-24; Lam. 3:40).
4. And we must decidedly, by the Holy Spirit's enabling, "forsake our wicked ways" and "return to the Lord" (Isa. 55:7). *Revival is always the Lord's work, but true repentance is always our duty* (Rev. 2:5-6; 39, 19).

Finally: revival preparation is not a formula. *It is*, looking up, praying on, staying at it. *It is* working for that for which you are praying. *It is*, with brokenness taking your place at His feet. *It is*, God again taking His place of splendor among His people. With a zeal for His glory and a yearning for gospel advance let the church, yea, any church, prepare aright for such . . . starting *now*.



Election and Evangelism

Election, so far from undermining evangelism, under-girds it, for it provides the only hope of its succeeding in its aim.

James I. Packer

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Personal Involvement in World Missions

George Martin

The heathen are to be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. But for all these things God will be inquired of; there must be faith, and prayer, and preaching, and tears, and toil. Without these things men cannot be saved, no more than Paul and his companions in the weather beaten ship could be saved, except the seamen remained in it. But as God has fixed upon definite results, and has prescribed the means which will infallibly conduct to the certain issue, with what joy may the spiritual husbandman thrust in his ploughshare and sow his seed. With what immovable confidence may the missionary of the cross, in obedience to his ascended Saviour, fly to distant lands, and proclaim in every valley and on every hill, "O ye dry bones hear ye the word of the Lord." Victory he knows will sooner or later come; and the assurance of victory nerves his arm and gladdens his heart amidst all the terrors of the battle field.[\[1\]](#)

So declared Charles D. Mallery in his sermon entitled "The Doctrine of Election." Holding the matters of divine sovereignty and human responsibility in biblical balance, Mallery underscored the fact that God, when he determines to save an individual or a number of persons, utilizes means. In other words, God employs the faith, prayers, preaching, and toil of his servants in the accomplishment of his will.

Let us affirm, then, that salvation is "through faith . . . the gift of God . . . not a result of works" (Eph. 2:8,9).[\[2\]](#) Let us agree unequivocally that "the new birth is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus."[\[3\]](#) If at any point we allow that man's salvation hangs on some work of his own, regardless how small, then we have lost the Gospel of salvation by grace alone. Let us declare without hesitancy, "Salvation is of the Lord!" (Jonah 2:9).

These facts any honest student of the Bible will affirm. They are not deliberated here, only stated. However, as Mallery declares, God "has prescribed the means which will infallibly conduct to the certain issue." That is, though his decrees stand and his purposes shall come to pass without exception, "God will be inquired of; there must faith, and prayer, and preaching, and tears, and toil."

Acknowledging the absolute sovereignty of God, let us examine the other side of the coin in regard to world missions; specifically, our responsibilities in the matter. This we will do under two heads: Direct Involvement and Support.

Direct Involvement

In the great world enterprise of preaching the Gospel, the prayers of God's people back home are just as important as the sermons of those on the field. The encouragement and support of those "holding the ropes" are vital to the world missionary work, which cannot be accomplished otherwise. By the phrase "direct involvement," however, reference is made to those who have gone to foreign lands to live and to serve. These cannot go unless they are supported by those who stay.

The emphasis, then, in this first section, is upon the question: Without a preacher, how will the world's masses hear the Gospel, believe and be saved? The issue is settled by Paul (Romans 10:14,15): there must be those who are sent to preach the gospel. But who will go?

Without attempting to examine all the issues involved in this question, the reader will be addressed directly. Have you ever considered serving as a foreign missionary? If not, why not? The necessity of a divine call to this work should not be overlooked, but perhaps it would be good to reconsider what constitutes such a call.

Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1954 to 1977, often encouraged believers to consider foreign missionary service with these words: "Unless God closes the door or redirects your path, you will follow him to the mission field and serve there in his strength."[\[4\]](#) Cauthen kept the following statement taped inside his Bible: "While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness and hundreds of millions suffer in horrors of heathenism and Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by him to keep you out of the mission field."[\[5\]](#)

Such sentiments do not seem entirely inappropriate. Is God's work not a world-wide work? Are not God's people called to advance the Gospel into the whole world? To whom are texts such as Matthew 28:19-20 and Act: 1:8 directed? Can the servant of God be satisfied with anything less than a world-wide vision? In light of the many biblical directives to go into the world with the Gospel, perhaps the following question is legitimate: "Why do you stay at home, when there is so much to be done, knowing that God's will is for the Gospel to be preached throughout the world?"[\[6\]](#)

Traditionally, churches have supported foreign mission work in two primary ways: prayer and finances. Today, such support remains as important as ever. Consider, first, the matter of prayer.

Support Through Prayer

Various approaches exist for encouraging members of the sending churches to pray for missionaries and their work: 1) the appeal to human need: "There are so many millions who do not know Jesus. Pray that they will be saved." 2) the appeal to human weakness: "Our missionaries are only human like ourselves and, the task being so formidable, how can they succeed without being undergirded by prayer." 3) the appeal to human responsibility: "We are commanded in Scripture to pray for one another. We have a responsibility as Christians to pray for the world-wide work of the Gospel."

All the above appeals are both appropriate and biblical, and thus, ought to be used. However, a more theologically oriented approach may also be suggested. Meditation upon certain divine attributes should motivate every child of God to pray for world missions.[\[7\]](#)

The Divine Attributes As Motivation To Pray

God is omniscient

When we pray for world missions it is encouraging to know that God is all knowing. Our God is not like the false gods formed in men's imaginations. In his confrontation with Baal and his followers Elijah mocked the false prophets: "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." (1 Kings 18:27). The Lord Omniscient, however, is neither too busy, nor gone away, nor slumbers nor sleeps. "The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry" (Psalm 34:15; James 3:12).

The Psalmist could pray "from the end of the earth" (Psalm 61:2) and be confident that his God would hear. Though he goes into his closet and prays in secret so that no one else knows what he is doing, the Christian knows that his heavenly Father "sees in secret" (Matthew 6:6).

The meaning of these texts is clear. When we pray we know that our God hears us.[\[8\]](#) This does not, however, mean that we may pray presumptuously. When Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray, He also warned them: "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words" (Matthew 6:7). We must remember that "all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). That is, the One with whom we have to do knows when we pray with an indifferent spirit.

We are warned, then, against praying halfheartedly and with apathy. If with indifference we pray for world missions, though our God knows that we pray and what we pray, we have little assurance that our prayers will avail. That is the meaning of Thomas Brooks when he reminds us, "Cold prayers do always freeze before they reach to heaven."[\[9\]](#)

Why, then, should we pray for world missions? Because regardless where we are, or what our outward circumstances, or what language we employ, God hears our prayers.

God is omnipotent

The importance of this divine attribute for prayer will be obvious to any Christian. Because God is all powerful He can answer our prayers.

He is able to raise up a vast multitude of missionaries to go to foreign lands. He is able to turn masses away from the darkness of their paganism and bring them into the light of his dear Son. If a child of God prays that an unreached people group with more than 30 million members (like the Sundanese of West Java) be reached with the Gospel, he knows that his God is able to accomplish that.

Presently, approximately 70 countries in the world will not allow the entrance of resident missionaries. One estimate is that by the year 2000 eighty three percent of the lost people in the world will live in countries that are closed to resident missionaries.[\[10\]](#) However, the child of God knows when he prays for open doors, that his Lord is able to tear down those barriers.

Southern Baptists, as part of Bold Mission Thrust, have made plans and projections to have 5,000 missionary personnel overseas by the year 2000. Year by year the number of new appointees fluctuates, and one wonders if even that modest goal shall be reached. The Christian knows, however, that the One who rules in heaven and earth and moves men by his Spirit can, in answer to his children's prayers, raise up a missionary force that would dwarf even the 5,000 goal that Southern Baptists have set.

