



The Sovereign Grace Messenger

A Publication of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship

*The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens;
and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

Psalm 103:19

Issue 54

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Special Note: Biblical Christianity has always been under forms of attack, forces of darkness moving in various ways to oppose the church of Jesus Christ. We now face opposition in ways not known before in our country. We rejoice that thus the Lord assures us concerning His church, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18) No one shall prevent the will of our Sovereign Lord from being fulfilled. But the spiritual battles faced are very real, strong difficulties presenting temptations to compromise or even give up the battle pressing hard. Every genuine Christian truly redeemed by the blood of Christ and born of God faces strong oppositions both from without and from within. In the forefront of this battle God places leaders who come under special attack. It is to these that the following article is specially addressed. Yet it is meant to be read by all, because your spiritual establishment and progress is greatly affected through those appointed of the Lord to “watch for your souls,” (Hebrews 13:17) who are “over you in the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12)

Fulfilling a God-given Ministry

When a man answers God's call to preach the Gospel, he undertakes a task that will require the highest and very best he has to give. It is an all-consuming responsibility, with distinct challenges and burdens that are unique to his calling. He does not labor for worldly honor or reward, but out of love for his Lord and the people he serves. However, it often happens that with the passing of time, his labor is taken for granted, even by those who truly love and appreciate him. Moreover, there will be times when he will encounter great opposition in the line of duty. As a result, the man of God may become discouraged and weary, not of the work but in the work.

“Take heed to the ministry which thou has received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.” (Colossians 4:17) This was the word Paul sent through the Colossian church to one named Archippus who had a ministry given him by the Lord. We are not told why he had this need of exhortation, but obviously the need was there. The only other hint we are given is found in Paul's letter to Philemon, where Archippus is called a “fellow-soldier” of the apostle. Was he battle weary from long labor and spiritual conflict, or tempted to cut short that to which the Lord appointed him? Perhaps he was. Many of God's servants do become battle fatigued at times. Ministry is a battle, just as Timothy was exhorted to “fight the good fight of faith,” a battle that takes place not only without but within. (1 Timothy 6:12) At the end of his course

**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13:
“And we beseech you,
brethren, to know them
which labour among you,
and are over you in the
Lord, and admonish you;
And to esteem them very
highly in love for their
work's sake. And be at peace
among yourselves.”**

Paul could say, “I have fought a good fight.” (2 Timothy 4:7) But what a different kind of battle! It is not a fight to destroy one's enemies. The purpose of the soldiers of Jesus Christ is to be an instrumental means of conquering the hearts of people. Then in pastoral ministry comes the long and often arduous task of leading, feeding, and establishing the people in the Word of God. Those who have been brought to surrender to Jesus Christ, coming to Him in a self-abandoned faith and trusting Him alone with their eternal souls, then have need of learning the way of life in Christ. The battle is not over when one is saved by God's wondrous grace. It is just beginning. In the forefront of this battle are specially equipped and God-sent pastor/teachers. They are not super-men, but men of “like

passions” with those to whom they are sent. (Acts 14:15) These men have their own inward struggles. They are subject to the exhaustion of continuous labor, disappointment at apparent failures, deep grief when those for whom they had high hopes abandon their profession of faith, and great stress when opposition arises. This battle in which the minister of Jesus Christ is engaged is so demanding that it can take quite a toll. He must first learn to diligently watch for his own soul before he can effectively watch for the souls of others.

The man of God is yet a man, a man with all the weaknesses of human nature. Like every other believer, he must fight temptation and is subject to faults and failures. Moreover, he often struggles with great disappointment, which can lead to depressive disheartenment. It is a noteworthy temptation for the man of God when he labors to exhaustion but success seems so often to elude him. When hopes are dashed and expectations met with disappointment again and again, he is tempted to ask himself, “What is the use?” Taken a step further, he may find himself on the verge of saying, “I give up!” In addition, some churches have unrealistic expectations of their pastor, as if the whole burden of ministry is on his shoulders alone. This can be especially true in smaller churches, causing the pastor to labor relentlessly until exhaustion takes its bitter toll. Few understand the all-

consuming nature of the pastor's work: the intense study required for sermon preparation and studies; the labor of prayer for his people; addressing the needs of others and bearing their burdens, while endeavoring not to neglect his own family. It is little wonder that many ministers of Christ fight with feelings of loneliness. Then there are those members who have the greener pasture syndrome, either eventually tiring of the faithful ministry of the Word or seeking what they think will be better for them. These are to be found among the fault-finders, the discontented, and those who are adept at turning molehills into mountains. In addition, the man of God serves on the forefront of a spiritual battle in which he is the object of specific satanic attack. No genuine man of God escapes this often subtle conflict, for the adversary aims his flaming arrows at the hearts of God's chosen servants. How do we continue when there seems to be nothing but an unending battle within and without? With little to encourage and much to oppose, we can be tempted to feel like Jacob of old when he cried, "All these things are against me"? (Genesis 42:36)

If the above seems to be a bleak picture, it is still drawn in colors of truth; for statistically, approximately 1,700 leave the ministry every month. It is most likely that the vast majority of these were never truly called and equipped by the Lord, so that unlike Archippus whose ministry was "in the Lord," their ministries were more a chosen profession than a divine calling. Yet the very fact that Archippus needed encouragement shows plainly that true men of God are not exempt from times of great discouragement that can come with the calling, including those times when the temptation to quit becomes very strong. It is to these men that this article has to do, to those who are truly called and who truly care for Christ's sheep, men who remain steadfast and faithful through a great deal of opposition from within and without.

I have read many articles dealing with what is termed ministry or pastoral burnout, offering solutions to this all-too-common problem. Most of them offer some good, practical advice. There are common-sense things that help alleviate exhaustion, things that certainly are useful to the pastor or missionary just as they are to anyone else with a pressing and relentless occupation. How could you argue that taking a full day of rest a week, taking time to recoup strength with a vacation, or even a lengthier sabbatical when severely depleted could not be

helpful? It is a very unwise course to burn the candle at both ends, and even worse to do so without a break. When it comes, a burnout or crash can have severe consequences. But the usual solutions to burnout are those things that could be applied to any demanding profession. However, the pastor or missionary is not simply a professional with a job to do. He carries the weight of eternal things, the demanding care for those to whom he is charged to minister, and is actually charged in an instrumental sense to "both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy 4:16) He is called to do things impossible for him to do, things that can only be done by the Lord working through him. Only another God-called, God-ordained, God-equipped minister of Christ can understand the weight of the responsibility.

When problems arise unexpectedly in the church, things such as discontentment, fault-finding, criticisms of the ministry, surprise departures and the like, it poses a severe trial for the pastor. In spite of his best efforts to lead the people in biblical ways of resolving their problems, it often seems to no avail. Depending upon the severity of the situation, the pastor can become physically, mentally, and spiritually exhausted as a result. It is in such times that many simply throw up their hands in despair and leave the ministry. Many others, myself included, have felt like throwing in the towel when facing such a thing. With a sense of helplessness and desperation, we turn to the Lord, literally weeping and crying for His help who alone can control, change hearts, and bring peace out of great trouble. That's not a bad thing, but can be out of the need of hearing the corrective words of the Lord, "O ye of little faith."

What is the Solution?

The solution for the servant of the Lord is not simply the need of more rest, which can be indeed absolutely essential, but is much deeper than this. The answer lies in the exercise of the God-given gift of faith, a submissive faith that leaves all in the hands of Christ while simply continuing to do what you have been commanded by the Lord. Sound simple? Not so simple! We are not exempt from the tendency to look at circumstances, experience great disappointments in people and problems, and be sidetracked from our main responsibility. We teach that God is an absolute Sovereign, that all things are in His hands and that nothing is going to ever

fail of what He has purposed. But do we really believe and act upon it? Are we exempt from the tendency to be so moved and discouraged from disappointing expectations, when we look for a time of success and all then seems to fail? Have you ever in some way cried, "Lord, I've done all I know to do, endeavored to be faithful, to consistently preach and teach Thy Word, to care for those for whom I must give account, and all seems to be vain. Why is this happening"? Why indeed is this happening? Could God really have something to do with it? Yes! Maybe we should first admit that God is in control no matter how difficult the way seems to be, and that His decreed will is being done. Should that not be the first place we turn our thoughts? But often, I fear, it is not. Perhaps we would do well to listen to the motivation that kept the Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson standing when bullets were flying all around him. He said, "Duty is mine. The outcome is God's." Are you not charged to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"? (2 Timothy 2:3)

The first responsibility of the pastor is to the One who called and sent him, as the apostle said, "not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (1 Thessalonians 2:4) His charge is to be faithful and his real success in obedience to his Lord, no matter the divinely appointed outcome. God is an absolute Sovereign, and accomplishes what He has purposed as He has purposed. Listening to an apt Adult Sunday School teacher in our church recently, he brought out an excellent application of this truth. The prophet Jeremiah was faithful and obedient, though at times greatly discouraged, and constantly filled with sorrow. He would have to watch those to whom he was sent come under great suffering, such as the dishonor of the aged, the rape of the women, the starvation of little children, and far more all the way to the captivity of the people. He obediently and faithfully gave forth the message of God, and how did he evaluate the results of his God-given task? He wrote, "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hear: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." (Jeremiah 6:10) On the other hand, God in His absolute sovereignty, whose perfect ways are unsearchable, used a disobedient prophet who despised the people to whom he was

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sent, to bring about a great awakening and city-wide repentance to the averting of divine judgment. His name was Jonah. God appoints the outcome of the ministries of His servants, and blessed is the man who remains faithful though he sees not the fruits of his labor. He may be a sower rather than reaper, and true spiritual fruit be borne long after he has fulfilled his God-given task.

Is it not quite possible to labor diligently in the ministry of the Word, endeavoring as fervently as possible to serve others, while failing to take care of your own walk with the Lord? When troubles inevitably arise, the hard things you face are going to be far more difficult if you haven't made your own life in the Lord your first priority. The Lord through Paul made it clear that you must first be diligent in your own self-watch if you are to be in a proper position to watch for the souls of others. "Take heed unto yourselves," and then "to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" is the charge to the elders of Ephesus. (Acts 20:28) "Take heed unto thyself" is the charge first given to Timothy, and then "unto the doctrine (teaching)." (1 Timothy 4:16) However, even if you have kept up your own prayer life, personal study, and devotion, it is quite possible to be sidetracked by unexpected trouble. The temptation is to be so distracted and overwhelmed by those really hard times that we allow them to rob us of spiritual strength. These times come to us all, even though we have endeavored to be as faithful as possible to our calling and responsibilities. In such times we can tend to forget that ultimately "the battle is the Lord's" and that no matter the conflict within and without, His purpose shall not fail.

There is absolutely no greater encouragement, or more effective way to the renewal of strength, than our focused looking to Christ alone. It is He to whom you belong, He who counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry. When I was a very young pastor, I remember reading G. Campbell Morgan's commentary on the Gospel of Mark. In the midst of an early battle in my own ministry, I found great encouragement from it that stays with me to this day. The gist of it is from memory. He was commenting on Mark 3:14-15, the choosing and equipping of the apostles, and drew from it a great application to all chosen ministers of Christ. You are His, first and foremost His servant, equipped and sent forth by Him, and in this He has

taken the responsibility for you. Like those stars of the churches in the book of Revelation, you are in His hands. More than a great thought, it is a great truth that He is your Protector, Keeper, Defender, and will never relent on the responsibility for you that He has taken unto Himself!

