IN THIS ISSUE...

The Church in the 20th Century

The Church in America in the 20th Century
This issue of the Voice attempts to address the effects of change in our society upon the church in America during this last century. I have asked the authors to share their insights and observations on what transitions and changes have been occurring in the 20th Century Church.

Dr. Richard I. Gregory
IFCA International
Executive Director & Voice Editor

The Challenge of Evangelism
Choked with emotion and his voice barely audible, Cliff prayed and trusted Christ as his personal Savior. Bill and I had gone there that Thursday evening out of a sense of urgency.

Dr. Jerry Knoblet

The Church & Family in an Age of Change
The church has also had to adjust to changes in our culture, environment, political system, philosophy of life, and theological understanding over the past 100 years. Just as I had to adjust to changing times, so too the church has been forced to adjust to changes as our world around us has changed.

Mr. Lance Duncan

The Church & the Theological Wars
As a setting for understanding the theological battles of the Twentieth Century, one must note the emergence of differing theological positions within the liberal and conservative camps.

Dr. Joel Pitner & Dr. Joseph Pitner

Christian Conduct in the 20th Century
As we approach the new millennium it would do us well to pause and examine the changes that have occurred in terms of Christian Conduct during this century, examine the concept of "worldliness" and review the biblical perspective on Christian Conduct.

Mr. Dennis M. Swanson

The Path of Separation in the 20th Century
As the 20th Century comes to a close, a careful review is appropriate regarding the path of the doctrine of separation. While separation has faced significant episodes in the past, such as the era of the Reformation when Martin Luther faced separation from the Roman Catholic Church, in many ways the past century has been the period most complicated by the issue of the doctrine of separation.

Dr. Daniel Anderson

A Wake-up Call to Missions
...What has happened? Why has evangelistic passion become so notably absent from the conservative church movement? One would be reckless to reduce the answer to one or two simplistic propositions, but a couple of major contributors to the problem deserve to be addressed in an article of this type, along with a brief prescription for treating these deficiencies.

Dr. Donald H. Alban
The Church & Social Responsibility
Compassionate conservatism is not a new idea among Bible-believing Christians. As the True Church of born-again believers entered the 20th century, it brought with it a strong history of social activism.

Rev. Bob Kennedy

Church History, the Pastor, & the Local Church
Why should you, as a Pastor, and your church study Church History? Actually, you cannot avoid Church History. Your church has its own history, which can be very present whenever decisions are made concerning the future of the church.

Dr. James Mook

Vision for the 21st Century Banquets
In Sacramento, California on Friday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. the first of our IFCA International "Vision for the 21st Century" Banquets was held. It was a glorious success! Our Executive Director Designate Les Lofquist traveled to Sacramento to be a part of the evening.

The Church and Education in the 20th Century
Challenging Secular Sectarianism: The Church and Education in the Twentieth Century...
Sweeping changes during the nineteenth century altered twentieth century education in America...

Rev. Ronald E. Manahan

FEATURES...

Chaplains' Diary

God Works Behind Bars
Chaplains Steve Francis, Centinela State Prison, California and David Pipping, Liberty Correctional Institution, Florida share accounts of God at work in inmates lives...

Our Women's Voice

A Heart for Ministry
...In over thirteen years of full-time ministry, Tony and I have observed many unhappy marriages among pastors and their wives. Many of these problems could be traced to the fact that the husband considers full-time service as his ministry but that commitment is not shared by his wife...

Mrs. Cindy Loubet
This morning I was privileged to open the Scriptures and teach a group of young pastors in Belarus. I am on a trip that will take me to three of the countries of the former Soviet Union. Les Lofquist and I are meeting with the national church planting missionaries that are a part of our Operation Partnership. I am finding that even though I am from a different generation than most of these men and speak a different language that the challenges in ministry that we face are essentially the same. A changing society is impacting the church in so many ways. Freedom was something that these men craved and Christians in the West prayed for but with this freedom has come some great liabilities. Western liberal ideas in theology and pragmatic church growth methodology have come along with the people that have come to “help” the church that survived the persecution. Change is flooding in upon these dear brothers and with it comes great danger. Their society is in a state of flux and the church is seeking to understand its opportunity while trying to avoid the inevitable tendency to lose what was so precious to them before freedom came - a simple faith and a total dependence upon a sovereign God.

This issue of the Voice attempts to address the effects of change in our society upon the church in America during this last century. I have asked the authors to share their insights and observations on what transitions and changes have been occurring in the 20th Century Church. This is not an easy task but it is vital that the church understand what changes have taken place and how the influence of these changes has affected the life of the church today. Some changes have been beneficial while others have been destructive. This issue of Voice will attempt to help us understand some of these changes and their meaning.

Someone once said that if we do not learn from history we are destined to repeat its mistakes. It is apparent to me that the church today is repeating some of the same mistakes that occurred in the early years of the century. The mistakes of the early years resulted in much of the church being led into liberalism. Some of the men that lived in those years have observed to me that the same attitudes toward the world and approaches to the Word of God that were popular in the 1920s are once again present. These Christians are children of the churches that gave birth to fundamentalism. Much of the church has lost what it once called precious, a simple faith and a total reliance upon a sovereign God and the teaching of His Word. It has substituted programs for prayer, personalities for power, entertainment for genuine worship, prosperity for purity and organizational unity for fidelity to an unadulterated Gospel. Doctrine is regarded as divisive and the church is more concerned about relating properly to the unbeliever than understanding and carefully obeying God's Word. In short, what led the church into liberalism in the early part of this century is once again captivating the church. The one thing that may be different this time around is that in the early part of the century it was the church's leadership that was the prime mover in bringing about the changes whereas in much of the church today the pressure for change is coming from the people in the pew. Pragmatism has so overtaken the thinking of the people of God that enlarging the numbers in the church is regarded as the criterion of blessing and whatever it takes to accomplish this end is justified.

Thus we have great emphasis on removing anything that will hinder this process of attempting to include people in the family of God. A Christian is redefined as "Anyone believing in Jesus." Definitions of Justification are carefully crafted so that Roman Catholics are not excluded from the effort to bring the church together. Understanding of holiness is adjusted so that lifestyle does not indict one as being out of harmony with an acceptable Christian life. The common cause of "Reaching the World for Christ" becomes the foundation of the church's unity in spite of the doctrinal differences in areas that theology regards as essential.

Each generation must contend earnestly for the faith as it was once and for all delivered to the saints. Assault by the enemy often comes through well meaning believers that lose their moorings and are set adrift from the anchor of the Word of God. They attempt to accomplish things for God in ways that are contrary to the Scriptures and are energized through the arm of the flesh rather than the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Change is not wrong but change that is unbiblical or that focuses simply on the ability and effort of man must be resisted. Let history record that IFCA International entered the 21st Century with a focus on advancing biblically authentic, dynamic, compassionate Christianity to all people groups while at the same time earnestly contending for the faith.