Why pray for foreign missions? Because the One to whom we pray is all powerful and is able to do great and mighty works, of which we cannot even conceive.

God is benevolent

This means that God is good. A variety of words are used in the Scriptures to describe God's goodness: love, grace, mercy, kindness, etc. The Psalmist wrote: "The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalm 145:9). Tom Wells rightly observes that "God desires to benefit His creation, and He does so."[\[11\]](#) That is, he is not only able, he is also willing to do good.

Particularly in relation to the lost of the world, we realize that God delights in the salvation of men, not their destruction. Thus, we know that when we pray for the salvation of men all over the world that such a prayer is compatible with his nature and will.

Do you long for the salvation of the lost multitudes around the world? Rest assured that your God is even more concerned about his creation than are you. Do you rejoice when you witness someone, long dead in sin, given new life in Jesus Christ? Then you can know with a certainty that the hosts of heaven rejoice with a heavenly rapture.

While thinking about God's goodness, James Packer's observation is helpful: "To assume that God's character . . . is really one of indulgent benevolence without any severity, is the rule rather than the exception among ordinary folk today."[\[12\]](#) This assumption is the basis for the often heard statement, "God hates sin, but loves the sinner."

Nowhere in the Bible is God's anger found to be directed against some obscure and intangible concept of wrong doing. Rather, the Scriptures teach that God hates sin and is angry with those committing sin. "Thou dost hate all who do iniquity" (Psalm 5:5). In the opening chapters of the epistle to the Romans Paul specifies in unmistakable terms that the sinner himself, because of his offences, abides under the wrath of a holy God.

To emphasize God's goodness to the exclusion of his holy anger leaves the missionary without any real motivation to flee to distant lands with the Gospel. The astute mind must reason: "If God loves everyone without exception, if God is a friend to all those who remain steadfast in their rebellion, if God has no problem with these folks and loves them no matter what, then why should I worry about them? It seems that everything is going to turn out OK in the end. After all, doesn't God love them?"

If men are to be motivated to pray for the world-wide dissemination of the Gospel, there must be no mistake: the destinies of vast multitudes hang in the balance. Millions and millions of men, women and children face a terrible judgment. Along with this, however, the one who has experienced God's grace in Jesus Christ will also remember that God is "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." (Exodus 34:6,7).

Why pray for world missions? Because I know that the One to whom I pray is not only able, but also willing to save.

In addition to these divine attributes, one other matter will be presented for the encouragement of prayers for world missions.

The Priestly Office of Jesus Christ As Motivation to Pray

When prayers are made to the Lord, we are confident of his hearing and considering our requests because of our great High Priest. We do not approach the Father alone, but through his Son, who has prepared the way into the heavenly holy of holies by his blood. Because Jesus Christ is there, because we come in his name, because we come clothed in his righteousness, we have perfect assurance of gaining a hearing with our heavenly Father.

Thus, the Christian has every encouragement imaginable to hearten him in praying for world missions. Though he has never met or spoken to an Indonesian, the Christian can pray and know that his Father is aware of the needs of Indonesia. Though he himself can do little or nothing to expend the kingdom of God in far away Zimbabwe, the Christian knows that his God rules over that country and over all nations of the earth. When his heart breaks at the thought of so many millions in "enlightened Europe" who remain in darkness, he is heartened to know that his Savior cares about people in that land, too. And when he senses that he is unworthy to approach a holy God with his petitions, the Christian remembers that there is One who goes before him and opens the way into the Father's presence and hearing.

Support Through Financial Giving

In an article designed to encourage support from among the sending churches, how can the missionary inspire the people back home to provide financial assistance? Obviously, such support is necessary. Perhaps a recitation of statistics could be given regarding the enormous costs of sending and supporting foreign missionaries and their work. Interesting would be a look at how each of us spends our income, and the realization of how small a portion is used for the promotion of the world's greatest cause. However, those statistics vary from person to person and place to place.