One of the greatest battles we face is an inward one. Even though we don't mean to do so, we can be so taken up with the work we are given to do, and the problems and oppositions that inevitably arise, that we are tempted to take matters into our own hands. We try to take control and fail to look to our Lord alone in a clinging faith. The great blessing is that even though sidetracked by adversity and distracted by opposing pressures, the Lord will not forsake you or let you go. At times it may seem like He does, but not so! He can make those very things that are so painful, discouraging, and strength-robbing to work to your far greater good. When Jacob fled from his brother's fury to find refuge with his uncle Laban, God promised that He would be with Jacob and eventually bring him home to Canaan again. Then when through Laban's anger against him he is forced to flee and go back to Canaan, God renews the command and the promise to be with him. He has and knows the promise of God to him, yet when hearing of the coming of his brother Esau with four hundred men, fear moves Jacob to take matters into his own hands. That's when God, in the form of a man, wrestles with him and puts his thigh out of joint, so that all he can do is cling to the One who smote him. (Genesis 32:24-26) Hosea reports that "he wept, and made supplication unto Him." (Hosea 12:4) And his clinging then only to his God was not in vain. It was for him a great victory. David, whom God had purposed for the throne of Israel, "encouraged himself in the LORD his God" and renewed his trust in God whose purpose cannot fail, when Ziklag was destroyed and his family taken captive. (1 Samuel 30:1-6) Peter ventured out of the boat to go to the Lord on the storm-tossed sea at the invitation of Christ to "come." But when the storm increased and he began to look at the fierce winds and waves instead of to the Lord alone, Peter began to sink. The Lord had no intention of letting his faulty servant perish beneath the waters, but drew forth the cry, "Lord, save me," and then "put forth His hand" and rescued him. (Matthew 14:22-33) The most difficult times of our lives often become the most important, especially when they weaken us so as to find our only

real strength in the One who loved us, gave Himself for us, and promises to never forsake us.

We are not only to look to, but also at Christ our Lord, our Sender and our greatest Friend. Men can and will forsake us but He is a true Friend who "sticketh closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24) He is the genuine Friend who "loveth at all times" and from whose love we can never be separated, a Friend who is "born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17) We teach the believing children of God in their trials and afflictions that He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," (Hebrews 4:15) has a purpose in them for their eternal good, gives grace in the midst of them and is preparing them for an eternity with Himself. Glorious! But then it is quite possible under our own trials and tribulations to fail to make that glorious application to ourselves. The Lord doesn't send you and then forsake you, even when weakened by long labor, trial, or even failure. He knows, as prophetically said of Him, how to "speak a word in season to *him that is weary.*" (Isaiah 50:4) By His wondrous sovereign grace He called us in some way according to the saving word, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." (Isaiah 45:22) And now that we are set apart unto Him for the work of the ministry, we are to learn in a very experiential way what He says of fruit-bearing, "Without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Look at Christ your Lord, your Sender, your greatest and most faithful Friend. By looking at Him, learning of Him, and learning from Him, we learn to look to Him. We know that He experienced every area of temptation that we could possibly face, "*yet without sin.*" (Hebrews 4:15) He knows every temptation that could possibly come against His own redeemed. Then He conquered every attempt of the forces of darkness and men to turn Him from the purpose for which He came. To all of His loved and saved ones, He alone is our Great High Priest who being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrew 4:15) is "a merciful and faithful High Priest." (Hebrews 2:17) It is then only from Him that we are to learn and believe that through prayer and supplication "He is able to succour (come to the aid of) them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2:18) Dear pastor and servant of Christ, if by grace you look to Him and trust in Him in the midst of loss, grief, and disappointment, you will find that He has faced every subtle foe to ministry you face and is able to come to your aid.

Our Lord was completely submitted to the will of His Father, no matter how much opposed, no matter the cost to Him, and no matter the grief and sorrow that He knew more than any man. Do remember that though He is God essentially and now man inclusively, His Godhood never overruled His very real humanity. He experienced everything that could possibly discourage, and continued in perfect submission to His Father without flinching. So reverently we ask, did He know the pain of labors met with little or no success? Look at His life! Look at the rejections, oppositions, grief and sorrows that accompanied Him in His life's purpose! Then listen to what He said prophetically in the prophecy of Isaiah, "Then said I, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." (Isaiah 49:4a) But He didn't stop there! He finished the sentence with "yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God." (Isaiah 49:4b) To the eyes of men it looked as if all was loss and the cross the end, but His greatest extremity was the hour of His greatest triumph. He continued in spite of every dread the cross presented, and cried, "Not my will but Thine be done." (Mark 14:36) That is why all that the Father gave Him shall come to Him, and those He came to save shall cry, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation." (Revelation 5:9)

Unlike the Lord Jesus Christ, you may not know the outcome of your labors. But what you and I should know is that God does not call and send His servants without the infallible will to accomplish all He has purposed. It may well come with many dangers, toils, and snares, and there will be times of great loss as well as gain, times when sorrow accompanies the joy of salvation. But when all appears dark and discouraging to our sight, it is our part to simply continue in submission to the will of Him who sent us. We cannot know the extent of what God is doing through us now, and if we judge by what we presently see and experience, we could become so discouraged that we are tempted to give up the battle. May God grant you and me, like Paul, to look at things eternal rather than the momentary and temporary things of sight. To continue, no matter what sight and experience might argue against it. As we continue with our focused look upon Christ alone in faith and submission to Him only, we will surely find that He will come to our aid. When little or no success can be seen, when opposition comes in

surprising ways and your strength seems to be gone, let the cry of your heart echo the prayer of David, "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." (Psalm 61:2)

"For Their Work's Sake"

"Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we *are* dust." (Psalm 103:13) That is a very precious word applied to all of the Lord's loved and redeemed ones. But take special note of that inclusive word, "all." The Lord knows all of us, all of our tendencies to weakness and discouragement, and is merciful though we deserve not an ounce of it. God shows mercy to His people when He sends them pastors to feed them with knowledge and understanding, who are there to uphold and encourage when trials and afflictions come, to lead in the right ways of the Lord when he perceives spiritual dangers, to understand that the sheep of Christ are very needy and can tend to times of great discouragement. He is distinctly a divine gift to the church, as is clearly taught in Ephesians 4:11. But what about the pastor himself? Because he is the specially called and equipped servant of Christ, charged with the oversight of the souls of others, the thought can sometimes be that he doesn't have the same needs others have. Nothing could be further from the truth. He can be merciful to the saints, weep with them when they hurt, rejoice when they prosper spiritually, encourage when they are discouraged, because he is subject to the same afflictions. He knows the needs of others because he has the same. The church, i.e., the people under his care is his life's work and driving concern.

Pastors are often embattled as they stand at the forefront of the conflict, often having to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:3) The labor itself is demanding, and often extremely tiring. Then there are those battles with unseen powers – the forces of darkness that oppose and often arise through unexpected means. Since the church is not generally aware of many of his struggles, he can feel very lonely, even though he is never truly alone because the Lord is always with him. And his family, his wife in particular, is not only by his side but shares in many of his conflicts. The pastor and his family need the church as much as the church needs them. They are not exempt from strong discouragement, especially when trouble arises in the church. Blessed is the

pastor who has a faithful wife that bears the burdens with him.

Are you made to wonder why the Colossian church itself was charged to exhort Archippus, and encourage him to continue in faithful ministry until it was fulfilled? Obviously he was under some kind of discouragement, the source of which we are not told. He may have been on the verge of giving in to some strong and continuing conflict and was robbed of strength. Although the Lord is the great encourager, He sometimes brings that encouragement through the instrumentality of others. When "saints" and "faithful brethren" (Colossians 1:2) take loving and caring notice of a disheartened minister of Christ; when they show themselves with him by encouraging him to continue because they recognize his work as truly "in the Lord," it can lift a heavy burden and be the means of God's grace to strengthen this brother and specially appointed servant of Christ.

You can be the means of strengthening him when the work is long and hard, and the battles are wearisome. Your faithfulness to your Lord, since you are his work, will be encouragement to him and will return to you with great spiritual benefit. He can suffer wounds in this spiritual battle that go much deeper than fleshly wounds, and take longer to heal. When he knows not only by your lips but by your life in Christ that his work is not in vain, you can be a means to his healing.

His greatest encouragement is in knowing that you are walking in the grace and truth of Christ, glorifying Him in life and witness. You are his work in the Lord. Your living godly in Christ Jesus is his greatest reward in this life.

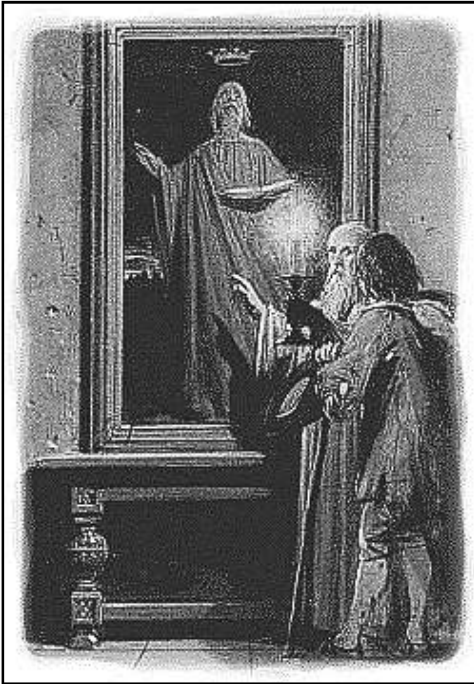
Ron Staley, editor
The Sovereign Grace Messenger

Charles H. Spurgeon: *"As ministers we are very far from being perfect, but many of us are doing our best, and we are grieved that the minds of our people should be more directed to our personal imperfections than to our divine message. God has purposely put His treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power should be ascribed to Himself alone: we beseech our hearers not to be so occupied with the faults of the casket as to forget the jewel. Wisdom is justified of her children, and grace works by such instruments as it pleases."*

Editor's Note: The following article is an excerpt from the book, *From Grace to Glory*,¹ subtitled, "A Present Day Journey Through John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*." The interpretation is based upon the portrait first shown to the character named Christian as he entered the entrance hall to the Interpreter's House. The features in the portrait are symbolic of a true man of God and servant of Jesus Christ, distinguishing him from imposters. It was the consensus of the Executive Committee of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship that it would be a fitting supplement to the first article, the book from which it is taken being a work of the editor's wife.

One Man Among a Thousand

Carolyn Staley



As the Interpreter leads the way into the first private room, notice that it contains a single item, a portrait hanging on the wall. Although it is not a great masterpiece or the work of a famous artist, study it carefully, my friend. Who is the solemn person depicted there, and why is his portrait displayed so prominently in the Interpreter's House?

Although the Holy Spirit lives in every child of God as his or her resident teacher and guide, we have need of instrumental help if we are to safely navigate the path of life. God graciously provides this help by calling and gifting men to be his watchmen, the guardians of his flock. Upon the Gospel battleground, these men form the vanguard and bear the brunt of the conflict. At the same time they must guard the flank lest the enemy break through, for part of their calling entails protecting the flock against the intrusion of

deadly error. The man of God does this by his uncompromising declaration of the truth and by maintaining a vigilant watch over those who have been placed under his pastoral care.

The godly minister is a rare and precious gift. Like Great-heart in *The Pilgrim's Progress: the Second Part*, he is the conductor and spiritual guide of those entrusted to his charge. His faithful ministry is highly instrumental in their conversion, spiritual growth, and perseverance in faith. Therefore, he occupies a vital place in the kingdom of God even though he usually lives and labors in relative obscurity. This is the man in the portrait, one man among a thousand.

However, all who claim to preach the Gospel are not the true servants of Jesus Christ. Many assume the name and claim the office when they are really wolves in sheep's clothing. These imposters are driven by ulterior motives, not genuine love or concern for the flock of Christ. Through clever words intended to deceive, they pervert the Gospel and create havoc in the churches. (Acts 20:28-30)

How are we to distinguish between the true minister of Christ and the false pretender? By what criteria are we to make this vitally important judgment? Take a close look at the man in the portrait. Ponder his expression and note well his features, for in them we shall find the answer.

Studying the characteristics of the imposter will do little to help us identify a minister of Jesus Christ. He is only known by a careful consideration of the true. The portrait hanging in the great entrance hall of the Interpreter's House is placed there for just this reason. It is a composite of the genuine under shepherd of Christ, both as to his godly character and the exercise of his divine gift. Its distinguishing features show the high standards required for this highest and most noble calling. So as we carefully ponder each feature of the man in the portrait, what do we see?

First, we must understand that he is a man, not an angel or a super-human being. He would be the first to say that he is fallible, limited in wisdom and knowledge, and fully aware that his strength is not equal to his great task. Yet he is a very special man, described by John Bunyan as "one of a thousand." He is what he is by the grace of God, a chosen vessel filled with the Spirit of Christ and set apart for special service in the kingdom of God.

