

The Faith Watch

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NEW TESTAMENT MISSIONS

The New Testament is missions. From John the Baptist's cry of "Behold the Lamb of God" to John the Revelator's last gospel call in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.", the grand theme of God's book is missions. The original disciples were sent out to do missions work as were the seventy. Paul, the most prolific penman of the New Testament, was a missionary. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is a model for missions work. He left His original estate to walk the earth "to seek and to save that which was lost". He condescended and denied Himself for the sake of the unsaved. To understand missions one must understand the New Testament. To understand the New Testament is to understand missions.

THE MISSION

Christ commissioned His first church to be missionary. In Matthew 28:19 His instructions were to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." His words in verse twenty expand the scope of this instruction beyond just that first congregation when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of

the world." This extends the missionary command to all churches for all time. Whatever else churches do, missions is fundamental. The small group of listeners that day must have been overwhelmed at the magnitude of the responsibility placed upon them by this commission. Mark puts it this way in his account, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Churches would evangelize their areas and send out others to work in other areas where separate churches would be founded. These new congregations would continue to spread the gospel in their respective locales while sending out yet more missionaries to repeat the process elsewhere. In this way the commission of Matthew 28:18-10; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47,48 and Acts 1:8 would be fulfilled.

THE MISSIONARY

In the general scheme of things every church member is a missionary. The "Jerusalem" of Acts 1:8 represents the immediate area surrounding any given church. We fulfill our part of the Great Commission by evangelizing our friends and neighbors. In this way the church seeks to capture its own city for Christ. We have all been called to do this. In the same way, God calls some of our number to go beyond and relocate to do mission work elsewhere. Acts 13:1-4 is

a good example of this. Saul and Barnabas were called out of the church at Antioch to do foreign missions work. The Antioch church was missions-minded in that they acknowledged -the call, fasted and prayed, and then they affirmed the mission of these men by the laying on of hands and the sending of Saul and Barnabas out.

The work of the missionary is very similar to the work of the pastor back home. Both are building churches and training those churches to reproduce themselves through missionary efforts. Often the missionary is more mobile, travelling to various villages and changing fields as God leads, but the preaching of the gospel, the baptizing and the teaching is consistent with true ministry anywhere.

As the call to the missionfield is experienced by an individual God places a burden for a certain people upon the heart. This causes the missionary to willingly surrender his homeland and way of life to fulfill the call. Possessions are sold and family must be left behind to live in remote locations and perform the work gladly that God has led them to. This sometimes involves the learning of a foreign language. In some cases missionaries are on location for some time while they adjust to local customs and learn the language well enough to actually be effective in beginning the work there. This process can take years, but to the God-called individual, it is what he must do. I have seen many missionaries on furlough from foreign fields or back in the United States temporarily for medical reasons who longed to leave the comforts of this country as soon as possible to be back on foreign soil (sometimes in relatively primitive conditions) to continue the

work. This is real surrender. This is the work of God upon the heart.

When our children were small, missionaries would be guests at the churches we attended showing slides of their work and sometimes presenting their fields for support. At the end of the service my wife and I would always escort our children to the front to shake hands with the missionary, and we always made a big deal of the fact that they were meeting a "missionary"! I still think it is a big deal when someone will surrender what is necessary to obey the call of God in leaving home and taking Christ into the darkness.

THE MISSION BOARD

To discover how missionaries are to be supported and what mechanism is to be used to accomplish their purpose we must simply look at the Great Commission itself. In Matthew 28:18-20, to whom did the Lord give the mandate to evangelize the world? Which earthly organization has permission to be the missionary agency for all time? Christ was speaking to His church in Matthew. His churches are to preach and baptize and teach the world. The rest of the New Testament bears this out as churches sent and supported missionaries called out from among them. As one author put it, "If the churches are not in view in the Great Commission, then they should stay out of missions."