Dr. Gregory is the Executive Director of IFCA International.
The Challenge of Evangelism in Our Contemporary Times
by Jerry Knoblet

Choked with emotion and his voice barely audible, Cliff prayed and trusted Christ as his personal Savior. Bill and I had gone there that Thursday evening out of a sense of urgency. We had presented the Gospel and asked Cliff if there was anything keeping him from trusting Christ as his Savior. He struggled to yield his life to Christ but eventually surrendered. As we sensed the peace of God that enveloped his soul, we were overjoyed with what God had evidently done.

The next morning Cliff boarded a plane for a routine business trip to Chicago. Shortly after he arrived, a massive heart attack unexpectedly claimed his life. In retrospect, Bill and I now know why God sent us to Cliff's home that Thursday evening. For Cliff it may have been his last opportunity to respond to the Gospel.

Sad to say, in many Christian circles today, evangelism is a threatening concept. Right or wrong, the methodology of evangelism has changed dramatically as we head into the twenty-first century. Methods that were unquestionably successful fifty years ago are now considered by "the experts" to be impractical, outdated, and unworkable. In this article, we will ponder some vital questions. Why did some of those methods work so well? Why has our methodology changed so radically? What can be done today?

Old-time methods produced an abundant harvest. City-wide crusades experienced God's blessing. Local church evangelistic meetings were the norm. The busing ministry flourished. Pastors gave altar calls and people responded. Door-to-door evangelism was the coveted arena of God's best servants.

Some would say that the reason that our methods have changed so radically is because our secular society is increasingly hostile toward Christianity. That is the reason, so they claim, that all of the old-fashioned methods no longer work. Let us be careful about blaming the world for our own shortcomings. If we obey Christ, He will do His part and save people. He will work through Spirit-filled vessels of clay as He has always done.

The first step in solving the real problem is prayer. Christians need to be engaged in effective, intercessory prayer (James 5:16). Our Lord promised us much more fruit in response to prayer (John 15:16), not in response to compromise. The pastor and church leaders desperately need our prayers. The truth is we pray so little, because we think we can get the job done with our ability.

What is more, our focus is wrong. We are enthralled with our clever methods and brilliant strategies when we should be focusing upon the Lord Jesus Christ. When we focus upon our human abilities, we miss the point.

Part of the solution to the problem is the pastor. God bless our faithful pastors. First, he must know and preach the Gospel with confidence and boldness (1 Cor. 15:3-4; Gal. 1:8-10; Acts 4:29-31). The pastor needs to be a man of courage, conviction, and perseverance. He must be faithful to Christ's command to evangelize in the face of certain opposition. Some people in the church only tolerate evangelism while others are so threatened by it that they do not want their local church participating in any kind of evangelism (Luke 15:25-32). Victory means moving forward in spite of this factor.

God has a special blessing for the pastor who takes evangelism seriously. May I share for a moment from my own personal experience. After being a pastor for many years, I made a bold decision. I decided that I needed a refresher course on personal evangelism. I thank the Lord for Larry Moyer's EvanTell ministry out of Dallas. I was amazed at how I found God revitalizing "my" ministry. Immediately, upon returning home, I was privileged to lead a Shiite Muslim from Tehran to the Lord.

Part of the solution is for lay people to be trained to do effective personal evangelism. The first lesson that Jesus ever taught His disciples was on personal evangelism (Luke 5:1-11). Simply put, you cannot teach it effectively if you are not practicing it yourself.

Why did those methods fifty years ago work? They worked because Spirit-filled Christians made them work, and that same power is available to us today. Nothing has changed. Christians in those days lived holy lives, prayed for the lost, and daily shared their faith. They recognized that true missionary activity began in their own Jerusalem (Acts 1:8).
There is nothing magical about any method. Those methods would never have worked if lay people had been out of tune with God. The key is that each Christian was excited about sharing Christ.

When humble Christians live obedient, consistent lives, it makes all the difference in winning the lost. The unchurched masses have a right to expect us to be sincerely concerned about their souls. They have a right to expect us to give them the Gospel no matter what the opposition may be.

When we stop treating the church as "our toy" and get down to the business that the Lord has set before us, we will see a difference. The answer is not in new-fangled methods but in obeying Christ. Are you willing to obey Him?

As the wonderful hymn "Cleanse Me" declares, O Holy Ghost, revival comes from thee. Send a revival, start the work in me. Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need. For blessing now, O Lord, I humbly plead.

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One of the most difficult concepts that I have ever had to grasp is that of change. The reality of change became most obvious to me the Christmas my father died. I realized then that nothing would, in my life, ever be the same again. Never again would dad be there for the opening of presents or for Christmas dinner. The reality of change suddenly seemed to be everywhere in my life. I had to adjust not only my thinking but my entire being to this reality of change.

The church has also had to adjust to changes in our culture, environment, political system, philosophy of life, and theological understanding over the past 100 years. Just as I had to adjust to changing times, so too the church has been forced to adjust to changes as our world around us has changed.

My wife's grandmother died recently at 96 years old. I can remember her stories of what life was like in rural America. She was raised in the mountains of Virginia and her hometown area is still considered by most to be part of rural Virginia. Grandma Mullins told of riding on her mule to church and of a small rural church where everyone was known and where the pastor was revered by the community. Her pastor came only one time each month for services as he had to minister in four different churches to support himself. She told of a community of believers where people where genuinely concerned with the well-being of one another and a time past where life moved a lot slower. There were also few outside influences upon the church such as television, radio, telephone, computer, e-mail etc. etc. Finally, there was a scarcity of information available to the average person. Books were becoming more plentiful but nothing in comparison to what is available to us today in this "information age."

Certainly, one can see from this brief example how our world, our church and our community have been impacted by the changes that have taken place in our country in just the past 100 years. Changed pastors with changed goals and methodologies for attaining those goals. Changed parishioners who are more impacted by the world and world standards than any society in history. Changed values and priorities that have been adjusted and sometimes compromised to suit our world. Changed beliefs that are more accepting of wrongs and more tolerant of sin and injustice. And, a culture that has dramatically changed due to the technological age that we live in.

Therefore, in consideration of these various elements of change, it is easy to understand that change does happen and given this reality, we can acknowledge that change can be both good or bad since both possibilities exist. Unfortunately, for the church, it is difficult to pinpoint the good or the bad that comes through change.