The sober mind and Christ-like character of the man of God can be traced in the deeply etched lines of his face. There is no hint of frivolity there, for the heavy responsibility and serious nature of his labor is ever in his thoughts. The sorrows and burdens that are unique to his calling give his face its rather care-worn appearance, yet there is a beauty in his features as well, the beauty of one who is selflessly devoted to the service of his Lord. (1 Timothy 6:11-12)

His eyes are worthy of particular attention, for they reveal both the nature of his calling and the orientation of his heart. Rather than looking straight ahead, his eyes are lifted upward, and even though you cannot see it, so is his heart. This precious servant of Christ has answered a heavenly call. Thus he labors tirelessly for both time and eternity, not out of mere duty or for earthly honor or reward, but out of love for his Lord and the souls of men. The power to faithfully perform his commission comes from the Spirit of God, who called him and placed him in the ministry. (2 Timothy 2:1-4)

Although he is a man of spiritual strength, he is keenly aware of his utter dependence upon the Lord. Therefore, he spends much time in prayer, seeking help and strength from the one whom he serves and to whom he belongs. Then coming out of his prayer chamber, he goes forth as a mighty man of valor, prepared for spiritual battle with the whole armor of God.

¹Excerpt from the book *From Grace to Glory*, by Carolyn Staley. Published by Solid Ground Christian Books, Port St. Lucie, Florida.

<http://solid-ground-books.com>

After duly noting the man's uplifted eyes, our attention is next drawn to the book in his hand. This book, which is continually in his heart and mind, is the Word of God. As his sole authority, it constitutes both the rule of his life and the message of his lips. Shunning the commandments and doctrines of men, including his own personal opinions, he diligently labors to learn and rightly interpret the Scriptures. In so doing, he is equipped for the task of properly expounding it to others. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Even though the minister of Jesus Christ is a leader of men, he is a leader led by his heavenly master. He is well aware that he can only accomplish his great task if the Spirit of God is the source of his knowledge, wisdom, and unction. Therefore, the man of God is no stranger to the house of the Interpreter. In fact, like Pastor Great-heart, he is a frequent resident there. Within the refuge of its walls he communes with his Lord, receives instruction in the truth, and seeks guidance as to its proper application. In this way, he becomes an able minister of Jesus Christ, skillful in the Word of God and apt in the ready defense of the Gospel. Then being filled and led by the Spirit of Truth, he is a proper guide for other pilgrims on their way to Zion. (1 Timothy 4:12-16)

The next feature of the man, the "law of truth written upon his lips," is not visible to the natural eye. It is a characteristic that has to do with the godly example of the minister of Christ. (1 Timothy 4:12-13) Truth flows from his lips because it is a living reality in his heart. Since his life is consistent with his message, the man of God is a worthy example to his flock. (1 Timothy 4:6-8; Hebrews 13:7)

We might presume that a man of such exemplary character would be loved and appreciated by all who know him, but this is not the case. Since he labors for the approval of God and not men, and since he buys the truth and sells it not, he is often misunderstood, slandered, and despised. (2 Timothy 2:1-15) He expects no better treatment from men of the world, but ironically, a significant part of this kind of suffering comes from those who claim to be brethren in the Lord. However, the truly spiritual person will love and respect him for his courageous defense of the truth.

After studying the various features of this very rare portrait, the perceptive viewer will observe that the world is placed

behind the man's back. He serves a heavenly master, a risen, reigning Lord; therefore, his heart is firmly set on things above. The world and its vanities hold no charms for him. Whatever earthly position or honors he could have attained, or temporal goals he might have achieved by pursuing a lesser calling, are gladly sacrificed to his Lord. Knowing full well that no man can serve two masters, he follows his Lord with singleness of heart and mind. Moreover, he does so joyfully, out of love for the one who saved him and placed him in the ministry. (2 Timothy 2:1-4)

Gazing still more closely upon the countenance of the man in the portrait, we observe that he "seemed to plead with men." In this, we may infer much concerning both his ministry and his heart of love for the souls of men. The imposter has no genuine care for men. He possesses nothing of the true shepherd's heart, but ever seeks his own selfish purposes. Therefore, when the tide turns and trouble or persecution comes, he is the first one to flee.

Unlike the false pretender, the man of God loves people enough to tell them the truth, even when he must do so at great personal cost. As an ambassador of Jesus Christ to whom the ministry of reconciliation has been committed, he faithfully declares the good news that through Christ, men are reconciled to God and made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) Since this precious truth is neither universally loved nor accepted, suffering is an inevitable part of his bold defense of it. Yet he does not shun the pain that often attends his valiant stand for the truth, but can honestly say with the apostle Paul: *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

Then there is the parental aspect of his calling, which is evident in his concern for the spiritual growth and welfare of those placed under his care. As they strive to follow the Lord and be more like him, as the image of Christ is gradually being formed in them, their pastor suffers spiritual birth pains right along with them. (Galatians 4:19) He can truthfully say with the apostle John: *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.* (3 John 4) On the other hand, he knows no greater anguish than seeing those whom he loves reject the truth and depart from it.

What possible reward could be due such a man as is represented by the portrait? It would certainly be nothing that this world has to offer. But he does not seek earthly recognition, esteem, or reward. The "crown of gold hung over his head" signifies that a heavenly reward awaits him. (2 Timothy 4:7-8) When earthly honors and corruptible crowns have all been left behind, something far higher is reserved for the faithful under shepherd of Jesus Christ, a crown of glory that will not fade away. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Dear brother or sister in Christ, there is perhaps another reason why this portrait is given such a prominent place in the Interpreter's House. Although the Spirit of God is the only infallible Interpreter, every Gospel minister also bears the name in that he is taught by the Holy Spirit in order to rightly teach others. Moreover, in a very real sense, every gathered assembly of saints is an Interpreter's House, part of the household of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22) Those who have the divine Interpreter living within will discern the gift of God and hear the voice of Christ through his appointed under shepherds. (Ephesians 4:7-16)

So before we leave the antechamber, join me in taking one last look at the portrait hanging there, for it is actually a study in contrasts. By rightly interpreting its features, we should be well able to distinguish the true minister of Christ from those who merely claim to be. Moreover, the way in which we regard and treat the man of God says much about our spiritual condition. (Matthew 25:34-45) Therefore, let us give him diligent heed and follow his authority, remembering that he is commissioned by the King of kings to guide us safely through the difficulties we will encounter in this life. (Hebrews 13:17) Many false voices will clamor for our attention along the way, but armed with the increased knowledge gained in the Interpreter's House, we should be much less likely to fall for the lies of the false pretender. (1 John 2:18-27)



The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Proverbs 4:18

Editor's Note: Years ago we would have never thought an article like the following necessary. But we live in strange times, i.e., strange to truth and right. The word of the living God, the Creator of all things who created all the distinctions in His own creation, will stand when all else has passed away. We live in a time when the defiance of God has taken strange turns, but the defiant stupidity of many shall never change the order established by the God who is.

Marriage and the Distinction of the Sexes

John Hunter



John Hunter serves as pastor of Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Millport, Alabama. He is a long-time supporter of the SGBF.

Today, there is a heated debate over the nature of the family and the distinctiveness of the sexes. Trying to arrive at sanity in the discussion of these issues is often difficult. Is there any definitive source we can turn to as a society and individuals to provide an answer to the dilemma of what is morally right or are we doomed to depend on the sliding scale of human opinion influenced as it is by the constant forces of mass media and social planners? To this question the answer is yes, there is a definitive source that has all the information necessary to come to right conclusions in this whole area. The definitive source is the Bible, God's Own holy Word. After all, He is the Creator of the family and the sexes, and therefore, has the right to establish moral absolutes if He pleases.

The Bible keeps using the pattern of the creation of man as the display of God's will in the matter of marriage and the distinction of the sexes. Therefore, we will trace in this article the subject from its roots at creation.

In Genesis 1:27-28, we are told that it was God's purpose from the beginning to have two sexes with the capacities of fellowship and procreation. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Although, as it has been said, it was God's purpose in creation to have two sexes. They were created in a specific order and fashion. This order and fashion is full of instruction. God formed first the male, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7). God then created the woman demonstrating to man his need of intimate fellowship and help by the way He went about that creation. He also demonstrated the inadequacy of

anything else in creation to meet this need. Genesis 2:18-25 says,

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Remember that Adam was in a state of creature perfection having not yet fallen and so possessed intellectual power not possessed in man since that time. As soon as God declares that man should not be alone but needs a helpmate, God shows man that his need can nowhere be fulfilled in any of the animal life. Then God moves in a special work to provide for man. Out of the man God fashions woman. It is obvious that God did not need previously existing material to work with, yet God chose to make woman out of the man as a special teaching tool to man and woman. A soon as the woman is brought to Adam, he realizes that she is that perfect means of satisfying his need of intimate fellowship and help. He also sees that she is part of himself taken and returned. So intimate is this relationship that she is "...bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh..." (2:23).

Adam then draws in his unfallen state this necessary conclusion for the right development of the human family, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (2:24) All the rest of the Bible works from this foundation as it deals with marriage, family and the distinction of the sexes. To fail to see this only leads to confusion and chaos on the subject. As the old saying goes, "God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve".

Could it be that this initial work of the creation of the sexes and their distinctiveness with the later natural development of the family was just an original pattern to be altered to fit the needs of a developing society? No! God calls all tinkering with His original, not improvement or variation, but sin. Let us continue to examine the evidence from Scripture.

In the fifth chapter of Ephesians from verses 22-33, God magnifies the marriage state, building on the foundation in Genesis one and two, and further explains the roles and the purpose of marriage.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and

without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Please be careful to note that marriage is a type of Christ's love for His Church and the Church's loving submission to Christ. This is the reason Satan has attacked and sought to pervert this institution—that by doing so he might lead men away from a proper understanding of Christ's love for the Church and the Church's willing submission to her Savior and Head. Please also note that the distinct sexes, male and female, have their prescribed role to fulfill in this relationship based on the Genesis pattern and Adam's statement concerning the woman being "...now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh..." (2:23). Marriage and the conjugal union of marriage, which is "...honourable in all, and the bed undefiled..." (Hebrews 13:4), is for men and women or to be more correct, is for one man and one woman in a faithful commitment to each other for as long as they live. Reference may be made to Matthew 19:4-6 and Romans 7:2 to verify this statement.

God made clear from the beginning the distinction of the sexes and commanded the vigorous maintenance of those distinctions in the Old Testament and brought down judgment on those destroying that distinction. Let me give several examples.

In Genesis 19, we first come across a society that had blurred the distinction of the sexes. We get our name for the perversion of homosexuality from one of the communities that made up this society. That community was Sodom and the perversion of removing the distinctions of the sexes is called sodomy after the town of Sodom. For this wickedness God destroyed that society in a fiery judgment. You may read about this judgment yourself.

In Deuteronomy 22:5 even the possibility of the blurring of the lines between the

sexes was quickly called abomination to God. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God." Deuteronomy 23:17-18 says, "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God." God could hardly be clearer about the perverted use of the sexes as He condemns whores and sodomites together and then He uses the term that shows God's utter contempt for sodomites by calling them "dogs".

Some have claimed that the New Testament does not share the Old Testament attitude toward this sin. Those holding this view are fond of quoting the Lord Jesus' response to a woman caught in the act of adultery, to which the offending man was conspicuously absent. After the Lord had shamed her accusers away because of their apparent guilt, He said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." John 8:11. Thus some say Jesus taught tolerance and forgiveness for sexual sins. The obvious flaw in this argument is that Jesus continued to see the behavior as sin to be repented of and not repeated. Let Jesus speak for Himself on this point. Matthew 19:4-5 "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

Jesus says God made two sexes to form the union of marriage. In the book of Romans, which is of course New Testament teaching, when God warns us about those who have been given up to a reprobate mind, He categorized the reprobate mind in this way, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 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." Romans 1:26-27. Note that the physical and emotional problems caused by homosexuality God calls meet--that is, proper. Sin must eventually meet with judgment. In I Corinthians 6:9-11 God makes His attitude abundantly clear.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

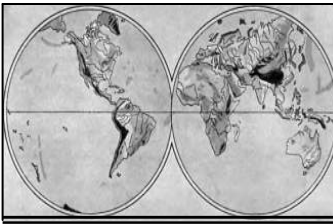
The King James Version is rather mild in its translation of the Greek using the word effeminate as among those under God's ban. The New International Version translates this same passage this way, "...nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders...". Either way you translate the passage let there be no mistake, God does not take removing the sexual distinctions or the perversion of them lightly. He condemns the sin of homosexuality in no uncertain terms.