Instead, remember that the use of our money and resources sheds much light on the true condition of our hearts. No matter how esteemed you are in the eyes of your fellow man, no matter how well you get along in your church, no matter what your own self-evaluation, if your God-given resources are utilized disproportionately for your own comforts and pleasures, you should be concerned about the present condition of your heart and your standing before God.

All things are gifts of God and should be used to his glory. This includes money. The Christian cannot profess the lordship of Christ in his life and then love and serve another. Do you, dear reader, think that you are immune from such danger? Could you, who so strongly yearn for reformation and renewal among God's people, serve the idol of mammon? Look at your home, your car, your recreations, and see if few resources are used for world missions in comparison to these things. And examine your attitude when you give. Do you give grudgingly? Haltingly? Or do you give cheerfully?

Here are the questions: "How much am I really concerned about the lost people of this world? Do I truly long to see Christ's name glorified among the nations?" E. Calvin Beisner nails it down: "'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Matthew 6:21) is not a proof text for fund-raising, but a measure of our devotion to God."[\[13\]](#)

Do you sense that our world-wide efforts have borne little fruit? Then recall the assurances of our heavenly Father. To those who had held back their resources from God, the prophet Malachi exhorted: "'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need.'" (Malachi 3:10) Paul wrote: "he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully." (2 Corinthians 9:6)[\[14\]](#)

Give generously to the cause of world missions. And as you give, watch and see what our Lord will do!

Conclusion

No wonder that Mallery could declare, "With what joy may the spiritual husbandman thrust in his ploughshare and sow his seed." He serves an all knowing, all powerful, benevolent Lord. He has direct access to his Father through Jesus Christ, and can be confident that the prayers of many are being directed to the Father through Jesus Christ on his behalf.

Likewise, those who support the missionaries from their home base have the same assurances. They can enter into the missionary's work full of confidence that they are a vital and contributing part of that work, and knowing that their toil is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).



¹Charles D. Mallery, "The Doctrine of Election," rep. ed. (Louisville, KY: Kosmosdale Baptist Church, 1988), pp. 24,25.

²All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

³*The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1963), p. 11.

⁴Jessie C. Fletcher, *Baker James Cauthen: A Man for All Nations* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977), p. 263.

⁵Ibid.

⁶In 1991 the Foreign Mission Board of the SBC will send out over 400 new personnel to foreign lands. Those who desire to explore the possibility of missionary service may write: Missionaries Needed. FMB SBC P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA, 23230-0767.

⁷Other divine attributes might be mentioned as well: wisdom, righteousness, etc. Tom Wells, in *A Vision for Missions* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985), takes the divine attributes as, his starting point for promoting a missionary vision among God's people.

⁸See below on the priestly office of Jesus Christ as motivation to pray.

⁹Thomas Brooks, *The Works of Thomas Brooks*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh Banner of Truth, 1980), II:493.

¹⁰Timothy St. Claire, "Odd-duck Missionary," *The Commission*, December 1990, p. 66.

¹¹Wells, *A Vision For Missions*, p.74.

¹²James I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), p. 144.

¹³E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate use of Resources in a World of Scarcity* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), pp. 25,26.

¹⁴For a list of biblical examples of stingy giving plus the sad results on the one hand, and examples of generous giving and the resultant rewards on the other, see William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Luke in New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 357.



¹Charles D. Mallary, "The Doctrine of Election," rep. ed. (Louisville, KY: Kosmosdale Baptist Church, 1988), pp. 24,25.

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⁷Other divine attributes might be mentioned as well: wisdom, righteousness, etc. Tom Wells, in *A Vision for Missions* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985), takes the divine attributes as, his starting point for promoting a missionary vision among God's people.