As a Christian counselor, I see some changes within the church in the area of counseling that genuinely concern me. First, few pastors are willing or able to counsel individuals in their churches. There are numerous reasons for this. Lack of training, fear of legal entanglements, lack of time, fear of falling into sexual temptations are just a few. Add to these a lack of confidence in the counseling process making any real difference. Subsequently, there has been a tremendous change that has taken place in the last 100 years in the role a pastor takes in counseling. Today, many pastors refer their parishioners to both secular and Christian counselors. The pastors have been told and bombarded with books, radio talk shows, and television that they should be referring their counselees to those who specialize in the discipline of counseling. In many cases counselors are much better trained than the average pastor to counsel those who have specific needs. Our society has changed tremendously over the past 100 years and pastors are now being encouraged to let the "professionals" handle the counseling needs of their people.

The question is, however, is this the best that we can do as Christian leaders? Is it best to refer believers to counselors outside the domain of the local church? Should pastors refer people that are looking to them for spiritual leadership to a counseling model that may or may not be Christian in its orientation? Many times counselors have a theological position on critical issues such as divorce and remarriage are in direct opposition to Scriptural teachings. Can pastors justify referring believers to a Christian or secular counselor who uses secular therapies that deny the authority of the Scriptures in the life of the believer? Surely not!

What the church can do, has done, and is doing in various parts of the country is recognize that, although the world has changed, God's guidebook has not, and His authoritative Word is still the best counseling instrument for the Christian today. If the church continues this course of sending its people to secular counselors and Christian counselors who use methodologies that deny the authority of Scripture in the life of the believer, then we can be certain that few believers will trust in the Word of God in future generations.
Today, more than ever before, the “Biblical Counseling Movement” is making headway in the Christian community. The American Psychological Association has acknowledged that the vast majority (70-95%) of counseling needs pertain to problems with living. For the Christian, the answers to these problems must be founded upon the Word of God and not modern therapies. Appalachian Bible College, where I have the privilege of teaching, has been instrumental in helping to amend this change toward secular counseling by helping to establish a full-time counseling ministry that is supported by the local churches, overseen by leaders from those supporting churches, and in submission to the authority of the Scriptures and the local church in the life of the believer. Individuals are not charged for counseling but are required to be actively involved in their respective churches. Those who do not regularly attend church are required to attend one of the supporting churches while they are in counseling and to be in submission to the leadership of that church while they are in the counseling process. The cost of the counseling is borne by the churches, and the counseling ministry is viewed as a home missions type of ministry.

So, while there has been great change in our culture in the area of counseling, we as Christians can manage that change and control its impact upon our society. The present need for counseling in the church is evidence that a change needs to take place. The problem is that the church has allowed the wrong change in the area of counseling. Pray that God's leaders and his people will see the need to restore Christian counseling to its rightful place and position, the church as ministry.

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As a setting for understanding the theological battles of the Twentieth Century, one must note the emergence of differing theological positions within the liberal and conservative camps. The dawn of the Twentieth Century presented a relatively uncomplicated theological scene in western Christendom. On the left were theological liberals, the Modernists; on the right, theological conservatives. Early on in North America the latter became known as Fundamentalists. Following World War I, Neo-Orthodoxy entered the liberal camp via Karl Barth. Disillusioned by the war and disenchanted with European liberalism, Barth took a step toward the right while still remaining in the liberal camp. This caused a reaction within the old liberalism. While not espousing all that Barth offered, some in the old liberalism gave birth to Neo-liberalism. Since then major developments within liberalism have included: Process Theology (God is still developing, struggling, and overcoming); Liberation Theology (theology redefined in terms of socio-political realities); Secular and Radical Theologies (characterized by slogans such as "God is dead" and "Christian Atheism" and claiming to be Christian in following the humanitarian values taught by Christ); and Theology of Hope (in reaction to Radical Theology, with a hope that God exists and that the future will demonstrate this). A significant development has been Existentialism. Its stress upon the subjectivity (relativity) of truth, the centrality of man (humanism), the obscurity of God, and the finality of death have had profound tragic results in the way many religious and secular people think and act.

Fundamentalism came into being in the early part of the century as a reaction to Modernism. Conservatives sought a re-emphasis of the basic (or fundamental) doctrines of historic Christianity. The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy ensued. Originally the issues centered in five key concepts: (1) The inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures, (2) the deity of Christ, (3) the virgin birth, (4) the vicarious atonement, and (5) the physical resurrection and future bodily return of Christ. Generally, the terms "conservative," "evangelical," and "fundamentalist" were viewed as synonymous.

Cut adrift from an inspired Scripture and enamored by a rationalistic approach, liberals had reduced Christianity to but one of a number of ways to reach God. Evolution was seen as God's method of operation in the natural world. The dignity and divinity of man were espoused. The gospel message was one of social reform. Missions should not seek to convert persons in different cultures but educate. The lines in this battle between Modernists and Fundamentalists were clearly drawn.

Following World War II, a movement emerged in the conservative camp which called itself Neo-Evangelicalism. It was a move to the left of Fundamentalism. It claimed to hold firmly to the original five fundamentals, but felt Fundamentalism had been discredited by the pugnacious displays of some of its leaders. The new movement sought a more ironic expression. They were open to dialogue. The findings of unbelieving scientific scholarship were not to be ignored. Greater involvement in social action projects was needed. Ecclesiastical and personal separation was downplayed. Before long some Neo-evangelicals questioned the first of the five fundamentals, the inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures. A limited view of inerrancy was set forth which effectively destroyed the biblical concept. Now, cut adrift from this solid mooring, the leftward drift toward Neo-Orthodoxy began.

Within the broad camp of Neo-Evangelicalism (New Evangelicalism) today, there are right, center, and left-wing positions, the latter sometimes referred to as Young Evangelicalism. To the far left a Radical Evangelicalism has developed, largely concerned with political and social activism, in essence, a reborn liberalism. The Charismatic Movement (1960 onward) in its more conservative expression is largely within the New Evangelical camp. Closely allied is the Signs and Wonders Movement. Great effort is being expended by some in the New Evangelical camp to bring about ecumenical unity. Also, since 1980 the movement has ceased using its earlier adopted name and simply refers to itself as "Evangelical," in contrast to "Fundamental."

The advent of New Evangelicalism brought about a polarization of positions within conservatism. A popular categorization is that of Militant, Moderate, and Modified positions representing right, center, and left within Fundamentalism. The far left wing of Modified Fundamentalism appears to differ little from right wing New Evangelicalism. The distinction appears to be in name only. Some New Evangelicals would group Fundamentalists in two broad positions, namely Separatist Fundamentalism (on the right) and Open Fundamentalism (center and left).