Mission boards have been organized (some call themselves clearinghouses) to facilitate the sending of missionaries around the world. These organizations often vote to send people here or there and handle the support money for the missionaries. This is an attempt at

improving Christ's design in the Bible. Our Lord did not leave boards and clearinghouses in charge of world evangelism. There are no para-church ministries organized under Divine sanction. I believe mankind has a tendency to overorganize and thereby hinder what should be an uncomplicated endeavor. Boards create power structures and positions unnecessary to the cause ... absolutely obsolete! Sometimes the word "clearinghouse" is used by some who know that all authority resides in the local church for spiritual operations as they seek to distance themselves from the fact that "boards" have taken to them authority which Christ did not give. These clearinghouses then operate in similar fashion to the boards from which they wish to disassociate. Both boards and clearinghouses take precious funds out of the hands of missionaries. These entities require buildings in which to operate. Utility payments must be made as well as office expenses. Sometimes they have paid staff. All of his overhead must come from somewhere, either from a percentage of the missions giving from the churches or of separate donations. Either way, money that could go to the field is absorbed by these needless agencies.

Much of the blame for this goes to lazy churches who should be sending and managing these missionaries themselves. They have delegated the Great Commission for convenience sake. All of the missionaries supported by Faith Baptist Church of Moline are operating solely out of local assemblies. It is a hard and fast rule here at the church. These churches don't have a problem in doing this, though it takes additional accounting of funds and

administration. In these churches every cent of missions money goes directly to those on the field. Those who wish to argue in favor of boards say that more can be accomplished for missions by such organized efforts, but I personally have not seen this. The churches with which I am familiar have very effectively accomplished the sending of missionaries around the world. Perhaps those who are employed by boards who think the churches are failing in this should take the time and energy they commit to their unbiblical organizations and dedicate them to their local assemblies. Then the wasted money that goes to run the cumbersome para-church machinery could be funneled to the field where it is needed. Anything these extra-biblical enterprises can do the church can do and should be doing. I believe that God's blessings would attend such obedience to New Testament design. (see Spurgeon's opinion of mission boards elsewhere in this issue.

THE MONEY

Not everyone in a church can go, but all can send. As in the New Testament, FBC believes that the burden of the financial support of missionaries falls upon the churches. Our system is simple. Our offering envelopes present three opportunities for giving. Printed on each is a space to record tithe, missions and designated. The tithe is considered the minimum. It consists of ten percent of an individual's income. Missions donations are over-and-above the tithe and are recorded separately. All missions money goes to the missionary. Only money marked for missions on the envelope is used for such. Other designated funds can be channeled by

marking the third area on the envelope. At this time it takes almost all of the incoming tithe to operate the church within budget. I can foresee a day when our total offerings are such that a portion of the general offering can be earmarked for missions each week in addition to that which is given specifically for that.

Our missions projects number four at the present time. The Rettig's are laboring in the Czech Republic, the Westenberger's are busy in East Africa, The Brumbaugh's work among the Mormon's in Utah and The Roloff Homes work with wayward young people in Texas and Montana. At this time we are able to support each at the rate of seventy-five dollars per month. They depend upon this, and in all the years we have never missed a payment.

Paul said to one of his supporting churches, the church at Philippi,

"Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. (Ph.4:15-17)

Even those churches from whom God has not called specific individuals to travel abroad for missions receive credit from Him for sending and supporting those who do. I am looking forward to increasing the missionary outreach of Faith Baptist Church in the days ahead both through those who might be called out of our congregation and through the faithful giving of others. This will surely

tender fruit to our account. While others are busy in the fields, how can we be idle?

Psalm 96:3- Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

Pastor Stan Gustafson

Spurgeon's Opinion of Mission Boards

We must never think of leaving God's work to societies. They have had their day, and have supplied a great lack created by the loss of the apostolic spirit, but it is now time that the aroused and revived church should assume her true position and do her own work.

Fifty years or more, missionary societies have been trying to convert the world, and albeit that many souls have been saved, and therefore the effort has been far from useless; yet, compared with apostolic success, they have been a miserable failure. All these years we have spent ten times the money, with not a tenth of the success, of early evangelistic effort.

In my inmost soul, I believe that the Lord is not with most of our foreign missions. And why? Because God never called the missionary societies to the work. He never bade the missionary society become the spouse of Christ, and bring forth sons unto Him. His offspring, His seed, which shall reward Him for His soul's travail, must spring from His own well-beloved Bride.