⁸See below on the priestly office of Jesus Christ as motivation to pray.

⁹Thomas Brooks, *The Works of Thomas Brooks*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh Banner of Truth, 1980), II:493.

¹⁰Timothy St. Claire, "Odd-duck Missionary," *The Commission*, December 1990, p. 66.

¹¹Wells, *A Vision For Missions*, p.74.

¹²James I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), p. 144.

¹³E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate use of Resources in a World of Scarcity* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), pp. 25,26.

¹⁴For a list of biblical examples of stingy giving plus the sad results on the one hand, and examples of generous giving and the resultant rewards on the other, see William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Luke in New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 357.



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News

Correction on 'Baptists Converting to Mormonism' Report

In an earlier issue (*FJ* 3) a news item appeared in this column which cited the Interfaith Witness Department with reporting that 285 Southern Baptists a week were converted to Mormonism last year. This statistic was quoted in a report delivered by a representative of the IWD to the Royal Palm Baptist Association's annual meeting in Ft. Myers, FL, on October 16, 1990. However, Gary Leazer, who is the Director of the IWD, has informed the *Founders Journal* that this statistic is without factual documentation. The rumor has been spread for several years and should not have been perpetuated by one of the IWD's associates. We sincerely regret publishing this claim.

Invitation to Unity for Reformed Baptists

A new worldwide fellowship of Reformed Baptists has come into being to promote and strengthen church unity. The International Fellowship of Reformed Baptists was conceived in Toronto, Canada, where Baptist leaders from around the world met last October.

Erroll Hulse, a member of the Executive Committee said, "For more than twenty years the Reformed Baptist movement has grown and spread throughout the world. There has emerged an ever increasing need to cooperate in the building up and strengthening of Reformed Baptist churches, and to stress the doctrinal and practical values which unite us. We recognize the essential unity of the body of Christ worldwide, and wish to strengthen bonds of evangelical unity wherever possible, but disavow the modern ecumenical movement."

Membership applications are now invited from interested ministers, Christian workers and churches who subscribe to the doctrines of grace as set out in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith.

Members will receive the journal *Reformation Today* along with information for encouragement and prayer from around the world.

Full details are available from Pastor Erroll Hulse, 75 Woodhill Road, LEEDS, LS16 7BZ



Book Reviews

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God by J. I. Packer, 1961, 126 pp.; InterVarsity Press \$5.95.

Reviewed by [Ernest Reisinger](#)

Almost 30 years ago God sent this little volume across my path and He used it not just to tune up my evangelistic efforts but to give my evangelism a complete overhaul.

Dr. Packer became my mentor in evangelism. I was so helped and excited about it that since that time I have personally distributed over 3,000 copies.

It is the expansion of an address given on October 24, 1959, at the Pre-Mission Conference of the London Inter-Faculty Christian Union.

It does not purport to be a blueprint for evangelistic action today, but it does clearly set out biblical principles for any evangelistic efforts.

It is not an examination of all the modern methods of evangelism but rather, lays down the relevant principles for God-centered evangelism.

It is the finest piece of biblical and theological reasoning in print to clarify the relationship between God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility in the great work of evangelism.

Dr. Packer answers the two most asked questions: If God is in control of everything, does that mean the Christian can sit back, and not bother to evangelize? Or does active evangelism imply that God is not really sovereign at all?

The author shows how a proper biblical understanding of God's sovereignty is not a hindrance to evangelism but an encouragement, an incentive and a powerful support for evangelism.

His very definition of evangelism should cause every sincere Christian to own it, to read it, study it and distribute it.

To evangelize is to present Jesus Christ to sinful men in order that through the power of the Holy Spirit they may come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.

No, this book is not a must--it is an ABSOLUTE MUST.

Words to Winners of Souls by Horatius Bonar; 1979, 76 pp; Baker Book House (reprint).