Does the Bible have more to say on this subject? Yes, it does! Although not of any different nature than that that has been here recorded. Any that claim the Bible is unclear on the subject are just incorrect, willingly ignorant, or liars.

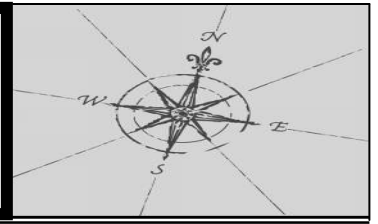
But don't let me close without a word of encouragement. The Christian message is ever a message of hope. The Bible is not primarily a book of judgment, but it is primarily a message of redemption. When God through Paul in the Corinthian epistle condemned the Corinthians' sin, He went on to say, "And such were some of you..." and then He said, "...but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (6:11). This is good news! Some of the Corinthians had been sinners of the vilest nature, but now were washed from their sin; sanctified or set apart for God's use; justified from all their sin, so they stood right in the sight of God. All of this was done for them, "...in the name of the Lord Jesus...". The Bible teaches that there is such forgiveness today for guilty sinners. Even for those who were once effeminate, if they turn to Christ, repent and believe. In the words of Christ, having received forgiveness "go and sin no more".

The free and sovereign grace of God is powerful to the salvation of souls. God promises that true seekers shall find it. If you would like to be part of His forgiveness, call upon Him now in repentance and faith.

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World Missions



A New Mission to Spain

The Work of Ihor Dovzhyk

Our mission point emerged naturally after we started praying for planting a Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Ferrol, Spain. Before that, I came to Spain from my Baptist church in Ukraine with Operation Mobilization in 2011. Having resigned from the mission due to my getting married, and having then preached at a small Brethren congregation for several years, the only conservative Evangelical church in the area where we actually live, we began praying for planting a Reformed Baptist church in 2017. Since that, for several months I was preaching to only one person on Sundays — to my spouse (we don't have children). Then other folks joined us — one of them is a Colombian sister, Eny, who specifically sought a place where the Doctrines of Grace are preached — and now we have a small group of five, celebrating our Sunday worship services with expository preaching, the Lord's Supper once a month, biblical lessons on Wednesdays, actively evangelizing and waiting upon coming of some new lookers from the United States and Mexico by September 2019.

In the city of Ferrol in northwestern Spain, our small Reformed Baptist group of five is the only Baptist congregation in the city and its surrounding communities with a total population of 160,000. Of course, there are other few Christian churches nearby, but for the most part these are Neo-Pentecostal groups promoting the Word of Faith ideas and female preaching. We've witnessed what The Gospel Coalition said about the portrait of most Protestant ministries in Spain, "There's no doubt that the heresy of the prosperity gospel has become the new orthodoxy" (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-gospel-in-spain/>).

The only conservative Evangelical Brethren church in Ferrol area, mentioned above, was founded by the English missionaries as early as the nineteenth century and unfortunately declines due to aging of its members and, thus, decrease in number. Therefore here, as in all Spain, there is an acute need for planting biblical churches. Apart from our city of Ferrol, several towns with a population of more than 5,000, sometimes even more than 10,000, have no Evangelical witness. Some bigger cities have small congregations with a distorted gospel, e.g. Naron, the closest city to Ferrol with the population of about 40,000, has only two small Evangelical churches: one with interdenominational and Emerging Church tendencies, and the other is a Neo-Pentecostal church rebuking Satan and practicing other unbiblical stuff, — each one totaling about 20-30 attendees. The town of Fene counts more than 13,000



inhabitants and has no Evangelical church. By the way, the Spanish shipyard company Navantia is located in Fene, and the recent contract with Saudi Arabia for ship building will cause employment increase for several years on, which may lead, in turn, to the rise of population. Valdoviño is another town without Evangelical church, and its population is almost 7,000. The population of Neda is 5,000, and there's no Evangelical church. The capital of Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, has a population of 95,000 and is also in urgent need of planting biblical churches. In short, there are many places with little or no Evangelical presence, and if there is one, we're not completely sure that there's no need to plant a church that would speak sound doctrine. Thus we're working on planting a church in Ferrol and then, after establishing it until its full functioning, we pose to open new mission points in surrounding towns or farther.

Please come to help us (Acts 16:9). You're welcome to visit us, join our group and help us in our work, whether it be evangelizing, preaching at group if you're an expositor, and so on. We can't cover your flight costs, but we offer accommodation and meal at our home. Spain, the least evangelized Spanish speaking country, is called a cemetery of missionaries, because more than a half of missionaries leave Spain after their first period of ministry and don't come back again. Prof. Jerram Barrs (Covenant Theological Seminary) made a note that in such countries as Japan or France, about ten years is an average time that a person's conversion takes from the first contact with a biblical believer until the conversion itself.

Spain is like France, even as its geographical neighbor. Spain still has many inveterate Catholics, who never accept even a tract. On the other hand, Socialism is very strong in Spain due to the popular support and a civil war in the past, so many may listen to you exposing the Gospel just wanting to be apparently tolerant to all:

Missionaries, are you interested in reporting your work in the *Sovereign Grace Messenger*?

As a service to missions and missionaries the SGM dedicates a special missions section in each issue. The Missions Editor, Larry W. Dean, should be contacted for further information. larrywdean@aol.com

Evangelicals, Muslims, LGBT and so on, but never accepting the Good News and always declaring themselves agnostic. So church planting goes very slow in Spain.

We also need your support in prayers. We'll appreciate your prayers about our contacts with people which allow us to speak of the Gospel. Sister Eny has about four more or less constant contacts, and I am currently developing friendship with a Chinese Catholic Hugo confused about biblical Jesus. Generally we practice frontal evangelism on the streets talking to people and sharing tracts, but, being aware of Postmodern thinking, we don't reject the possibility to get closer to people in friendship relationship in order to show them the Gospel in action, i.e. to let people see how God's grace is working in us, and to communicate them the Good News verbally. That's the practice shown by our Master, "Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour" (John 1:38-39). Pray for Hugo. Pray for other contacts. Pray for new contacts.

Particularly, please pray for our faithfulness to God, numerical growth and new missionaries to Ferrol. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the some with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Colossians 4:2-4). We'll hugely appreciate your praying for coming of a young missionary from Mexico, brother David Martinez, who will stay with us, Lord

willing, for some weeks in September-October. Earlier the place of his long-term ministry in Spain was uncertain, but recently David was issued a scholarship by a university of Madrid, the capital of Spain, — and this is a good possibility for him to stay years in Spain in terms of managing his visa — so his long-term ministry in our region Galicia is discarded for now. This notwithstanding, we wait upon him for a short period this year before his studies in Madrid start. As well, in September two folks from a Hispanic Baptist church in Las Vegas, NV come to Ferrol for two weeks. They have already bought their flight tickets, and now with fervent prayers we're waiting upon them. Please kindly uphold these two visits prayerfully (Romans 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 16:9), that the Lord prepare their hearts for this work, guide them, provide us all necessary means for accommodation, that nothing can hinder their coming (1 Thessalonians 2:18) and that their and our evangelistic efforts bring fruit (Romans 1:13).

Also, I have a secular job taking more than 9h. Monday to Saturday. Please pray that the Lord give me a financial support for full-time ministry, so that, besides devoting more time to church planting, I can spend hours in knowing God more through in-depth study of His Word and seeking His power through prayer, lead daily family worship, have free time to finish my Master of Divinity with The North American Reformed Seminary www.TNARS.net etc. We'll also appreciate you praying for my wife Yane's health. A couple of years ago she underwent a surgery, in which six benign tumors were eliminated from her womb. And of course, we pray that the Lord give us a baby. Please email us id.baptist@gmail.com if you'd like to know more about our ministry in Spain.

Open Doors for the Gospel in India

Prem Waghmare

We are grateful to the Lord for His many blessings that includes you, our praying partners.

We appreciate your interceding on our behalf. Through your precious prayers and support, our God has been opening the doors, enabling us to proclaim His glorious Word and bringing in His sheaves, His captives like me, home. That is what Christ came for "to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" (Isa 61:1b).

We are thankful to our Lord for granting us His precious presence and His joy as we minister among many enemies of the Gospel. "The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. (Ps 110:2).

As much as possible, our daily routine includes meeting each morning for studies of the Word and brief time of prayer. Some mornings we travel to the villages/towns to preach and to the breaking of bread among the saints. Some days we travel to the preaching points where the unconverted souls are gathered through the brethren's contact. In this all our hope and our confidence are not in ourselves or in our ingenuity but in our God Who has given us His sure Word and "Who is rich in mercy" and "abundant in goodness and truth" .. Who is worthy of all our worship, praises and adoration.

By His grace, our family and the brethren are doing well. My dear wife Anita and the two older ones have recently traveled back to



Kansas City. Samuel and Elizabeth will continue attending the Longview community college.

Praise be to our Lord for watching over and protecting us during the summer heat in Nagpur. The temps were gone up to 116-117F during the months of May and early June. We thank Him for the Monsoon rains which brought much relief.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Rev 5:12).

With a grateful heart and in the love of the Lamb,

Prem Waghmare and family

US address for Prem

Sovereign Grace Church
Prem Waghmare ministry
P.O. BOX 9424

“The Lord appears to be fully healing me.”

Trevor Johnson, Papua, Indonesia

Update for the *Sovereign Grace Messenger*

I was not sure if I'd EVER heal last year. This understandably caused me much distress and even depression. Multiple internal organs were enlarged and I had liver damage from chronic malaria, and suffered extreme and chronic pain all the time such that I could not sleep unless utterly exhausted. I also had a brain inflammation and could barely read some days due to inability to process any deep thought.

Stripped down from all abilities and work as a missionary, and even one's mental abilities, one comes to learn that just simply being and existing as a child of God is enough. In the final assessment we truly have nothing to offer God anyway that was not first given to us by Him. And so even if my body and my mind fails, I am still His – and that is enough. And at some point, this will happen to every single one of us in death. It is better to reckon with that now.

But this conclusion is not easy to come by. It is easy to state it with your lips. But it is not so easy to live it out, and to truly believe it.

And now, I just spent a week snorkeling and scuba diving in the ocean with my kids with probably what would be considered normal fatigue for most 44 year-olds. Aside from some cortisol irregularities, my labs tests are “like a 20-year old's” the doctor told me.

We plan to return to Papua in January to continue our interior work among the tribe.

From tactical to strategic

Being sick has forced us to think about what our next steps in the ministry will be. I am 44 now and living past 50 in a remote jungle village might not be sustainable.

Since being married, my wife and I have never once talked about divorce. And likewise, when we entered the remote village of Danowage in 2007 we did not ever talk about leaving. Until now. Now since I have been sick, we've seen the need to think of the next step. Some of the following items below are related to those shifting roles for the future.

The Danowage “Samuel Dorm/Orphanage” is now open: Because of your donations over 20 more Korowai kids will now get an education. The dorm/orphanage was opened just last week, paid for entirely by my supporters. This opening is in line with our push for Christ-centered education among the Korowai in order to shape the next generation. We also shipped in a teacher just for these kids, Canisia, paid for by your donations. Thank you.

The Fuau Scholarship Program: There are currently 17 youth from remote and neglected villages being schooled through our scholarship program, gaining training as nurses, teachers, and in bible school, to graduate and serve their own people. Rudy, Harun, and Edo who have already graduated now all hold church office. And region-wide church elections have just been held and all the positions are now held by quality folks we have selected and trained. You are making a difference in the Mamberamo Region of Papua.



Teachers and Nurses: We are currently supporting 6 teachers full-time (including 2 in support roles), 2 part-time, and a nurse. All of these (save the 2 in the background) are serving remote interior posts neglected by the government.