The major opponent of Fundamentalism has been the breakaway position of New Evangelicalism. At first it subscribed to the Fundamentals, while desiring a host of other changes including a change of label. Soon a battle raged within New Evangelicalism over inerrancy of the Scriptures. Some insisted on a limited inerrancy. Currently, New Evangelicals are pressing the conservative camp to rethink the way it does hermeneutics. The end desire appears to be to placate the allegorization approach of Reformed Theology.
The issue of co-operative evangelism as set forth by New Evangelicalism disrupted some Fundamental churches. The non-separatist stance of New Evangelicalism invited the toleration and later the acceptance of the Charismatic Movement. Classic Dispensationalism has been reworked by some into Progressive Dispensationalism, with an apparent intention to narrow the gap with Covenant Theology. Others have pressed for Evangelicals and Catholics Together, a thinly disguised ecumenism. Certain Neo-evangelicals, influenced by the contemporary feminist movement, have pressed for a gender-neutral Bible translation. Others have espoused theistic evolution necessitating the allegorization of the Genesis account prior to the life of Abraham. Currently the suggestion is for a kinder, gentler theology of hell. This can only lead to views either of the annihilation of the wicked or a universalism in which all mankind is eventually saved. Christianity is viewed as one of several ways to God in the eyes of some New Evangelicals. They feel people can be saved apart from specific faith in Christ.

In effect, New Evangelicalism in its steady march towards liberalism has elevated reason above revelation. Scripture is either mistaken in places or needs to be reinterpreted in a rationalistic fashion. This position has been and continues to be the greatest threat to a biblical, God-honoring Fundamentalism. New Evangelicalism is in reality fighting liberalism’s battles while claiming to be a reform movement within conservatism. Fundamentalism is viewed as a passé, if not benighted, stance.

How has this impacted the church, its leaders and laity? Liberal denominations have as a whole moved farther to the left, conforming even more to the godless philosophy of this age. Abortion on demand is accepted and defended. Homosexual lifestyle is approved; homosexual marriages are blessed by the church. Homosexuals may be ordained. Evolution is accepted. Ecumenism is pursued with a passion. Christianity is but one religious path to God.

Confusion reigns in conservatism. There are various shades of Fundamentalists and New Evangelicals. The latter had hoped to infiltrate the mainline liberal denominations (rather than separate) and turn them back to God and conservatism. This has not happened. Without a strong doctrinal stance, especially respecting the Scriptures, theological flexibility has led to theological compromise. New Evangelicalism has been quick to accept not only the neutral aspects of cultural change but aspects decidedly detrimental to a separated, holy life. Consumerism appears to be the driving force affecting particularly the music and the services of the church.

There are godly, separated, biblicist pastors in Fundamentalism who know the Scriptures, know where they stand, and preach an uncompromising message. Fortunate indeed are the congregations with such leaders. Such pastors not only feed the flock, but warn them (Acts 20:28-32). Members of these assemblies can feed themselves from the Word, share their faith effectively, and discern the times. They labor in light of the blessed hope.

Space will not permit recounting the ecclesiastical battles which led to a variety of church affiliations to preserve conservatism. The early response, through the 1920s, was transdenominational as Fundamentalists sought to cleanse mainline denominations of doctrinal error. This failed and the Fundamentalists separated and sought new associations. This marked the change from non-conformist to separatist Fundamentalism. It is strange that at mid-century the New Evangelicals felt that they could accomplish what the Fundamentalists earlier had learned was futile.

Simultaneous with separatist Fundamentalism was the establishment of numerous Bible schools which played an important part in the preservation of its heritage. These Christian schools of higher education produced students who generally adopted the attitudes and positions of their teachers. Bible school graduates became the leaders of outreach and service organizations as well as churches.

Tragically, New Evangelicalism has infiltrated many Bible institutes and colleges as well as most Christian liberal arts institutions. Too many congregations have been asleep theologically, lulled there by unconcerned pastors who have adopted the New Evangelical position deliberately or unwittingly. From the standpoint of numerical following, Fundamentalism may have lost the battle in the Twentieth Century. However, God has preserved a remnant of faithful believers and independent Fundamental churches.

Joel S. Pitner, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Bible and Theology in collaboration with Joseph K Pitner, Th.D., Professor Emeritus, Appalachian Bible College

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Christian Conduct in the 20th Century
By Dennis M. Swanson

The English poet and literary critic Matthew Arnold stated that "conduct is three-fourths of our life and its largest concern." With scandals of conduct almost a daily occurrence in politics, sports, and the business world and tragedies of conduct such as school shootings fresh in our memories, it is no wonder that we see secular society beginning to really make an attempt at defining and implementing acceptable standards of conduct.

For the Christian, issues of conduct are also among the "hot topics" of the day. Scandals of conduct have, unfortunately, become all too familiar even in the evangelical world. As we approach the new millennium it would do us well to pause and examine the changes that have occurred in terms of Christian Conduct during this century, examine the concept of "worldliness" and review the biblical perspective on Christian Conduct.

At the beginning of this century, in many respects, "Christian" or even biblically based conduct was the norm; so much so that most of the major issues that we grapple with today such as abortion, homosexual activity, and adultery were not only unacceptable, they were illegal. Groups such as the Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union were at the height of their political influence and had expanded their horizons well beyond the issues of alcohol. Laws regulating activity on Sunday were also well entrenched and expanding (Johns, Dateline Sunday, p. 71). "Christian America" had reached its apex, and even in the declaration of war against the Spanish Empire in 1898 President McKinley listed as a chief reason for American intervention the need of "carrying Christianity and democracy to the benighted peoples in the uncivilized quarters of the world" (Dictionary of American Christianity, p. 694).

However, as Charles Spurgeon pointed out, "A little Christian gold leaf goes a very long way, and makes things look respectable, but the gilded articles are not solid gold. National Christianity is no more the real thing and a gilded farthing is a golden coin of the realm" (Spurgeon, A Good Start, p. 14). While the "civil religion" of America was thriving, the church was about to begin a phase of significant transition. In the 1800s Christian conduct had really become almost the unchallenged social norm. In many respects it had been codified into civil law and remained largely unchallenged in both society and the church.

As the 20th century began the standard for Christian conduct, the Scripture was under increasing attack. Theological liberalism empowered by German rationalism was making inroads into the churches via the seminaries and education institutions. The main assault was on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, and thusly the authority of the Bible, especially as it related to matters of conduct. The denominations began to move away from a high view of Scripture and the foundation of Christian conduct was slowly being eroded away. It would not be long until the "civil religion" would also begin to forget what Gardiner Spring called the "Obligations of the World to the Bible." As Benjamin Warfield points out clearly in his classic work, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, that a high view of Scripture is invariably connected with proper living (pp. 123-28). Once the centrality of the Word of God began to be lost, to a large degree, in the churches the "civil religion" of the country began to decline as well. As Allan Bloom points out, people began to learn "to doubt beliefs even before they believed in anything" (The Closing of the American Mind, p. 42). The Bible, and its instruction, as the basis for conduct began to slowly be replaced by a moral relativism.