Reviewed by [Bob Selph](#)

I am delighted to review Bonar's small treatise on a "living ministry." This little booklet was given to me fourteen years ago by Pastor Walt Chantry. He stated then that his own practice is to work through it once or twice every year. Since then I have adopted the same practice.

This is 48 pages of constant conviction. A Scottish Presbyterian preacher of 1866, Bonar has much to teach us "evangelistic baptists" about the subject of soulwinning -- from a sovereign grace foundation. These "smart bombs" of undisputed truth target the coldness, complacency, and barrenness of our ministries--ministries that otherwise convince onlookers that we are doing the work of the gospel ministry.

To Bonar, the fruitfulness of our ministries is the winning of souls and the edifying of believers (with emphasis upon the former). To Bonar, life begets life. Where a minister's own private walk with the Saviour causes his ministry to be "drenched in Christ" and in the issues of eternity, and where there exists the attendant signs of seriousness, boldness, and broken-heartedness, there will be fruit. To be sure, he would say, the amount of fruit will vary from man to man as God has sovereignly dealt to every man the measure of faith. Nevertheless, the tendency to rest in ministerial busy-ness, fulfilling all our pastoral duties, even with business-like precision, while excusing the fact that sinners are not being changed, and that there is no sorrowing over sin, nor any broken hearts seeking after God for mercy, can be nothing but a cop-out--laying the result of our laxness at the door of the sovereignty of God. Might we be strangers to soul anguish and urgency? Might our time be found consumed with lesser things? Might we be ministerially acceptable yet lukewarm?

The fourth chapter of the five is part of a ministerial confession of sin, composed by a gathering of Church of Scotland ministers in 1651. From this, Bonar launches off into stating fourteen areas of specific sins pertinent to the work of the ministry. This chapter is powerful! It could be used at solemn assemblies or simply for an annual "judgment seat" that a pastor holds privately for himself.

The booklet's final chapter is an appeal for concrete steps to be taken to see the infusion of the Spirit's life into our lives and ministries. Begin doing the things that make a difference; things that will increase solemnity, urgency, and humility in our own lives as ministers of the gospel; things that will make our preaching more earnest, more gripped with eternity, and will bring us the experience of Whitefield, who preached a "felt Christ."

This challenging little X-ray machine is not meant to discourage us, but it does seek to keep before us the high calling of a herald of Christ who stands between sinners and eternity with the best of Books in his hand, the Law of Truth on his lips, the world behind his back, and a tear in his eye, pleading with men, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" It is easy in our daily experience to lose the edge of a spiritually hot life and ministry that has the unpretentious countenance of a "dying man speaking to dying men." We must not give up by settling into a casual, relaxed pastorate.

May the Lord use this diminutive volume to create such a passion for the lost in us that concerted efforts will be made to put the Biblical Gospel in the ears of more and more sinners out of hearts experimentally pulsating with the realities of Christ and eternity.

Thoughts for Young Men by J. C. Ryle; 61 pp; 1991 Calvary Press (reprint).

A Plea to Pray for Pastors by Gardiner Spring; 9 pp; 1991 Calvary Press (reprint).

Reviewed by [Thomas Ascol](#)

It is a pleasure to introduce Calvary Press to the readers of this journal. Under the leadership of Pastor Michael Gaydosh, this new publishing concern is connected with the Calvary Baptist Church in Amityville, NY. They are committed to making available "bite-sized" pieces of valuable literature to God's people.

The first two efforts show the concern for both quality and relevancy to the contemporary scene. Ryle's essay is taken from *The Upper Room* (Banner of Truth) and is filled with practical wisdom for young men, their parents, and their pastors. As an experienced soldier Bishop Ryle admonishes his younger counterparts by exposing some of the peculiar dangers which face them (pride, love of pleasure, thoughtlessness, contempt of religion, and fear of man) and giving general counsels ("get a clear view of the evil of sin," etc.) and special rules of conduct ("break off every known sin," etc.) to guide them. Here is an excellent book to be used with teenagers and young men in both the home and the church.