Yuli's land and house: Several months ago, a major coastal flood in Papua killed many and displaced even more, among them 27 Mamberamo folks in 3 major family groups. You've bought their emergency supplies, paid for temporary housing for these 3 families, and have purchased land for Yuli to rebuild. Heartcry Missionary Society just recently gave some money to build a new house for Evangelist Yulianus and we hope building begins soon.

Receiving Papuan guests for medical check-ups and planning church seminars: After a high-ranking church leader died due to inadequate medical care in Indonesia, we've received over a half-dozen Papuan guests over the last 2 months for medical treatment in Penang, Malaysia, where I am recovering - most of them living with us during their visits. Several were church leaders and we've planned preaching and church seminars for January when I return to Papua.

A book and dissertation: I am also trying to finish my doctoral dissertation and also a short book about Papua this year.

Family and marriage: Me and Teresa just celebrated 20 years of marriage during an obligatory trip out of Malaysia to get a new visa. We went to Phuket, Thailand. From Malaysia this place was the quickest and cheapest flight (48 USD round-trip), so we got to have our anniversary dinner on a tropical island (a different tropical island than usual). Teresa has treated the sick in our jungle home for several years in Papua and endured periods of little to no electricity in the village and 5 years of washing our clothes in the creek out back. So it was nice to enjoy something special for our 20th wedding anniversary.

Alethea: One prayer request is for my daughter, Alethea, now 12. She has been having some adjustment issues. We've moved around many places in the last year looking for adequate healthcare for me. And she feels constantly uprooted. She has professed faith in Christ; please pray for her adjustment and contentedness.

Thank you for your support. Trevor and Teresa.

“It could be a brain tumor”

Paul and Susan Brown, Thailand

“It could be a brain tumor” said Dr. Srminipornphop. Oh the value of our time! It is far more precious than any substance on earth. May David’s prayer be ours, “LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.” (Psalm 39:4-5)

No, it was not a brain tumor. Most likely it is an ongoing irritation of a nerve on the top of my head that may take some time to heal. But life is short! I am continually made aware of the shortness of time to fulfill that calling the Lord has given, to see the advancement of His kingdom here in S.E. Asia, to see the portion of that innumerable number that are here brought in, baptized and taught. Brethren, pray for us!



It has been a great blessing to have Shelby Banks with us for six weeks. She is on break from teaching school and has given her time and resources to help Susan with the children and their education. What an asset she has been! That is true with the teaching but also with the wonderful Christian influence and example she has been. The children are doing well with their English in speaking and reading. Our great longing is to see them used of the Lord to affect their generation for the glory of the Lord. Susan is doing a great job. What a blessing she is to me and this ministry!

The brakes on the truck have gone out on me three times. The first occasion was at the airport. I made it to the Nissan dealership for repair. After 11 days in the shop I left for the mountains with a pickup load of men. At the highest point the right front brake locked up. The pedal brakes were useless. We limped down out of the mountains by downshifting the transmission and using the emergency brake. After the second repair (?) they locked up again coming down the mountains from a service in one of the LaHu villages. This time there were 14 in the vehicle, including our children. We think the problem is fixed now, but pray for our safety. We are continuing to preach in the mountain villages as much as possible. The Lord willing, this Lord’s Day we will baptize an 80-year-old LiSu woman who has been a spirit worshiper all her life. We have been able to preach to her on numerous occasions in the LiSu village where she lives. It has been a privilege also to help this very bent-over, arthritic woman with medicine. What a joy to know that what the Lord has done for her now will last forever.

And another blessing: Rusty, our Australian brother, is back for an extended period to study Thai and to help us in the work.

Thank the Lord and thank you for your prayers and support! May the Lord bless you!

For Christ count everything but loss... Bro. paul

Additional Report Concerning Thailand on page 17



We had another wonderful Preachers’ Training the last week of June. We had 22 men from Thailand and Myanmar. There seemed to be a good retention over what we studied in the last PT and a deep hunger to learn more. Please pray for these men. Most of them are pastors with a longing to feed the flock over which the Lord has made them an overseer and shepherd. Some of them are local missionaries sent out by their church to evangelize in a new village. These men are very precious to my heart. Several of them have some big health issues that make me cry out to the Lord. It reminds me of our Lord’s command, “Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into the fields...” Join us in prayer for the health of these men and for more laborers.

Notes from the Missions Editor

Jean-Claude Souillot is wrapping up a trip to the United States to visit supporters and friends. Please pray for the continuing work of the Gospel in French-speaking West Africa.

Joel T**g***n and family have just arrived back in T**k*y (7/19/2019) to continue their mission work in that location after a brief trip home this spring and summer. Please keep them in your prayers as well.

(For security reasons, safety of missionaries serving where there can be danger to those serving, it is necessary to obscure names recognized by their financial and prayer partners.)

“Hello from Danowage. We made it!”

Paul Snider, Papua, Indonesia



Hello from Danowage. We made it! After 13 months away, we are in Danowage and diving back into the work. We have been back in the village for 4 weeks. We arrived to some termite damage, but were very thankful for our friends at Yajasi Aviation staying with us for several days to replace rotten boards, install our new batteries, make new shelving, and clean the solar panels. They saved us a lot of work and we had power the first night. I also am finding that after being so sick last year my stamina is not the same, so we are very thankful for all their help. In between fixing up the house for the past 4 weeks, I have been teaching my Salvation History Translation and teaching from the Gospel of John. Pray for the young church that is established in Danowage. Many that do come to the teaching time are still without Christ.

I plan to return to Mabuwege in August. Wahyu and I did hike to Mabuwege this week to check on the new church lumber, clean my little room, and see the people, but my time has been occupied with not only setting up the house here in Danowage, but helping out with the new Samuel Danowage Dormitory for children from outlying villages. We had a celebration for the grand-opening 2 weeks ago. I taught from Luke's Gospel and Jimmy cut the ribbon at the ceremony. We have 19 children living in this dormitory. Thank you so much for all of the donations and prayers for this to happen. These girls and boys can receive the attention, discipline, and Bible teaching they so desperately need. We also have a new dorm teacher, Canisia. She is a great addition to the team here. Jimmy & Perin Weya are overseeing the dormitory. They have been working hard looking after all of these kids. This is a new responsibility that is difficult for them, but they are happy to be a part of these childrens' lives.

Please pray for the Korowai people. Know that the outside world has and continues to come in via airplane, visitors, and government, the Korowai people don't know what to do with themselves half the time. There are a handful of believers here. Many confess to follow Christ, but you see them throughout the week and its quite the opposite. Many distractions keep them from hearing the truth. One distraction was a false teacher that came in several weeks ago, before we arrived. She told the Korowai that the Father and Holy Spirit do not exist, only Jesus. She also told them not to listen to us or the GIDI Evangelists, and not to worship on Sunday's. I was very thankful to hear that Jimmy and Perin stood up to her at the airstrip. Pray that she is blocked from coming back in to do harm. Our team is ready to oppose her if she returns.

GREAT NEWS! I paid for all 300 solar recorders. I received an email this week stating that they have been shipped to Papua. Pray that all of the recorders make it safely to my door. My plan is to rent a small room at the SIL buildings in Sentani in August, and record the translation. Once I have a recording, then the fun task begins of uploading the translation on each recorder. Since I only have 300, my plan is to give them away very carefully for now. There are almost 2,000 people in the North, which makes up 12 villages. I will be requesting the helicopter to take us to each village, pass them out, and teach them how to use the solar recorders. Pray for all of these efforts coming up.

Please pray for the family. Trish and I are tired a lot of the time. We are thankful for the nurses that have come back. This relieves us of exhaustion from medical work. Although we still treat the people in the outlying villages. Last week, I ordered the heli for 2 southern Korowai villages. I treated people all day in these 2 villages. The Lord gave strength to us, and answered our prayers about one young lady that gave birth. Twenty-four hours later, her placenta was still inside her. She had a fever and was still bleeding. We massaged her abdominal area and stood her up. Finally after an hour, the placenta came out and we cut the cord. There were also cases of TB, Malaria, and Filariasis. It's difficult to leave a village knowing you don't have all the meds you need to make the person well. Pray for the health of these people.

Many have asked about my health. I have been doing well considering I had a rough year of 2 sicknesses. I still have some stiffness in the face, but God is in control and I am happy to serve Him no matter what. I am very thankful for the wife God has given me in this ministry. Please pray for her daily. She works hard and can fatigue quickly due to so much happening at the house. Lane is doubling up on assignments for school to finish 9th grade. Marianne is still being tutored. Pray for her understanding in learning and in everyday life. Ask God to control her anger if she does not understand something. Pray that we will draw near to God in the midst of such noisy, busy, and tiring work.

Lord bless you all, Thank you for all your prayers to our Father in Heaven, Paul & Family.

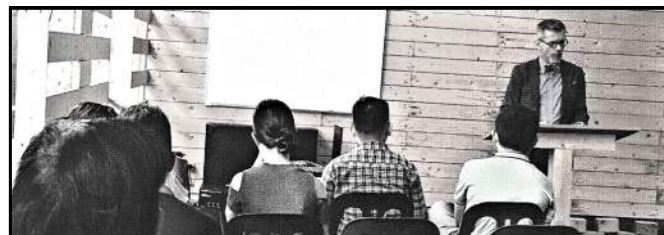
From Barry Carpenter, Philippines

Grace Baptist Church: GBC has moved out of our house and is meeting downtown. They are renting a room by the week. This is not stable and will place added financial strain on the church. At this point, there is nothing else we can do. We continue to pray for the funds we need for land, a building, and housing.

We do have a major issue to deal with in the near future and prayers would be appreciated. I anticipate that there will be a push-back when we begin to teach on Biblical church government and authority. It could be that some of the people will want to leave. Please pray that we can maintain the people and that they will

submit to the Scripture. I know there are landmines ahead, but I could not be more encouraged on the work that God is doing there.

BUILDING FUND: We currently have a total of about \$16,000 toward our Phase 1 goal of \$50,000. I am very encouraged by Churches who are collecting coins and finding creative ways to assist this effort.



Andres Galaviz, Mexico Severely Afflicted, Serving Still

Report from Kyle White

In April of this year brother Andres was forced to undergo surgery to replace his failing ICD (pacemaker/defibrillator). The concern was that if he waited any longer his heart might fail and there would be no recovery. Yet, the operation to replace the failing unit was also extremely risky due to the weakened condition of his heart. Plans were made and many of you joined the Galaviz family and Community Baptist Church in fervent prayer as our brother was taken into surgery one Thursday morning in April. We all also joined together in praise to God for His kindness in bringing brother Andres successfully through the surgery and recovery.

Since that time, Andres has been able to regain enough strength to return to village ministry in the Chihuahua mountains to continue serving in limited capacity. His wife, Rhonda, and daughter, Damaris, are his faithful companions in life and ministry. Damaris is a strong young lady who has faithfully supported her parents through their years of labor in Mexico. Andres cannot engage in any taxing physical labor, and therefore must depend more than ever upon help. He has had strength to preach on Sundays and then must spend a couple of days recuperating. His mind is sharp and he is able to engage with others in conversation and counsel and lead the church that is established in Agua Caliente.

God has blessed with the necessary funds to install a new water line and large tank at their Agua Caliente house. Up until now they have had intermittent water supply, requiring them all too often to

truck their water in buckets from a village spring. This is one of the huge helps that should decrease one of the more physically demanding activities of their life in the village.

God has also provided the funds for house renovations that have been needed. Before winter hits this year they should have new siding and windows installed. This is a project that has been on our minds for a couple of years. We are thankful for this provision as we seek to properly maintain the Galaviz's home base.



The church in Agua Caliente has suffered from the impact of corruptible bodies. Not only brother Andres, but others who have been long time members of the church are facing life-threatening physical problems. We pray for the conversion of some who consistently visit the assembly, for leadership to be raised up to help brother Andres and prepare for the day of his departure, and for strength in the assembly as they continue to serve together to make Christ known in their village and surrounding towns.

The gospel of Jesus Christ continues to go forth in the mountains of Chihuahua. On behalf of the Galaviz family and Community Baptist Church, thank you for all who fellowship with us in this gospel work.