Much as I value all good societies, I cannot hesitate to declare that the church is the ordained agent, and that all besides is human, and derives authority only from man. Hence I say of a society for

the conversion of the heathen, it is a man-constituted body, and not of God.

The Lord will work, not by committees, but by His churches. The Church must do her own work, and when all our churches are thoroughly aroused by this fact, and every congregation shall send out it's own men, pray for their own men, and support their own men, we shall see greater things than we have ever dreamed.

C. H. Spurgeon

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. 8

When The Sodomites Get Their Rights

There is a reoccurring theme gaining momentum in the media. Television offers an ever-increasing homosexual presence in its programming. This is due in part to shock value and in part to the moral (immoral) agenda of those behind the scenes. It is not uncommon to find homosexual news in the print media weekly. One of the latest examples is the recent coverage of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this country soon to vote on its view of homosexuality and same sex marriage. This ecclesiastical body (loosely speaking) is just another in a long line of apostate church groups caving in to the public pressure to find wickedness acceptable. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has already voted in favor of sodomy.

Also in print these days is the battle raging currently over whether homosexual marriages should be recognized legally, and whether such a union should be defined as a family. The sodomites are demanding their rights. So far, President Bush has come out against

such marriages. HOLD THE LINE, AMERICA! Your stand on this could decide your future as a nation! Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by an angry God over this very issue. Divine judgement now threatens this nation.

I. Sodomites Are Petitioning Their Rights

"The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves." Isaiah 3:9.

Sodomy is not a lifestyle preference, but wicked sin before God!

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly." Genesis 13:13.

Sodomy is not a lifestyle. It is rather a death style!

II. Politicians Are Promising Them Their Rights

"The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted." Psalm 12:8

I suppose that to most politicians a vote is a vote no matter where it comes from, but the Bible says--

"Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!" Habakkuk 2:12

III. Religion Is Pandering Their Rights

"And he cried mightily with a

strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Revelation 18:2

Religion with no absolute authority, no spiritual life, no light, stumbles along in the darkness of sin and embraces sodomites into their religions. The "cage of unclean and hateful birds" is now packed full.

IV. God Will Pay Them Their Rights

"... every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward..." Hebrews 2:2b.

The sodomites are having a field day now as they organize their "task forces" and demonstrate in various ways. They say they want their rights.

You may rest assured, every sodomite will get just exactly what he has coming to him!

1. God gave them rights in Lot's day-

"And the LORD said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." Genesis 18:20-21.

The Lord found Sodom so vile that He smote the Sodomites with blindness and destroyed them all along with their city.

"Then the LORD rained upon

Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; "And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." Genesis 19:24,25.

The sodomites just thought they had their rights until God's payday came. They lived in open sin. They probably had their sodomite parades, sodomite churches, political power and recognition. Sodomy was an appropriate lifestyle. There was no discrimination in employment.

1. Then God gave them their rights - Total destruction!

2. God gave them their rights in Asa's day -

"And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and did as David his father. "And he took away the sodomites out of the land... I Kings 15:11-12a.

The sodomites did not have the right to dwell in the land, and they were removed. Immigration laws banning sodomites from entering a country are right laws!

Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, followed in his father's steps and finished the good work that his father started -

"And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father" he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD... "And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.,, I Kings 22:43a,46.

He cleaned up the land. Oh, how this land needs a good cleaning! We need an Asa or Jehoshaphat in the White House.

3. God gave them their rights in Josiah's day -

*"Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem...
"And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD... II Kings 22:1a,21,23,7a.*

They didn't have a right to houses. They didn't have the right to marry and adopt children. Josiah didn't want them anywhere around the house of the Lord. God said what Josiah did was right in His sight!

4. God is now paying them their rights in the form of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome - AIDS!

God's warning of AIDS is seen in Romans 1: 27 -

"And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."

Hebrews 2:2 says -

"... every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward."

So the sodomites are receiving their rights in a measure now in the dreadful incurable disease of sodomy. They are "receiving in themselves that

recompence of their error..."