While the assault on the authority of the Bible was central to the changing views of Christian conduct, there were certainly other factors involved. World War I followed by the Great Depression followed by World War II all but eliminated the unbridled optimism and the postmillennial eschatology that had marked the American Church since after the Civil War. The evolutionary theories of Darwin had called into question not only the veracity of the Bible, but the entire concept of man as created in God's image. The "God is Dead" philosophy of Nietzsche, the hopelessness of Bertrand Russell's view of "man as protoplasm waiting to become manure" and the anarchy of Joseph Fletcher's "Situation Ethics" began to have significant impact on society as a whole, which in turn began to influence the church. Other factors affecting Christian conduct certainly were the expansion of technology, which gave the world television, mass media, computers and now the Internet. We lack the space in this article to detail these issues more fully, but would recommend three books beyond those already cited for further reading: Neil Postman's Amusing Ourselves to Death (Penguin, 1985); Douglas Groothuis' The Soul in Cyber-Space (Baker, 1997) and an excellent new book by Wayne A. Wilson, Worldly Amusements: Restoring the Lordship of Christ to Our Entertainment Choices (Wine Press Publishing, 1999).

The matter of Christian conduct certainly has always been open to debate on matters where the Bible was not clear or specific. Charles Spurgeon, who was critical of another famous London preacher, Joseph Parker, for his attendance of the theater, himself was well known for his smoking cigars. In America as Christian or biblical conduct became less and less dominant as a societal norm, churches began to have to deal with the entire idea...
of "worldliness" entering the church. Activities such as social drinking, smoking, dancing, movie going, gambling, non-church events on Sunday and other such issues began to confront the church more directly.

In many fundamental and conservative churches these issues were often dealt with as codes of conduct, both written and unwritten, in which "worldliness" was defined in negative terms; that is, a list of activities Christians could or should not do. Now, we cannot totally depreciate such lists of rules, every household has rules of conduct and so certainly should the church. The problem is that such lists often had poor biblical support or used verses entirely out of context. In the mind of many, fundamentalism became defined by what its members didn't do, rather than a more positive and perhaps more biblical approach.

How are we to determine appropriate Christian conduct? Are lists of rules and "church covenants" of no value? Not at all, but it seems that the Apostles approached the matter of proper conduct from an entirely different perspective, an appeal to pride and duty. A new biography of one of my boyhood heroes, Vince Lombardi by the Pulitzer Prize winning author David Maraniss was recently released. The title of the book is When Pride Still Mattered (Simon and Shuster, 1999). If anything characterized Vince Lombardi and the Green Bay Packers it was pride, duty and discipline, characteristics that were also of utmost importance to the Apostle Paul.

In Philippians 1:27 Paul commands the Philippians to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel." Literally the phrase means to "live as citizens." Later in 3:20 Paul reminds the Philippians that they are "citizens" of heaven. As citizens of heaven we are called upon to live a life that is "worthy" of the message we preach. On this verse John MacArthur states, "Believers are to have integrity, i.e., to live consistent with what they believe, teach and preach" (MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1822).

In 2 Corinthians 5:20 Paul tells us that as Christians "we are ambassadors for Christ." An ambassador represents the interests of one nation or kingdom in another. He is to conduct himself in such a way that no disrespect or dishonor is directed at his home country. At the beginning of World War I, Horatio Herbet Kitchener, the famous British Field Marshall and Statesman wrote the following to the members of the British Expeditionary force:

"You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy. You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience. Remember that the honour of the British Army depends on your individual conduct. It will be your duty to not only set an example of discipline and perfect steadfastness under fire but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle."

The individual issues of conduct, the list of do's and don'ts, while important, can only be effective as a supplement to the greater and more lasting concepts of pride and duty in the Christian life. Pride enough to remember that in the world's eyes the honor of God often depends on our individual conduct (Phil 1:27) and our duty to set an example of godly discipline in our "worthy walk" (Gal 5:16-22; Eph 4:1-4; Col 1:10-11; 1 Thess 2:12). When the honor of God is paramount in our minds the individual issues will certainly care for themselves.

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The Path of Separation in the 20th Century
Daniel L. Anderson, Th.D.

As the 20th Century comes to a close, a careful review is appropriate regarding the path of the doctrine of separation. While separation has faced significant episodes in the past, such as the era of the Reformation when Martin Luther faced separation from the Roman Catholic Church, in many ways the past century has been the period most complicated by the issue of the doctrine of separation.

Historical Review of Separation

At the beginning of the century, the signs of doctrinal compromise were beginning to create major turmoil in the American church scene. This turmoil was largely due to the effect of certain trends in theological thinking and practice which were primarily traceable to liberal theology sources originating from the European institutions of religious training and higher education.

There were three notable areas of compromise intruding upon the church. First was the area of the authorship of Scripture. Destructive Higher Criticism, popularized by such theories as the JEDP theory, began to cast dispersion upon the authority of the Scriptures, particularly the books of the Pentateuch and later the books of the Gospels.

Second was the onslaught of the movement known as the Social Gospel. This attack was upon the very core of theological belief in that it introduced "another gospel," i.e. the gospel that attempted to deal with man's sin problem by correcting his society. This gospel denied total depravity and presented man as becoming a sinner by sinning rather than believing that all people were born sinners. Furthermore this gospel portrayed Jesus as the great example to be followed rather than the incarnate Son of God who died as the vicarious substitute for the sins of the whole world. A book which greatly popularized this heresy was Charles Sheldon's book *In His Steps*, and the renewed famous phrase "What Would Jesus Do."

The third area of compromise in many ways was the most subtle, but has had the most devastating impact throughout the century. This area was the growing acceptance of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. This assault to the authority of Scripture, as seen in the denial of the Genesis record of creation, further was impacting in its application of evolution to other disciplines of thought, e.g. religious evolution or economic evolution.

The consequences of these notable areas of compromise eventually led to the now famous debate known as the "Fundamentalism/Modernism" controversy. Major denominations such as Methodism, Presbyterianism and Baptists were all affected with division over these issues. The other major denomination historically present in the founding days of America, i.e. Congregationalism, had already fallen into liberalism in large measure as a result of New England Theology of nearly a century earlier.

Without a question, the dominant cause at stake in this opening period of the century was a theological concern, i.e. the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures and the definition and message of the person of Christ in the work of the gospel. Such theological concern was approached with vigor and conviction by those who defended the historic positions on these issues. One of the most effective tools to marshal this attack was the publication of the articles known as "The Fundamentals." Their impact led to the regimenting of those who stood for these "Fundamentals." As they rallied together against the "Modernism" of the day, many were forced to separate from their past denominational associations. This separation movement brought about the formation of new churches and church associations such as IFCA International in 1930.

As the century continued, a shift in separation issues of concern began to develop. While these new concerns were doctrinally derived, their implications were far more associated with practice areas rather than theological areas. This in no way implies that the importance of separation diminished. The earliest of our New Testament writings, the book of James, dogmatically establishes the requirement of faith and works in the integrity of the believer's testimony.