Mission Reports, continued on page 19

Mission Contact Information

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Dr. Barry G. Carpenter

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Orlinda, TN 37141-2144
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Dr. Bob Doom and Global Baptist Mission

Russian Bible Society, Director, PO Box 6068, Asheville, NC 28816

Andres Galaviz

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Paul Snider

Support can be sent to the home church:
Bethany Bible Church, PO Box 435, 511 Eagle Lake Rd.
Big Lake, MN 55309.
www.bethanybiblemn.org has an online giving option.

Kyle White, in support of struggling churches in Siberia

C/O Community Baptist Church, 5697 Labus Road., Elmendorf, Texas 78112
www.cbweb.net

The Vanities of Youth

Curtis Knapp



Curtis Knapp is pastor of New Hope Baptist Church of Seneca, Kansas. He serves as the current Vice-chairman of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship and Assistant Editor of *The Sovereign Grace Messenger*.

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. (10) Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.” -- Ecclesiastes 11:9-10

This passage could be summarized as follows: “Enjoy yourself, young man or young woman. Go have fun and follow your dreams and impulses. Just keep in mind that God’s judgment is coming, and you’ll have to answer to Him for everything you say and do. So, what you should actually do is put away evil and remember that the days of youth are days of vanity.”

Verse nine above is written with irony. The preacher is not seriously advocating that young people “walk in the way of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes.” We know this because of what scripture says elsewhere about the folly of walking in the way of one’s heart. Proverbs 28:26 says, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.”

Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (see also Proverbs 3:5-6 and Mark 7:20-23)

The irony of verse 9 is also evident by the contrast at the end of the verse, “but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,” and by the contrast with verse 10. “Therefore, remove sorrow (also translated anger) *from thy heart*, and put away evil...”

This scripture warns us against the very thing most older people know by experience—namely, that the years of our youth are filled with foolishness and vanity. We spend an inordinate amount of time on things that simply don’t matter. That is, they don’t matter for the kingdom of God. They do matter, however, in a negative way. We must give an account on Judgment Day for the ways in which we have wasted our youth.

When older people think about the vanity of youth, many things come to mind. One triviality is sports. Look at how much time

we spend on sports in our youth, and for what? What was the great benefit of it all? “Teamwork” some will reply. Is sports the only way to learn teamwork? Is sports even a sure-fire method of learning it? If by teamwork, we mean unselfishness, then it begs the question: Are most athletes known for their unselfishness? Hardly!

Voddie Baucham, who was recruited to play college football, once replied to the dubious claim that “football builds character” with the incredulous response (and I paraphrase): “So professional football players should be the greatest examples of character in the world?”

“Listen to the voice of scripture which is wiser than the collective advice of a thousand elders. The days of your youth are not “freebies” that God gives you to waste in vain pursuits. You are accountable before God in your youth no less than in adulthood. It doesn’t matter if ‘everyone else is doing it.’”

A second oft-mentioned benefit of sports is physical exercise. Certainly, this has some temporal benefit, but is the benefit worth the all-consuming investment that we make? It is doubtful.

Another vanity of youth is clothing. Consider how much money is spent on decking ourselves out with the latest “cool” styles of apparel. And for what? To impress other fools, or to keep from being mocked by small-minded and superficial peers, only to have the “cool” fad of the moment be replaced by another arbitrary fad a couple of years later? This is vanity and a chasing after the wind.

Consider also the excessive attention given to beauty, especially among young women.

The time, energy and money spent on the hair, the skin, the face and the figure is mind-boggling. And to what end? To be an object of desire or envy? Proverbs 31:30 shows the foolishness of such priorities: “Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.”

This is not to suggest that we should throw all concerns about our appearance to the wind and parade about in our jammies with a bed-head hairdo. We are talking about the obsessive preoccupation with beauty and appearance, not the moderate and sensible attention that is necessary to avoid slovenliness.

Take the modern trendiness of tattoos. Generally speaking, it seems that tattoos are acquired to “make a statement”. They serve as a sort of advertisement that is intended to be seen or read by others. Yet how many months or weeks does it take before the new tattoo is no longer a novelty and no longer cool? In due time, the skull and crossbones become hard to discern under the sagging mounds of wrinkled cellulite.

This criticism is not intended to condemn everyone who has a tattoo, one percent of whom may be faithful brothers and sisters in the Lord and more mature Christians than myself. It is rather a criticism of the youthful vanity so common in our day, of which tattoos are an undeniable manifestation.

Not only does the preacher of Ecclesiastes tell us that childhood and youth are vanity, he also tells us that we must give an account on Judgment Day for the evil things we do in our youth.

When we are young, we think much of having fun, but very little about the consequences of that fun. We give no thought to the future. We have heard that there is an age of accountability and we

perhaps flatter ourselves with the empty hope that God won't take notice of our juvenile behavior. After all, we're just kids! Surely, God understands that kids are going to be kids! One religious denomination believes that the age of accountability is 21. Consequently, some parents have actually encouraged their children to "sow their wild oats" in their teenage years to get it out of their system. At age 21, they are then encouraged to join the church. What madness!

Look again at the text. Does it give us such hope in a nebulous age of accountability? Indeed no: "But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

There is no age of accountability. It is a pipe dream read into certain texts that

speaking of the moral ignorance of young children, but which say nothing about whether children are held accountable for sins they commit in ignorance. Our text here in Ecclesiastes is a flat contradiction to such notions. See also Gen. 6:5-7, Dt. 20:16-17 and Rom. 5:14-19.

If you are a young man or woman, take heed to the warning of those older than you. They have already traveled down the same road you are on. They have been young and know what it is like to waste their youth. They know what regret is. You, however, are not yet old, and you do not have the kind of discernment that is acquired by years of experience.

Listen to the voice of scripture which is wiser than the collective advice of a thousand elders. The days of your youth

are not "freebies" that God gives you to waste in vain pursuits. You are accountable before God in your youth no less than in adulthood. It doesn't matter if "everyone else is doing it." God is quite capable of judging multitudes in the Valley of Decision (Joel 3:13-14).

The time for sobriety and serious devotion to God is now, not later. Do not procrastinate on something as weighty as your eternal soul. Christ was sent to die for the young no less than the old. Come to Him now. Put your trust in Him now. Today is the day of salvation. Seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near. "Put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity."



Mission Reports continued from page 17

From Matthew Villandry, Thailand

In Acts 16 we see the Philippian jailer and "his house" being evangelized by Paul and Silas. The Lord proceeds to save the jailer and his household which was followed by the administering of baptism to these obedient believers. What an unspeakable joy it is when your "house" is saved! To know that your children have been set free from the curse of sin by the Lord Jesus, must be one of the greatest blessings we as parents can enjoy on earth! Many of you know that my daughter Lyla (9y/o) was saved a few years ago! Around the same time, the Lord began a noticeable working in our son Cohen (11 y/o). During this time we began to pray in earnest for the Lord to reveal himself to Cohen and save his soul. On June 5th, the Lord answered our prayers as Cohen came to me and told me that he knew the Lord had saved him! We will be going back to Grenada in August for Cohen to be baptized in our home church. Join us before the throne, as we thank and praise God for saving Cohen! On this same note, we also received word from Bro Paul, whom we will be going to work within Thailand, that the Lord has similarly blessed him and his house! Our gracious Lord has saved Nora, who has been living with the Browns for some time! She was baptized just days ago.

Deputation Update: The months of May and June have been busy travel months as we have visited churches in Florida, Alabama, Texas, New Mexico, and Arkansas. I would like to thank all of the churches and their hospitality to me and my family. As we get closer to our moving date of August 28th, our time with our stateside brethren becomes sweeter and sweeter. The reality of the move is approaching and we are preparing for this next step. At the end of June, we made it back to Brittany's parents house in Fayetteville, AR to begin the process of selling the remainder of our things that will not be going to Thailand. The things we are taking are being organizing and packed into large totes. We are weighing...and re-weighing them (they must be under 50lb) as we add to and take away the last of our belongings. Meanwhile, we are getting final check-ups for us and the kids, ordering and organizing school materials to take for the children, preparing the massive amounts of paperwork needed for all of our visas, and attempting

to keep up with the many checkboxes that keep filling up our daily list of things to be done before we leave. We will spend the next few weeks visiting with family and friends. We also have a few additional churches on the schedule between now and the end of August and we look forward to sharing the work in Thailand as much as possible before we depart. The reality is sinking in...each day we are more and more excited for our arrival in Thailand. The Lord has called. He has provided. Now, we go. My desire is to get off the plane and immediately into Bro Paul's truck as we head up the mountain to an unreached Lahu village. There is so much work to be done! However, the language barrier is there and it is real. We must start language school so this will be our first step. Pray that the Lord gives me patience and wisdom. Also, pray the Lord gives my wife Brittany and I the mind to learn the Thai language. It is not an easy language and language arts (of any kind) is not my area of expertise!

Progress in Thailand: A five acre section of land in Mae Ai has been purchased, cleared, and leveled. We are ready to begin the building process and hope to start with an all purpose ministry building. Paul and Susan are working with an architect so that plans can be submitted to local builders for bids on the project. As of right now, there is approximately \$40,000 in the building fund but it will undoubtedly cost far more than that to complete the process. Please pray with us that the Lord would provide the necessary funds. Bro Paul also had a good turnout for preachers training this month with 31 brethren! Please pray that the Lord will continue to call and equip preachers for His work in Thailand. Also pray that the Lord will strengthen Bro Paul as he faithfully teaches these precious brethren.

Specific prayer requests

- Praise for Salvation for both Cohen and Nora
- Wisdom with packing and moving our family of six
- That we can sell our vehicle before we depart
- For us and our family as we prepare to say our goodbyes
- That the Lord would prepare our minds to learn the Thai language
- Strength for Bro Paul and Susan and the many open doors
- Funding for the building project on the new property
- That the Lord would prepare my heart to minister to the people

What is the Highest Purpose of the Gospel of Christ?

Is the Gospel man-centered or God-centered? Salvation is by grace, sovereign and free. When one comes to a true faith in Christ crucified alone, believing that God gave His Son to be the one holy Sacrifice that alone removes sin, repents of sin and comes to Christ, our Bibles teach us that the whole of this salvation is “of God.” From beginning to end, salvation is by grace alone. So three pertinent questions concerning the highest purpose of salvation were posed to Pastors Tom Henry and Joshua White. One is a seasoned pastor, having served for many years in the Gospel ministry. The other is a much younger man, very serious-minded and, God willing, having many years of ministry ahead. The choice of older and younger was by design.



Tom Henry is pastor of Bible Baptist Church of St. Louis, Missouri. Bible Baptist Church hosts an annual Fall Sovereign Grace Bible Conference. He is himself a conference speaker and served as a past Chairman of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship.



Joshua White serves as the bivocational pastor of Reformed Baptist Church of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. He took part in the founding constituting of the church. His schooling included mentoring by the elders of Community Baptist Church, Elmendorf, Texas.