5. God will pay them their rights in the lake of fire -

*"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast -out into the lake of fire."
Revelation 20:15*

Author Unknown

An unknown author has penned these thought-provoking words:

*I would rather have one little rose
From the garden of a friend
Than to have the choicest flowers
When my stay on earth must end.*

*I would rather have a pleasant
word
In kindness said to me
Than flattery when my heart is still,
And life has ceased to be.*

*I would rather have a loving smile
From friends I know are true
Than tears shed 'round my casket
When to this world I bid adieu.*

*Bring me all your flowers today,
Whether pink, or white, or red;
I'd rather have one blossom now
Than a truckload when I'm dead.*

VBS 2003

by Barbi Daffara

"We may never blaze a trail on dusty roads, ride a donkey oh so slow, fill a can with bullet holes. We may never sleep outside on our bedrolls, but we're in the Lord's Posse - Yeehaw!"

Howdy Y'all! I guess I'm still in the cowgirl spirit after the great week we had with VBS 2003. This year, the kids of Faith Baptist were Trailblazers, blazing a trail for God. Here's a little peek into the diary of our journey.

Day 1 - We decided that we needed a leader to go ahead of us. After a bumbling stumbling game of "Follow the Leader", we decided that Barbi was not the best person for the job. In the end, we chose Jesus as our leader. On this first day of the journey, we have a good-sized group gathered together to blaze the trails with. "We are 38 strong and ready to go!

Day 2 - We are still raring to go! We started to make a list of some of the problems that we might encounter while on the trail. There were a lot of different things, but we kept coming back to the snakes. Our leader (Jesus, not Barbi) told us that we needed to pray to prevent us from falling into any danger. That helped a lot in our fear of the snakes we were going to see.

Day 3 - We were getting a little weary today, but then we got some good news. We found out that Jesus is alive, and he has forgiven us for all the sins we have done and will ever do if we just believe on him. That news has given us a second wind to continue in our journey no matter what we encounter along the way. There was a "close shave" with some shaving cream, but we worked together and overcame in the end. WHEW! We have added to our numbers a little and have 42 trailblazers today!

Day 4 - We're almost there! There's No Turning Back now! We have learned that no matter how tough things get out here, we need to keep going! We need to also have courage in the face of

danger and in the face of others who might not want to hear about our leader or our mission.

Day 5 - We made it! We have arrived at our destination, and we only managed to get there because of our leader and because we did it together. We found out that Together is Better! We tried to work together as Partners in the water balloon toss and only some of us got wet - a small price to pay for the greater cause. Tomorrow, we get our reward (our big surprise), and we are really excited and wondering what it is!

Day 6 - SURPRISE! We have a dunk tank! We got to see some of our "favorite" workers get "dunked" over and over again as long as we could hit the target. Amazingly, our aim improved with a little practice, and the adults got REALLY wet! While we were letting our arms rest from all the throwing, we went through the maze set up in the teen room and then back outside to make sure that our fearless leaders didn't get too dry! What fun!

Day 7 - This is the last day of VBS and the most important. Our parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles and even friends of the family came to see what we have learned. Hopefully, they were able to learn from us about our leader and what he did for us on the cross. We sang and said our verses that we memorized and even got to wear trailblazer hats and bandanas. It was a great day! What a wonderful journey we had!

I hope you enjoyed your glimpse into our VBS journal.

Faith Baptist has a wonderful group of kids who are so close and very bonded together. My hope is that they are creating relationships that will last for a

lifetime and will be grounded in Christ.

Faith Baptist also has a wonderful group of adults who care about this church and these kids so much that they are willing to be in prayer, make snacks, do crafts, play games, take pictures, sing, cook lunch and even get really wet in order to show them a good time and to teach them something about our God.

I am amazed at the work of Christ in each member of Faith, young and old. God can do such wonderful things with a willing servant, and we have a church full of them. Let us be in prayer for the seeds planted during the week and for our children who some day will be called into service for God. May they be able to point back to Faith Baptist Sunday School and VBS as having a part in making them the Christians they have become.

Keys of Life

I pray for the day that my wish will come true; to see the moment when you realize what you already knew.

Filed away, tucked deep in your hearts, the pathway to love--where happiness starts,

I see through your eyes and into your souls, your triumphs and pain through which you will grow.

My dearest children, keep close to your hearts, my love for you always because souls never part.

Practice not the ways of this world for deceived you will be; pray for God's wisdom, love and strength and the truth you will see.