Spring's booklet is taken from his larger work, *The Power of the Pulpit* (Banner of Truth). What pastor does not long to have his people fervently praying for him? What pastor does not need it? Spurgeon credits his ministerial success to the prayers of his people. Using Paul's exhortation, "Pray for us," Gardiner Spring makes an impassioned call for all who benefit from the public ministry of the gospel to pray for those vessels of clay who, fraught with temptations and weaknesses, are set apart by God to preach. I have personally purchased a copy to present to every family in the church I serve.

Both booklets may be obtained directly from Calvary Press, Box 805, Amityville, NY 11701, or from Cumberland Valley Bible Book Service, P. O. Box 613, Carlisle, PA 17013.

If these two titles are indicative of the quality of material which Calvary Press hopes to continue to make known, then may God greatly increase their efforts.



Recommended Literature

Occasionally requests for literature have been directed to the *Founders Journal* from pastors and church members who are interested in acquiring material to assist in the work of evangelism and biblical/theological instruction. The use of literature in the work of building a church has proven over and over to be a prudent strategy.

In order to accommodate those who may be interested in knowing what kind of material is available and how it may be obtained, the following list of books and booklets has been compiled. Each of the titles has proven valuable in the work of biblical reformation at different times and places. The list is merely suggestive, not exhaustive. These materials may be secured through Grace Baptist Church Literature Ministry, 204 SW 11th Place, Cape Coral, FL 33991.

Manual of Theology, Manual of Church Order - John Dagg
Abstract of Systematic Theology - James Boyce
By His Grace and For His Glory - Tom Nettles
A Southern Baptist Looks at the Biblical Doctrine of Election - Ernest C. Reisinger
The Forgotten Spurgeon - Iain Murray
Today's Evangelism - Ernest Reisinger
A Southern Baptist Looks at Predestination - P. H. Mell
Today's Gospel - Walter J. Chantry
Reforming a Local Church- Ernest C. Reisinger
Blessed Assurance - Ernest C. Reisinger
An Introduction to Southern Baptists - Tom Nettles
The Baptist Confession of 1689
A Baptist Look at Calvinism - E. Reisinger & Tom Ascol (Eds)
Memoir of James Petigru Boyce - John A Broadus
The Nature of Saving Faith - Ernest C. Reisinger
The Principles of Biblical Accommodation as Applied to the Invitation System - Reisinger and Lawrence T. Spargimino
James P. Boyce: God's Gentleman - Ramsey
Southern Baptists and the Doctrine of Election - Robert Selph
Calvinism or Hyper-Calvinism - E. Reisinger and T. Ascol (compilers)
Thoughts on the Regulative Principle in a Reforming Situation - Ernest C. Reisinger



Southern Baptist Sermons on Sovereignty and Responsibility

a book containing the following four sermons by early Southern Baptist leaders:

"Love Characteristic of the Deity"

W.B. Johnson (first president of the SBC)

"Perseverance of the Saints"

R.B.C. Howell (second president of the SBC)

"Predestination"

Richard Fuller (third president of the SBC)

"Sovereignty and Responsibility"

Basil Manly, Sr. (a founder of the SBC)

Also included in this work are excellent, brief biographical sketches of each man by Dr. Tom Nettles of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

These sermons demonstrate the warm, balanced commitment to the doctrines of grace which was prevalent in the formative decades of the Southern Baptist Convention's history.

In an effort to introduce these former SBC statesmen to modern readers the *Founders Journal* is pleased to offer a **free copy** of this book with every *new* subscription.

When you order a *new* one- or two-year subscription simply request a free copy of *Southern Baptist Sermons on Sovereignty and Responsibility*. If you order a gift subscription for a friend, a free copy will be sent to both you and the new journal recipient. This offer is good through the end of 1991.