Q. Since the glory of God is the primary reason for all of the creation, is this also the highest purpose of the Gospel?

A. Tom Henry: “In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal person, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world and all things therein.” This statement is taken from chapter four of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. All things were created for the manifestation of God’s glory, and for His pleasure. (Psa. 19: 1; Rom. 1: 20; Col. 1: 16; Rev. 4: 11)

We would all agree that the crown jewel of God’s creation was saved until last. After having made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, after His own image. (Gen. 1: 27) He created them with rational immortal souls, having His holy law written in their hearts, which, in their holy and righteous state, they had power to fulfill. However, left to the liberty of their own will, they transgressed that law, even the expressed commandment of God not to eat of the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3: 1-7) Thus man, by his own willful act, fell from his high and holy state into sin and death. Man, who was created in God’s image, and for God’s glory, lost the Divine image to sin, and ever after fell short of the glory of God. Adam’s sin and the consequent death was passed on to all mankind. (Rom. 5: 12; 3: 23)

It is therefore the high purpose of the Gospel to regenerate men and women, who, as a result of the fall, are dead in sin, and through regeneration to restore to them the lost image of the Creator. (I Pet. 1: 23-25; Eph. 4: 22-24; Col. 3: 8-10) The *good news* of the Gospel is that which was lost through the disobedience of the first Adam is restored through the obedience of the second Adam. (Rom. 5: 18,19) “*The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*” (I Cor. 15: 45) As sons and daughters of the first Adam, we are living souls. (Gen. 2: 7) But also as descendants of the first Adam we are spiritually dead. (Rom. 5: 12) In the second Adam, which is Christ, who is the last Head, in respect of grace and spiritual regeneration, He *was made a quickening spirit*. In His resurrection body Christ ascended up into heaven clothed with power, as to quicken souls with spiritual life, and also to quicken our mortal bodies at His second coming. (I Cor. 15: 45-49)

Christ came according to the eternal purpose of grace, to destroy the works of the devil and to redeem the chosen race. This God declared He would do when He first announced the coming Redeemer. (Gen. 3: 15) The purpose for Christ’s coming was man’s **redemption** and **restoration**, but more than that, it was to give him a standing that is even dearer than he had before, and that is absolutely secure. He redeemed us *that we might receive the adoption of sons*, and because of this, God has *sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying Abba Father*. (See Gal. 4: 4-7)

In all of this the chief end is the glory of God. As in the first creation God made man for His own glory, so also in the *new creation*. And as God created all things for His pleasure (Rev. 4: 11), we can be sure that He is well pleased with the work of His Son in the new creation. “*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.*” (II Cor. 5: 17) Through regeneration, man is renewed. Scripture says the *new man* is *after God*, i.e. after the image of God, *created in righteousness and true holiness*. (Eph. 4: 24) In fact, the *new creature* brings greater glory to God, in that, *first*, he is in Christ, and therefore beyond the realm of possibility of ever falling again, and *second*, he is *in the Beloved*, and is therefore, beloved as the Son. (Eph. 1: 6) Every soul that is brought to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit is to the praise of His glory. (Eph. 1: 12-14)

A. Joshua White: Far too few professing believers have been confronted with that wonderful catechism question and answer, “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” While it is not a popular thing to say in the day and culture in which we live, from the creation of all things, the whole of salvation history, this gospel age, and the consummation of all things was, is, and will be for the eternal glory of God. God-Triune eternally decreed that a fallen people would be redeemed to Himself through Christ for His glory (Colossians 1:16). Contrary to what we hear so often today, the Lord Jesus Christ did not come to redeem me for me.

While the individual believer experiences the benefits of God’s grace in Christ Jesus, the eternal point of salvation is not the

individual, but Creator God's glory. Put another way, if we were created for the glory of the Creator, and our purpose is to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever, then the regenerated heart longs to do this now in time and space, while having an eternal hope in Christ of engaging in the glorifying of our Creator in righteousness for eternity. To worship and glorify our Creator is the heartbeat of all who have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is God's glory that is in fact our eternal inheritance.

If we are being honest, there is no such thing as a "man-centered" gospel. There is either a God-centered biblical gospel, or there is no gospel at all. There is either good news that relates to our salvation and eternal hope in Christ, or there is bad news that can only end in eternal damnation. A man-centered message is a message that seeks to rob God of His glory by making the grace of God in the salvific work of the Lord Jesus Christ about himself. This flies in the face of what the Lord Jesus Christ so clearly expressed to His Father when He prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world (John 17:24)."

Ever since Adam chased after the lie that we could be as gods, mankind has pursued the theft of God's glory for himself. We are glory thieves. In our day and age, the rugged individualism of the west has seeped into every facet of our thinking. I submit to you that the individualism that we see in our world has become a festering stain on the fabric of the American church. In Scripture we see the same thing, it is just that different wording is used. Most people within evangelical America would never agree that they are doing "that which seemeth right in their own eyes," but this is precisely what is evident in the lives of so many professing believers.

The man-centered gospel, or the bad news that carries with it damnation, is precisely what the individualistic society in which we live so desires. The God of Scripture has been turned into a god who is a divine "big-box" store, able to provide the most luxurious things that the wicked heart desires at the most affordable price. So then, such "praise" songs as one I heard recently entitled "I am broken and its beautiful," speaks to the heart of the religious masses because God may damn the truly wicked, but surely, He has only good things for me. If we are centered on a message like this, and we truly believe that God loves me just the way that I am, then God's glory takes a back seat to our desires as we glorify ourselves and live in complete idolatry.

The true gospel of Scripture, however, calls upon us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, give our all, and die to self. The gospel of Christ requires this of us as we seek to glorify our Creator through Christ Jesus. The work that we have been predestined to do is that work which denies our own glory for the glory of our Creator. Both in Scripture and throughout church history, we find that the redeemed of the Lord gave their all in obedience to the true gospel, the God-centered gospel. Saints throughout history have been willing to give their all because they understand that the glory of God through Christ is in fact their own greatest good. It is no longer we who live, but Christ Jesus living in us (Galatians 2:20). Again, the redeemed of the Lord who have had that miraculous new birth by the work of the Spirit of God, have been granted that glorious desire to live fully for their chief end, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

Q. Since salvation is of God, how does God-triune bring salvation to hell-deserving sinners?

A. Joshua White: Truly, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit possesses for us certain mysteries. It is right to say "God is but one only living and true God, infinite in being and perfection, whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself; and yet within this divine and infinite Being there are three persons- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit- of one substance, power and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided (1689 LBCF)." Trying to grasp a full understanding of the eternal realities of this statement, leaves us behind in a fog of finiteness. Nevertheless, the truth of the Godhead's gracious salvation of sinful men is a truth that carries with it great encouragement, and cause for our undying praise and adoration of our Creator.

We know from Scripture that God has redeemed to Himself a people through the Person and work of the Son. Here and now we experience the benefit of salvation through Christ even as we join together with a body of believers in which we experience communion, love, and fellowship. We must never forget that this community we now have in Christ Jesus did not begin with us. What we now experience is eternally and perfectly embodied within the Godhead. In other words, communion, love, and fellowship all have their origin in the holy and eternal perfection of the Holy Trinity.

The Lord Jesus Christ's public ministry began at His baptism by John the Baptist. The unity within the Godhead concerning the redemption of men that was about to take place through the work of the Son, is clearly demonstrated as the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father proclaimed, "Thou art my Beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased (Luke 3:22)." What was about to take place within time and space was precisely what the Triune God had determined would take place to bring glory to Himself through the Son.

It is God the Father Who sent His eternal Son to glorify Himself through the redemption of a people whom He gave to His Son, and it is the Father Who keeps that for which the Son gave Himself (John 17:1-11). In terms of our own relationship to God the Father, it is He Who has adopted us as heirs through the Lord Jesus Christ because of the work that He has done (Romans 8:15). By the revelation of God the Father, those who have been redeemed by His own dear Son are brought into filial love that can only be experienced between a child and his father. In other words, we experience the love of the eternal Father and we are caused to praise and glorify Him (Matthew 6:9).

It is in and through the Person and work of the Son of God Incarnate that we have redemption. The Lord Jesus was chosen within the Godhead to do precisely the work that He would do to glorify the Godhead by redeeming a fallen race by His own efficacious death on the cross (1 Peter 1:19-21). It is the Son of God incarnate Who has become the first fruit of those who will rise victoriously from the dead in Him (1 Corinthians 15:23). It is the Son of God Incarnate who will return for His own (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

It is God the Spirit Who has secured for us the experience of redemption in time and space. Through the regenerating power of God the Spirit, we have been given hearts even now that desire the glory of God. The operation of being "born again" is the work of

the Spirit of our Lord. The redeemed of the Lord are marked by the fruits of the Holy Spirit, sent to us by Christ Jesus to strengthen us to those good works to which we were predestined (Ephesians 2:10).

A. Tom Henry: God the Father is the Author of the covenant of grace. Man having brought himself under the curse of the law by his fall, could never have attained unto life except by some voluntary condescension on God's part. (Gal. 3: 10; Rom. 3: 20, 21) It therefore pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him in order to be saved. (Rom. 8: 3) God's grace goes beyond the provision and invitation to provide those who are ordained to eternal life the necessary willingness and faith to receive it. (Ezek. 36: 26, 27; John 6: 44, 45; Psa. 110: 3) This covenant is revealed in the Gospel, first of all to Adam in the promise of a Redeemer by the seed of the woman. (Gen. 3: 15) This promise, after further development, came to fulfillment in the New Testament in Christ, the virgin born Messiah. It is founded in the eternal covenant transaction between the Father and the Son in which a people were given to the Son, a people that the Son covenanted to redeem. It is by the grace of this covenant that salvation comes to any of Adams fallen race. (II Tim. 1: 9; Tit. 1: 2; John 6: 37)

Christ Jesus the Son is the Mediator of the Covenant made between Himself and the Father. He is the Mediator between God and man. (I Tim., 2: 5) When the time was come the Eternal Son took upon Himself man's nature (John 1: 14) and though He was fully man in every respect, yet He was without sin. (Heb. 4: 15) The Lord Jesus in human nature that was united with the Divine nature was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure. Having in Himself the treasure of wisdom and knowledge, He was fully equipped to execute the office of mediator and surety.

This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, and did perfectly fulfill. He bore the punishment due to us, and suffered, being made a curse for us. He was put to death, bearing the just penalty for our sins, yet He rose on the third day and ascended into Heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. (See Rom. 8: 32-34) The Lord Jesus Christ, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, has fully satisfied the justice of God, secured reconciliation, and obtained an everlasting inheritance for all of those whom the Father has given unto Him.

The particular work of the Holy Spirit regarding the covenant of grace is to make the Father's counsel, and the Son's mediation effectual unto the souls of the elect, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. John Owen says of the work of the Holy Spirit, "It is not an original, but a perfecting work. Some things it supposeth, and bringeth all things to perfection; and these are: 1. The love, grace, counsel, and eternal purpose of the Father; 2. The whole work of the mediation of Jesus Christ, for it is the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit to make those things of the Father and Son effectual." (The Works of John Owen, Vol. 3, p. 189)

In the work of the new creation, God intends to reveal the particular roll of each person of the Divine Trinity, each one, in their peculiar and distinct operations, all of which tend ultimately to the manifestation of the glory of His nature. Therefore God plainly declares that the foundation of the whole was laid in the **counsel, will, and grace of the Father.** (Eph. 1: 3-6) He then

made way for the accomplishment of His counsel and will, so that it might be brought forth to the praise of His glory by the **mediation of the Son.** There yet remained the *actual application* of all to the souls of men, that they may be partakers of the grace designed in the counsel of the Father, and prepared in the mediation of the Son, and herein is the Holy Spirit manifested and glorified. Thus all three persons of the Divine Trinity are to be glorified, adored and worshipped in this wonderful salvation.

Q. How does the greatest act of humility, Christ crucified, bring the highest glory to God?

A. Tom Henry: The Prophet Isaiah in foretelling the humiliation of the suffering Messiah said, "*Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief: When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.*" (Isa. 53: 10) The *pleasure* that the Lord took in Christ's sacrifice was not in the agony that He endured, but rather in the fruit of His *travail.* "*He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*" (Isa. 53: 10b, 11) The meaning is that He would see the salvation of all those for whom Christ suffered at His hand. God was therefore glorified in the results of Christ's suffering and death.

In the original covenant promise, God declared that the Seed of the woman (the promised Redeemer) would bruise the head of the serpent, but in doing so His own heel would be bruised. (See Gen. 3: 15) The bruising of the heel speaks of Christ's agonies and the humiliation that He would endure, by means of which He would deal the death blow to Satan. Thus in the Hebrew epistle we read, "*For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering...Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were...subject to bondage.*" (See Heb. 2: 10-17) In this passage we see the *Seed of the Woman*, as *Captain of our salvation*, bringing glory to God by destroying the devil. This He did in fulfillment of the original covenant promise.

It was **through death** that the great Redeemer destroyed the enemy, but according to Isaiah's prediction, the Lord has prolonged His days, and the pleasure of the Lord does prosper in His hand. This is seen in the fact that God raised Him up, and He has *ascended* back to the Father, having spoiled the enemy of his prey, *leading captivity captive.* (See Eph. 4: 8-10)

In the Philippian letter Paul put it this way: "*Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*" (Phil. 2: 6-11) It is clear from this passage that it is **because of Christ's humiliation** that the Father receives glory in His exaltation.