Happiness is that which you bring unto others it's the giving of yourselves, the bonds of love for fellow sisters and brothers.

So you see love isn't tangible, found in things that you buy or touch; it comes only from within your hearts, selflessly given. It matters much.

Bernetta's Babbles

By Sara Shipp

As you know Bernetta is not a real person. It is a column written by me, Sara, about different subjects, topics or other things that I have heard on TV. Over the past couple of editions of the paper I gave you some things that may have been funny to us and everyone around us. This time I will share a serious topic with you. So, fasten your seat belts, this is going to be a little bumpy. Here we go.

While watching TV on a Sunday morning before church, I came across Robert Schuler's son, also named Robert, preaching. He started out great, but ended as lost as lost could be. He started saying that the only way to get to heaven is through Jesus Christ, and Him alone. No strings attached. Then somehow, he ended up by saying, and I quote, "The only way to get to heaven is to purchase the 'Ticket to Heaven' and the only way you'll get in is this little card."

Now. I don't know about your Bible, but in my King James Version, 1611, it doesn't say anything in there about having to buy your way to heaven. I don't recall the Roman's Road saying, "That whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord, and buys a ticket, shall be

saved.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Rom 10:10

I think you got my point. So without anymore time, I'll give you my opinion of what I know about the reasoning why Mr. Schuler is hell-bound.

Just think about it for a minute. You can't buy, talk, work, or anything to get to heaven. It is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on a cross that bought my way, your way, and everyone's way to heaven. Praise God that there is nothing I can do, because I'm not good enough to do anything.

So, let me leave you with the way I have my ticket to heaven. It was the morning of May 3rd, 1987. I was only 7 1/2, almost 8. It was then I realized that if my grandma was to die, that I would never see her again, but most of all I wouldn't see Jesus. So I bowed my head, asked Jesus to come into my heart and to save me. From that moment on I knew somehow that everything would be all right. I'm saved and on my way to heaven. And guess what?. I've never been the same again.

So please, if you like watching those TV preachers, please don't take what they say to heart unless you know without a doubt that he is an Independent, Fundamental, Baptist preacher. Which I'll guarantee you, they are not. Amen.



My son and I have been attending Faith Baptist for 6 months. My, a lot has happened in those months. I have started

to read my Bible again. I truly enjoy and get the message of the sermons, thanks to our precious Pastor Stan. I know God sent us to this church. Pastor Stan, you see, officiated our beloved mother, Katherine Evans funeral in November 2002. I don't think Mom ever met Pastor Stan or his wife Sue. But I know she would have enjoyed them as much as we do. As I read my Bible each day and pray to God, I thank him for all the blessings He has given me. A wonderful family, a great church family, my health, my patience to deal with everyday circumstances, the day my son accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Just to name a few. One of my favorite verses is Psalm 106: 1. It says it all. Praise the Lord!! In closing, I know God has led me to where I am today, I found this poem, and it reminded me so much of my Mom and everything we all went through during her illness. When I feel lonely, and find myself missing her. I know she is with God. And in some way, she was a great part in leading me back to Him.

Jeanette Johnson - I Cor 16:23

*Her eyes are closed against the pain; her lips are cracked and dry.
I hold my mother's hand in mine
and try hard not to cry.*

*I'm keeping vigil by her side, I know
the end is near. I wonder what goes
on inside, does she feel any fear?*

*I know the time has finally come
when I must let her go. The child in
me keeps holding on, the tears
begin to flow.*

I ask my God to give me strength -

YOUNG DISCIPLES

*I can't do this alone. I need to know
He's waiting there to take my
mother home.*

*It always comes, this gentle peace,
this love beyond compare, When I
turn it over to my God, the things I
cannot bear.*

*I turn to say goodbye to Mom, I see
she tries to speak. I bend to hear
her final words; her voice is soft
and weak.*

*"I see the angels!" she exclaims;
"they're here to show the way!" I
tell her it's-okay to go, we'll meet
again one day.*

*She finds the strength to raise her
arm - I think, "Who does she see?"
God must have sent my Dad down
to set my Mother free.*

*She smiles a final smile at me, then
goes to his embrace. My Mom is
free from pain at last - I see it on
her face.*

*I stay behind, an orphan now, left
in this world alone. But I am still a
child of God, a child He calls His
own.*

*My Jesus sat with me today, and
heard my frightened plea. He gave
me just a glimpse of what is waiting
for me.*

*I keep a different vigil now; I'm
waiting for my day; and when it's
time for me to go, my mom will lead
the way!*

The Young Disciples have been up to quite a bit this year. Our calendars are still full of things that we yet would like to do.