The two practice areas causing separation concerns in the middle of the century were the area of missions and the area of evangelism. Missions controversy arose as denominational boards became infected with social gospel practices in their overseas efforts. Social concerns, while legitimate avenues to open opportunities for presenting the gospel, became the sole end of missions work. Independent mission agencies came into existence as fundamental leaders faced the reality of the irreversible decline in the biblical practice of missions, i.e. church planting.
The area of evangelism compromise requiring separation largely involved the practice of cooperative evangelism. As the use of community-wide evangelistic campaigns increased, inclusion of various categories of "believers" occurred leading to the appropriate description of such campaigns as "ecumenical evangelism." Without a doubt, the evangelism methods of Billy Graham best illustrate this compromise under the misconception that because "souls were saved," therefore it was acceptable to overlook doctrinal differences and thus overlook the importance of separation. Time has confirmed that some souls were saved through these efforts, but the confusion of doctrinal purity has been catastrophic. This episode in our separation review of the century reminds us that God is not a pragmatist but a principle God. The end does not justify the means.

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And thus the two areas of greatest importance in the expanse of the church (missions and evangelism) have fallen into "dry times" because of the compromise of separation standards. If missions and evangelism are not faithfully practiced, the church's existence is at risk, save the promise of God to build his church!

In reaction to the cause of Fundamentalism, a further separation challenge faced the church in the late 1940s. This system of thought became known as Neo-evangelicalism. The promoters of this system attempted to straddle the theological and practical fence between Fundamentalism and Liberalism.

Neo-evangelicals wanted the respect and dialogue of the Liberals while claiming to reject their theology. Neo-evangelicalism had a disdain for the "negative message" of Fundamentalism as well as its rejection of modern scientific theories which attacked the authority of the Bible in such areas as science or history. With the rise of Neo-evangelicalism, again separation was required for ministry purity. This stage of separation was often painful as the issues frequently involved associations that were more difficult to identify then the concerns of the original Fundamentalism/Modernism debate.

Some have attempted to dispel the existence of neo-evangelicalism by trying to simplistically resort to the "original fundamentals" as the only criteria for determining a fundamentalist. Such reasoning brings to mind a quote attributed to Martin Luther as he faced the controversy of his day.

He stated: "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest expression every portion of the truth of God except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."

As the century closes, our historical review concludes that much of the concern of separation remains the same as throughout the century. Theological separation must be vitally sustained. Practice areas of separation must be guarded as seen in such dangers as the ecumenical movement of Promise-Keepers. Separation will always be a necessary tenet to protect the purity of the faith.

A final observation about the historical review of separation is the current promotion of toleration in our culture. Tolerance has become the buzz word of the final decade of this century. In religious realms that toleration is promoted at the expense of absolute truth and practice purity. Fundamentalism is faced with the need to withstand this spirit of toleration as it relates to the breakdown of Biblical separation. Be aware that what one generation tolerates, a second generation propagates.

Biblical Reminders about Separation

So how should we approach biblical, ecclesiastical separation in the new century? A quick review of the biblical background to separation will remind us that separation is ultimately the expression of God's jealous love for his
children. Separation is not intended as a negative measure restricting us. Rather it is a positive evidence of God's desire for our very best.

The root thought behind biblical separation is the concept of holiness. God desires that his children and his church be holy as he is holy (Lev. 11:44a; 1 Pet. 1:15). Therefore, the separation practices of the church are ultimately to be the evidence of the church's commitment to purity and holiness in every area, both theological and practical (1 Cor. 3:16,17).

May God help us to earnestly stand for the faith as we approach a new century. May our separation doctrine reflect bold candor with biblical kindness.

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A WAKE-UP CALL TO MISSIONS

By Dr. Donald H. Alban

Several events during the early part of this century steered the direction and impact of the fundamental movement. Two major world wars and numerous regional ones, along with severe economic crises like the Great Depression, combined to seemingly validate the popular eschatological teachings of fundamentalist churches. "Perilous times will come when things wax worse." This parallel and belief that the last days are at hand attracted quite a following, for it offered a sensible explanation of modern world events and punctuated them with the blessed hope of Christ's imminent return. This sense of impending parousia was one of several factors that inspired a sense of evangelistic urgency within fundamentalist circles.

Overseas military experiences around mid-century awakened many young Christians to the spiritual realities of the "world out there." Many returned to America after the war with a sense of evangelistic zeal and a determination to return to formerly war-torn territories with the Gospel message. During the late 1940s and the 1950s countless mission societies and Christian organizations came into existence for the express purpose of taking the Gospel overseas. Bible institutes and mission-minded Christian colleges prioritized missionary training programs and witnessed a remarkable surge of young people with hearts set on carrying out the Great Commission.

Conservative churches, some denominational and others non-denominational, rallied around the cause and cooperated to send these young people to the field, often through the organizational muscle of independent "faith" mission boards and other strategically organized Parachurch ministries. Although intensely loyal to the fundamental doctrines of faith, the churches cooperated despite their differences of perspective regarding various secondary matters. They thus abided by Tertullian's credo: In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity. As GARBC leader R. T. Ketcham once observed, "all evangelical denominational bodies honored and respected each other for their insistence upon the saving fundamentals of the Gospel. This attitude was maintained in spite of the differences in church polity and practices." Fundamental churches saw evangelism as an all-consuming priority.

If the American church was healthy and proactive at mid-century, studies suggest its zeal has waned in recent decades. According to a report recently cited by Focus on the Family, American church attendance has dropped from 49 to 37 percent during the past eight years. This report indicated that between 3000 to 4000 churches close in this country annually. Fundamentalist churches are not exempt from this trend.

The diminished enthusiasm among churches for evangelism and missionary work shows in several ways. American congregations that experience growth these days draw new attendees for the most part from other churches rather than from pools of new converts. As the report published by Focus on the Family confirms, "relatively few new commitments to Christ appear to be occurring. These statistics tell us that evangelism is largely stagnant." Such conditions are certain to affect the missionary enterprise.

The diminished evangelistic ardor shows, too, in the conservative mission movement's lack of significant growth in recent decades. Many mission boards maintain consistent numbers of missionaries, while the forces of many others dwindle toward depletion. The growing pool of missionaries seems to have become a phenomenon of the past for many mission boards. Perhaps more disconcerting is the shift among aspiring missionaries away from primarily evangelistic field assignments toward "support" ministries that are passively evangelistic at best. A decade ago, TEAM's director, George Murray observed with concern that missionary candidates "want to teach, counsel, disciple, or engage in some other sort of specialized ministry, but few say they can and want to lead souls to Christ."

What has happened? Why has evangelistic passion become so notably absent from the conservative church movement? One would be reckless to reduce the answer to one or two simplistic propositions, but a couple of major contributors to the problem deserve to be addressed in an article of this type, along with a brief prescription for treating these deficiencies.