In John 17 Jesus, just before going to the cross, prayed, "*Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee...I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*" (John 17: 1,4) Clearly, our Lord's chief motive in the work of redemption was the glory of the Father. It was for this reason that He condescended to come to earth; to take human flesh; to assume the roll of a servant; to suffer and bleed and die. It was in this way that He destroyed not only the works of the devil, but the devil himself, and delivered God's chosen people who were held captive by him. All of this He did to the glory of God the Father.

A. Joshua White: The Lord Jesus Christ is clearly revealed to us in Scripture, not as One to Whom we may simply turn to if we have a desire for better things in this life with the promise of an escape from eternal torment. Peter writes that the Lord Jesus Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world (1Peter 1:20). Before man was formed from the dust of the earth, it was determined in eternity past to redeem a people to the glory of the Creator through the incarnate Word Himself. To this point, Paul writes that all things were created by the Lord Jesus Christ, for the Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is by His power that all things consist (Colossians 1:16-17).

This is the very Christ, Who in submission to the will of His Father, obeyed even unto the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

There is certain mystery here, but the Lord Jesus Christ is the One Who was chosen within the Godhead to bring about the redemption of mankind according to the perfect will of God the Father. The will of God concerning the redemption of sinful men dates back to the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) and has been providentially brought about in time and space by Creator God's own hand.

According to the will of God the Father, the Son took on flesh to become the Son on man. He was tempted at every point as we are and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He became that which our first father failed to be (1 Corinthians 15:47-49). The Lord Jesus Christ became flesh, learned obedience, took on the sin of those the Father had given Him, and died on the cross according to the will of God. That very same will of God which had been rejected by sinful man.

The greatest act of humility in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ brings the highest glory to God because it is the fulfillment of the eternal and perfect will of God. It is the fulfillment of the will of God to which sinful and fallen man could not attain. God is glorified in Christ Jesus' humiliation because it is the obedience which Creator God required of man, and it is through the obedience of Christ Jesus that man is brought to a place in which he is able to glorify his Creator (Philippians 2:9-11).



"Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9)

C.H. Spurgeon

1834-1892



Salvation is the work of God. It is He alone who quickens the soul "*dead in trespasses and sins,*" and it is He also who maintains the soul in its spiritual life. He is both "*Alpha and Omega.*" "*Salvation is of the Lord.*" If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful; if I have graces, they are God's gifts to me; if I hold on in a consistent life, it is because He upholds me with His hand. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation, except what God Himself first does in me. Whatever I have, all my goodness is of the Lord alone. Wherein I sin, that is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely. If I have repulsed a spiritual enemy, the Lord's strength nerved my arm. Do I live before men a consecrated life? It is not I, but Christ who liveth in me. Am I sanctified? I did not cleanse myself: God's Holy Spirit sanctifies me. Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by *God's* chastisements sanctified to my good. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me. All my jewels were fashioned by heavenly art. I find in God all that I want; but I find in myself nothing but sin and misery. "*He only is my rock and my salvation.*" Do I feed on the Word? That Word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul, and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna but Jesus Christ himself incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink? Am I continually receiving fresh increase of strength? Where do I gather my might? My help cometh from heaven's hills: without Jesus I can do nothing. As a branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can I, except I abide in Him. What Jonah learned in the great deep, let me learn this morning in my closet: "*Salvation is of the Lord.*"

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Ro.11:36)

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let Him glory in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:13b)

Editor's note: This article is the third in a series in which one of our Fellowship churches is spotlighted. In this edition, we hear from Gary Long, pastor of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Springfield, MO. SGBC in Springfield will host our annual meeting in September.

Church in Focus: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Springfield, Missouri.

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Springfield, Missouri was birthed by necessity. There was a desire in the heart of Jerry Parks (deacon) to see an Evangelical, 'Calvinistic' (for lack of a better term) Baptist church. Thus, Mr. Parks and I set about to see if the Lord would bless any efforts toward such an endeavor.

Meetings were called, those who held similar beliefs were invited, and after a couple of months, this group moved into the basement of Bill Hines (now deceased) in Galloway, Missouri. Finally, a storefront building was rented on South Campbell Street in Springfield, wood chairs were purchased, and a new piano was bought (still the church piano). By May of 1970, we made the commitment to constitute the church.

The first pastor was Brother Wayne Lemons of Buffalo, Missouri. In October 1973, a church building (with pews, pulpit, etc.) was purchased on the east side of Springfield. In December of 1976, Pastor Lemons resigned and in August of 1977, the church called me to be the pastor, since I had been teaching and preaching as needed in the church since it began. I served in a bi-vocational capacity. The church has been blessed to have two other pastors as well -- Brother L. VanDeMark (who died in 2010) and Brother Wayne Walker, both men serving as co-pastors at different times.

The church outgrew the facility on the east side of Springfield and so a building was purchased on the southwest side of town in 1986. In May of 1991, I was asked to serve in a full-time capacity. In 2004 a new auditorium was built, and the old auditorium became the fellowship hall. The Lord has provided us with a lovely facility and a solid group of saints to make up SGBC. Folks are always ready to do whatever needs to be done.

The great blessing of SGBC has been the level of commitment of the people. The pastors have never been 'the pillar and ground of the truth' at S.G.B.C., but the church itself. It has *not* been built around



the personality of anyone but has been fully dedicated to the ongoing proclamation of the Gospel and growth in grace, whoever the pastor might be. We have three capable and seasoned deacons.

God has assembled a unique and special group of people who love each other and desire to grow in grace and the knowledge of His Son. We are learning that the whole is greater than the part and that being able to yield on minors, is the pathway to "being of one mind."

Next year (2020), the church will be 50 years old and still holds to those things which called it into being. We also have a few "policies" that make us unique. We are unashamedly "traditional" in our music. We still uphold the Authorized Version of scripture. We practice closed communion (for members only). We leave "Christmas" out of the church and to the discretion of individual families. We have a "neutral" position on eschatology. We have an emphasis on male leadership in home and church, and we avoid all high-pressure methods.

One of our deacons told me many years ago that pastoring a church was like trying to carry a box of kittens -- they keep wanting to jump out. Losing dear folks for any reason is always difficult, but the Lord has reasons for what He does in His church. We have had to learn to move on, as the Lord always has other people ready to hear and learn.

We have been blessed to have many godly men visit and minister to us over the years, many who are now in glory. We are thankful for them. I can honestly say this

congregation may be deficient in the pulpit, but certainly not in the pew.

We had experienced a dry spell a few years back with respect to babies, and many asked the Lord to grant us the privilege of having the sweet sound of a crying baby again. That lovely sound has since returned, and we have had to buy three new high- chairs for the fellowship hall. The congregation is well balanced with mature adults, young married, and a sizeable group of young people that are second to none. What a blessing -- and responsibility!

My desire is to see the continued growth in grace that has been evident, and that Christ may receive greater honor and glory in our worship and service to Him. The fact that we live in a far different country than when this church began in 1970 is well known, and we don't know what we will be called on to do. We only know what we are to be, and that is faithful subjects to the King of kings and Lord of lords. May God give us all we need to live in a country bent on "casting off his cords and bands" (Ps. 2). May Jesus Christ be praised!

Serving this congregation has been the greatest possible blessing. They have exhibited patience and kindness toward their pastor, and faithfulness and commitment to the Lord.

Testimonial: Jerry Parks, deacon, SGBF

Brother Gary Long and I were called by Jesus Christ 49 years ago to be included in the start-up of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Springfield. Through all the trials and accomplishments in the start-up

of a church of Jesus Christ, it has been such a blessing. We all have our biological families, but what I gained was my spiritual family.

The church has been a source of strength, comfort, love and instruction for me over

the years. We can all find reasons to leave a church, because it is made up of human beings that often times differ from us. What we have to do is find reasons to stay in a church. The reasons I found to stay with Sovereign Grace Baptist Church was

the preaching and teaching of the gospel, the fellowship of the believers, love of the brethren, and a true desire that the lost come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I count it all joy to have been a part of SGBC these 49 years.

Member Churches of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship

Bible Baptist Church
3150 Sutton Blvd.
Maplewood, MO. 63143
Tom Henry, Pastor
Holmes Moore, Sr. Pastor

Bridgetown Baptist Church
2779 Malone Road N.
Nesbit, MS 38651
Larry Dean, Pastor

Calvary Baptist Church
1507 W. 2nd St.
Pine Bluff, AR 71601
Warner Worthan, Pastor

Calvary Baptist Church
8765 Fountain Road
Winston, GA. 30187
Terry Worthan, Pastor

Cedar Grove Baptist Church
Mailing – 8474 Highway 96
Millport, AL 35576
John Hunter, Pastor

Community Baptist Church
5697 Labus Road # 1
Elmendorf, TX 78112
Kyle White, Pastor

Coweta Particular Baptist Church
178 Cecil Hunter Road
Moreland, GA 30259
Dr. John W. Suttles, Pastor

First Baptist Church
P O Box 100
Delaware, OK. 74027
Tom Tanquary, Pastor

Grace Baptist Church
395 S. Washington
Lebanon, MO 65536
Don Preusch, Pastor

Grace Baptist Church
122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL. 35758
Dean Olive, Pastor

Grace Baptist Church
Of West Milton PA
400 Broad St.
West Milton, PA. 17886
David King, Pastor

Great Light Baptist Church
2100 N Boonville Ave.
Springfield, MO 65803
Al Garard, Pastor

Hope of the Gospel Church
(formerly Grace Baptist Church)
Mail- 1727 N Clay Ave
Springfield, MO 65803
Steve Long, Pastor

New Hope Baptist Church
5452 Spotslee Circle
Mechanicsville, VA. 23111
Ron Staley, Pastor

New Hope Baptist Church
2962 I Road
Seneca, KS 66538
Curtis Knapp, Pastor

Southside Baptist Church
807 South Cummings St.
Fulton, MS 38843
Doug Wilson, Pastor

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Anniston, AL. 36201
Timothy Gallagher, Pastor

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1430 N. 2nd Street
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Springfield, MO 65810
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Annual Meeting of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship

September 9-11, 2019

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Springfield, Missouri
Gary Long, pastor

Monday, September 9. The meeting begins at 7:00 PM with admonition by Rick Thomis followed by the evening message delivered by Mark Gerard.

Tuesday, September 10. 8:30AM church reports, followed by the morning message delivered by Joshua White at 11:15 AM. Lunch provided at 12:00 noon. SGBF Business Session at 1:00 PM. Supper provided by the church at 5:30 PM. Evening Session begins at 7:00 PM with a report on the business session, then an admonition by Luke Suttles preceding the message delivered by Warner Worthan.

Wednesday, September 11. Missionary Reports at 9:00 AM.
The meeting will then be dismissed before noon. No provided lunch on this day.

Recommended Lodging for September 9 & 10

Sleep Inn Medical District
233 El Camino Alto
Springfield, MO 65810
\$84.00 per night, phone (417) 886-2464

Quality Inn & Suites (No elevator)
3920 S. Overland Ave.
Springfield, MO 65807
\$79.99 per night, phone (417) 888-0898

Mention that you are with the Sovereign Grace Baptist Fellowship
Make your reservations before August 26, 2019
For further information contact Pastor Gary Long. Phone: (417)-883-0342

Annual Fall Sovereign Grace Bible Conference

October 21-24, 2019

Grace Baptist Church, West Milton, Pennsylvania, David King, pastor

Schedule of Services

The conference begins Monday evening, October 21, 2019 at 7:00 PM and continues through Thursday evening, October 24, 2019. There will be two speakers in the morning sessions and two in the evening sessions.
Morning sessions will begin at 10:00 AM. Evening sessions will begin at 7:00 PM.

Recommended Lodging

Comfort Inn, New Columbia, Pennsylvania (a short driving distance from the church building). Comfort Inn offers comfortable accommodations with a free deluxe breakfast included.
Mention Grace Baptist Church in order to receive a special of \$78.00. To reserve a room phone (570) 568-8000.

Meals Provided

In addition to the free breakfast at Comfort Inn, Grace Baptist Church provides lunch daily at the Country Cupboard for all who attend.

Pastor King and Grace Baptist Church invite all to attend.
For further information contact Pastor King: (570) 742-8915.