It all began with another round of Scavenger Hunting. This is a game that has been played in the past by the group. We had so much fun with it that we wanted to do it again. This time we had to battle the snow and cold weather as well as try to beat our opponents to be the first group to find all everything on our lists. And, this list did not just contain items to collect, but answers from people for Biblical questions and various other things. Handing out tracts and tapes of previous sermons given by our pastor were also included on the list. Each group had to travel to accomplish the goal so the Young Disciples were found to be roaming the streets all over the Quad Cities "hunting". The teams probably visited many of you.

We continued on into the evening with a delicious taco dinner in which everyone in the group provided and prepared. It was yummy!

We then finished the night with some indoor games. The famous Running Charades was of course included in the bunch (this is one of our favorites). And yes, the women beat the men at this game, AGAIN. The women are undefeated thus far.

The next event that we participated in was a fun, friendly game of softball AGAINST anyone in the church over the age of 13 who would go up against us. Unfortunately, we did not have enough people on the opposing team that we could go against, so we just divided up everyone into two teams.

We found out that we have some "star

athletes" within our church. Wow, can some people really play ball! We also found out that most of us are not as young (or as graceful) as we thought. We had some minor scrapes and bruises (and lots of falls). In the end nobody was seriously injured and we had so much fun that it was unanimous that we play again, and we did. Everyone who participated still wants to play again soon; so another great game is planned for the church picnic.

We even had a "stand full of adoring fans" to cheer all us players on. There were people who came out and sat on the sidelines and watched the game. I heard that they all had lots of fun too.

A big thank you goes out to those were watching. You keep our team spirits up by cheering us on and without you to keep an eye on our busy "little people" of the church some of us parents would not have been able to participate.

The next BIG event on our calendar was hosting the church picnic. Again, it was a big success. Thank you to everyone who provided the delicious food. As always, people worked hard to prepare a great menu. The food was in abundance and tasted fabulous. There were also some yummy desserts.

We could not have asked the Lord to provide us with better weather for the picnic. He provided us with perfect weather for the outing. A game of softball and a round of Frisbee golf were played. The children also had a great time playing in the sand and rolling down the hills. I am sure all those little ones slept well that night.

With the picnic over for another year and school beginning soon, the Young Disciples are slowing down on activities (but just a little). We will soon have our calendars out again planning the next

church activity.

Ben & Rubie Fox

Warning Is Not Wrangling

By Bill Mosley

(Reprinted from The Plains Baptist Challenger, July 2003)

Most doctrinally sound publications, editors, pastors, and preachers will sooner or later be censured or accused of trying to "straighten out every one else." Every pastor/preacher will also one day be accused of having a vulgar mind if he dares to preach on proper attire and separation. It is becoming more frequent to hear other Baptist preachers, including some who claim to be independent, cunningly express resentment toward sound, strong biblical expressions from the pulpit. Even to the point of accusing the one who preaches against, and identifies, provocative attire on women intent upon attracting the attention of men. It is no surprise that some will even accuse the preacher of being involved in staring if he mentions immoral attire of both men and women. Pastors/preachers should not be discouraged by such conformists but rather be encouraged by biblical examples of prophets and preachers who indeed warned of the danger of conforming to the immoral practices of the world. "Dumb dogs," that "cannot bark," (Isa. 56:10) have their counterpart today. The penalty for not warning of impending danger has not been revoked since it was spoken by Ezekiel (33:6).

There is abounding evidence in both testaments of men of God who were

unafraid to expose error, command caution, and specify the sensuality of a tolerant Christianity or a sinful society. That it is necessary that preachers warn of the spiritual perils facing believers today is made clear by this advice from Paul to Timothy. (2 Tim 3:13)

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

Not only are they deceiving, they are also being deceived by those a notch higher on the ladder of deception, whose primary commander is the devil. Without doubt we are living in the perilous times when loving the world is more fashionable than loving God and His Word. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) It cannot be ignored that our Lord's comparison of Noah's day is surely being paralleled today. (Luke 17:26)

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man."