A Plea for Interdependence

American fundamentalist congregations are historically defined by their deliberate opposition to the naturalistic ideals that framed the theological liberalism of mainline denominations during late nineteenth century. Motivated partly by theological conviction and partly by American individualism, many conservatives responded to the leftward drift of their denominations by withdrawing and either forming new conservative denominations or declaring themselves independent. Many of the independents cooperated with churches or parachurch ministries that were no less adamantly conservative than themselves about such truly fundamental doctrines as the
inspiration and absolute authority of Scripture. Other independents, however, followed the separatist impulse to excess, denouncing virtually any affiliation or fellowship and defining themselves more in isolationist terminology than in fundamentalism's traditional terms of passion for Scripture-centered doctrinal balance. The implications of the seclusionist mindset were ominous for the cause of world missions. If the unredeemed world was to be avoided, so, too, were the people who need to hear the Gospel. If other churches or parachurch agencies were to be avoided, irrespective of their doctrinal persuasions, so, too, was the hope of expeditiously sending fully-funded missionaries to the field. As unstirred puddles, churches that cloistered themselves stagnated."

Although many fundamentalist churches do not take separation to this extreme, many have taken the scriptural basis for separation to an unwarranted extreme that undermines the missionary cause. Separatism from brethren of like persuasion, whether deliberate or by default, has no biblical basis and runs the serious risk of disregarding the biblical insistence on unity within Christ's body (see John 17:11-23; Eph. 4:1-15). As George Peters has observed, "While the Bible upholds the autonomy of a local assembly, it knows nothing of independence in the absolute sense of the word. Biblical independence is always balanced by absolute dependence on the Lord and interdependence among churches."

Independence for the sake of independence is nothing less than a quest for self-sufficiency. May God forgive us if our self-sufficiency or lack of interdependence has imperiled even one soul. The church contains bodies of individual churches that work most efficiently when they work uniformly. Those that opt for seclusion weaken their ability to satisfy God-given imperatives.

Local churches need each other. If it is true that approximately 75 attendees comprise the average American church, as various studies suggest, the typical church is very unlikely to be able to fully fund one missionary. According to a study I conducted a couple of years ago, the typical theologically conservative missionary couple with two children must raise $3400 per month in support before departing for the mission field. The same study revealed that churches typically channel only $50 to $150 per month toward the support of an individual missionary or missionary couple. Most of these churches, the study further revealed, are incapable of fully funding one missionary. The implications of these findings are obvious. There really is strength in numbers.

Local churches need parachurch organizations as well. Mission boards are but one of several ministries that qualify as parachurch. The parachurch organization is often falsely characterized as independent of local churches. The fact is that parachurch ministries heavily rely and often express this reliance on the support of the visible church. Mission boards draw their personnel and funds from churches and benefit the body of Christ by establishing new local churches and contributing new converts to local church ministries. Parachurch missionary extensions offer advantages to local churches that are too easily overlooked. They formulate culturally-informed discipleship strategies, address legal, financial, and other administrative details, and hold missionaries accountable with direct supervision, to name but a few Parachurch advantages.

A Plea for Pastors

Those pastoring churches during the earlier part of this century were a vital link to world missions. Not only were men and women willing to be sent as missionaries, pastors enthusiastically promoted and supported missions. By doing so, these church leaders merely continued a tradition established during the late eighteenth century by the group of ministers that commissioned and sent fellow pastor and missionary pioneer William Carey to the mission field. Glover succinctly described the importance of the mission-minded pastor: "Missions will not take its rightful place in the program of the local churches, and the missionary efforts of the churches and denominations will not achieve their success, until pastors and other church leaders understand the primary work of their churches to be missions, of which everything else is a part and for which it is a preparation." "Missions made the church; the pastor whose world ends at the church door threatens to some extent to undo it."

Someone has said that people are their own worst judges. We usually view ourselves differently than others perceive us. My study indicated that pastors and missionaries view their respective attitudes toward missions incongruously. Missionaries who responded to a survey ranked individual pastoral interest in missions less favorably than the pastors. The missionaries based their observations on such variables as a lack of evangelistic zeal and effort in the pastors' churches, the lack of pastoral concern for or assistance during the missionary deputation process, a failure to keep mission-related commitments, and the pastors' apparent attitudinal disinterest in activities outside the church. Obviously, this indifference is not true of all pastors. Some pastors are outspoken leaders of the missionary cause. But the observation raises serious questions about missionary passion that pastors with hearts for God's work in the world must humbly and self-critically ask themselves and their churches. Passion for missions involves much more than an absence of indifference; it expresses itself, rather, in an aggressiveness that manifests itself actively, not just verbally."
If we are to rediscover the passion that motivated the American church to aggressively blaze missionary trails earlier this century, we must question not only what we do, in terms of missionary outreach, but why we do it. Perhaps we should begin by returning to the basics and jettisoning the unwarranted distinctions that Satan has used to sidetrack us in recent decades. As Hay eloquently reminds us, "The Lord founded the church as a missionary organization. Such was its original structure. It was not an ecclesiastical organization with missionary endeavor as a department of its work. Missionaries were its leaders. Its primary purpose was missionary and all its members engaged in the propagation of the Gospel."

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"The Church and Social Responsibility in the 20th Century."

Dr. Bob Kennedy

Compassionate conservatism is not a new idea among Bible-believing Christians. As the True Church of born-again believers entered the 20th century, it brought with it a strong history of social activism. Theological conservatives were leaders in ministering to the disadvantaged. Wilber Wilberforce led and won the battle against slavery in the British Parliament, setting the stage for similar movements in the United States. George Muller, following the pattern of August Francke initiated orphanages in Bristol, England in which children of all ages were fed, housed, taught trades and where they most importantly heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Started in Great Britain in 1844 to minister to the young workers of the period, the Young Men's Christian Association spread to the United States in 1851. William Booth founded the Salvation Army in England in 1880. In 1887, moved by the plight of homeless men on London Bridge, William Booth expanded the work to include social work and soon took the cause to the United States.

When the Chicago fire of 1871 drove churches out of the Chicago Loop, Pacific Garden Mission in 1877 returned the Gospel to what had become the abode of "saloons, brothels and gambling halls" (Carl F.H. Henry, Pacific Garden Mission 25). Among those saved was Billy Sunday. Similar missions still thrive across the United States, supported by contributions of individuals and churches who also provide periodic voluntary manpower needed for such works to survive. These efforts are a testimony to a faith that evidences its genuine nature in works of mercy (James 2:14-18).