There was decidedly more interest in personal luxury and pleasure than in the service of God. (Gen. 6:2,4) Teaching that children of God should not marry children of the devil was neglected if not forsaken. As it was then, so also it is today, that it is almost unheard of for pastors to refuse to marry their young people to lost men or women.

The heart condition of society at that time had reached an unacceptable low. (Gen. 6:5)

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil

continually."

Similar conditions prevailed in the days of Isaiah. Yet Isaiah heard the voice of God clearly when He said,

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isa. 58:1)

Had some modernist Baptist preachers been there in that day, they might have accused Isaiah of being involved in the same sins as others or he would not have mentioned it. Or they may have said, "All that thunder but no rain." Lifting up "thy voice" is indeed a noticeable distinction in the man called of God to speak out against sin.

It is little wonder that Paul would give Timothy specific instruction about spiritual behavior in the Lord's church, the house of God. (1 Tim. 3:15) Peter clearly associated Paul's writing with all other Scripture. (2 Pet. 3:15,16) In both testaments the house of God is a place where God met with His people. In the Old Testament it was Israel; in the New Testament it is the Lord's church. In both cases those with whom the Lord met have specific instruction of what to embrace and what to evade.

There were those in both Testaments who criticized the proclaimers of God's commands. Foolish, prosperous, wicked men still say, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" (Psa. 73:11) The writer of this psalm, noticing the prosperity of the wicked, revealed that he was walking on less than solid ground until he went to the "sanctuary of God." (v. 17) There must have been some prophet of God there

still standing on the Word of God. He must have been crying out concerning the dangers that were ahead on the path he was taking. Whether the exact same statement is made or not, there is an undeniable lack of warning in too many Baptist pulpits today. It is not so alarming that the ecumenical crowd compromise any and all standards to get along. But a similar behavior is approaching the shoreline of doctrinally sound churches.

There must be warnings sounded out from pulpits in churches today, or more scriptural discrepancies are sure to come. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that "grievous wolves [would] enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:29) He prayed night and day for them that this would not happen. He named Hymenaeus and Alexander as two who were engaged in shipwrecking the doctrine of Christ. (1 Tim. 1) Some in the church fit the category of Diotrephes, who was identified by John as one "who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." (3 John 9) Closely associated with those who disapprove of clearly defined doctrinal boundaries is a desire to be accepted by the spiritually weak. Once that beachhead is established it is much simpler to sway those slightly more steadfast in the faith. Soon a Diotrephes has established himself with a firm land base to override any biblical doctrine that may still abide. There was no "straightening out" of Diotrephes intended by John, but there was a warning for the people and an exposing of error. Paul was not unduly concerned about the well-being of the grievous wolves, nor was John interested in the outcome of Diotrephes, but there was a stern warning of impending dangers

confronting the church in both instances.

Ezekiel had no doubt what he was to do, who he was to warn, and Who directed the warning. In Ezekiel 33:3 he was to blow the trumpet and "warn the people." In verse seven he must hear and heed "the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." Paul warned of men arising with distorted views speaking perverse things so as to draw away disciples after them. (Acts 20:30,31) He "ceased not to warn every one night and day" of those whose soothing voices were less disturbing than his.

It can be truthfully said that a considerable number of so-called Christians have reached the same depth of conformity as those in Isaiah's congregation. Isaiah's instruction from God was to write His Words before them in a table and note it in a book. Their description was clear and concise. (Isa. 30:9,10)

"That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: . . ."

They knew the difference in "right things," "smooth things," and "deceits." Flattery is a plentiful commodity today, used primarily to gain followers. Delusions are too often as commonplace in gaining acceptance among the Lord's true churches as Benny Hinn's fantasies which lure the biblically unlearned to send him millions of dollars. Incidentally, this is not to straighten out Benny Hinn, it is to warn the unaware that Hinn is a fake. This is not a wrangling but a warning.

FAITH BAPTIST WATCH

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