However, among the Fundamentalists of the period (Evangelicalism as a movement did not come into existence until the 1940s), social responsibility was seen as the concern of individuals and was scattered. It was not the churches within the Fundamentalist movement of the period which united to combat such social ills as child labor, improved working conditions for women or minimum wages but rather the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

To be fair, the Fundamentalists and other theological conservatives were involved in theological battles involving the very heart of biblical truth. Today we are indebted to them for their efforts. However, our forefathers passed on another inheritance as well. Perhaps as a reaction to the liberalism they combated, fundamentalism then and today they paid scant attention to the matters which are central to liberalism. Fundamentalism's lack of a relevant social ethic is acknowledged by both friend and foe, and modern fundamentalism has had an uneasy conscience on this matter for some time. There is little recognition that the routine of participation in human civilization is the very area of obedience to God (Walhout, "The Liberal-Fundamentalist Debate," Christianity Today 520).

Direct involvement in social concerns, never widespread among Bible-believing Christians, disappeared almost entirely by the middle of the 20th century. Inner city work was largely evangelistic in nature. The 1940s saw the rise of such organizations as Youth for Christ and the Billy Graham Association, both reaching into the inner cities of the United States.

Still, the Conservative Churches did not address the grave social issues of the period. In 1947 the theologian-historian Carl F.H. Henry wrote that the elimination of "aggressive warfare, racial hatred and intolerance, the liquor traffic, and exploitation of labor or management" (Henry, The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism, 17) did not have the active support or vigorous cooperation of large segments of evangelical Christianity. Such social issues were seldom, if at all, even addressed in the sermons of the period (Ibid., 18). Believing Christians adopted a policy of "indirect influence" rather than "direct involvement." The preaching of the Gospel is essential to change the individual who, it is assumed would through the changed life transform society (Grounds, 7).

The rapid dissolution of a Christian consensus in American society in the 1960s and 70s was in part due to the inability or unwillingness of Evangelicals to deal with the social turmoil of the period. Evangelicals in any great numbers did not begin speaking out against racial prejudice until the 1980s. By then, they had alienated large segments of the more theologically conservative black population. Consequently, the racial reconciliation movements of the 1990s are all the more difficult because of an atmosphere of mistrust, neglect and perhaps even guilt. Rightly or wrongly, Conservative Evangelicals have been quick to criticize such theologically and ecclesiastically broad-based movements as Promise Keepers for its efforts in this area. Yet, while criticizing we seldom recognize the legitimacy of the problems that such organizations seek to correct.

In our criticisms, modern Evangelicals advocating a biblical separatism have failed to come up with any workable alternatives. We are reluctant to form coalitions of churches or organizations of sufficient size and strength to deal adequately with issues of the race. We also have not developed a coherent public policy concerning such issues as crime and poverty.
With the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, Evangelicals were quick to condemn homosexual life-styles. Compassion for those affected was largely missing. Interestingly enough, even today some of the most effective organizations working among such groups are broad-based coalitions led by third-wave Pentecostals in the Vineyard movement which Evangelicals are quick to criticize. How many Evangelicals realize that the Exodus movement also effectively ministers to Evangelicals seeking deliverance from these tendencies but who find little compassion and understanding in their own churches?

Is it any wonder that non-Christians feel there is something inherent in the worldview of the Evangelical that keeps us from dealing with social ills? Consequently, we should not be surprised that our testimony of the Gospel is compromised. Evangelicals have been justly criticized as "stubbornly reactionary, fighting against any change, supporting and sanctifying the status quo." Vernon Grounds calls this a "quietism" which naively assumes that God will somehow remedy the problems of poverty, injustice and oppression without the intervention of His people (Ibid.) It is an attitude strangely reminiscent of the church councils at the time of William Carey that at first refused to support Carey's efforts to reach the subcontinent of India with the Gospel. In their opinion, God was well able to save the poor Indians without the help of His Church.

Can theological Conservatives in the 21st Century gain the edge in dealing with social issues? I believe so, but we need to adjust our worldview. We can take the following actions.

1) We need to acknowledge our "successes." Non-Christians do not respect us for our efforts in dealing with moral issues such as abortion and abstinence. Nevertheless, the number of abortions performed annually has dropped, a testimony to our efforts to unite as one voice against this evil. Abstinence too is increasingly becoming a behavior of choice among the nation's teenagers, in part due to our ability to communicate this as a preferable behavior.

2) Nevertheless, we need to re-evaluate our social ethic as a whole, particularly in such areas as our ministry to the poor and disadvantaged. If both the Old and New Testaments emphasize so strongly the care of widows, orphans, aliens, should we not also be concerned about those in society who are in such dire need today? The argument that our responsibility is first to those in the Church holds little water, for often we ignore such groups in the Church as well. Perhaps the spiritual poverty that we find in our Churches and ourselves is traceable, at least in part, to a maladjusted worldview concerning the Christian's social responsibility.

3) We who embrace the dominion mandate of Genesis 1:26 to steward God's creation must also consider our responsibilities in the areas of environmental preservation.

4) We need to revisit our ideas of biblical separatism. Does biblical separatism mean every church for itself as far as the social responsibility of the Church is concerned? Or is it possible for us as Evangelicals, as members of the IFCA churches, to form coalitions to proactively involve ourselves in social efforts along doctrinal lines that we all agree upon? We are strong in number and strong active involvement is what we need to deal with the grave social issues of the day in a manner pleasing to the Lord.

5) For every criticism we make of those dealing with the social ills of our day, we need to ask the Lord to provide us with acceptable alternatives.

6) We must preach social responsibility from the pulpits and encourage our people to be active and creative.

The Social Gospel movement of the 19th century influenced many of the hymns that we still sing in our Churches today. Among them is the hymn "Rise Up, O Men of God" by William P. Merrill. We may not agree with the eschatology in the hymn. Still it is a clarion call to "trod where His feet have trod." Jesus needs to reenter the marketplace of our society where people are hurting and need not only the Gospel, but a drop of water given in His name. We are His instruments, and we have the authority from God and His Word.

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Why should you, as a Pastor, and your church study Church History? Actually, you cannot avoid Church History. Your church has its own history, which can be very present whenever decisions are made concerning the future of the church. Someone has well said that the seven last words of a church are, "We've never done it that way before."

Even so, you cannot ignore the history of Christianity, because it also influences the present and can be a help as you and your church plan for the future. Since the past is part of the present, why not study the past to understand how it affects your church and how it can be a guide as you and your church deal with future challenges? As a former pastor and a student and teacher of Church History, let me suggest a few ways that Church History can be a blessing for you and your church.

First, the History of the Church can fortify your doctrinal integrity. Church History contains the history of doctrinal controversies, discussions, and decisions. This history can help you and your people more fully appreciate the doctrines that you hold as you study the work and sacrifice of many people to discern these teachings in the Bible and articulate them in a formal manner. This history can show how people in the past were led into false doctrine and how others helped assure purity of doctrine. Since there is "nothing new under the sun," the history of doctrine can warn you and your people concerning past errors -- and can give insight into how to resist and counter those false doctrines as they reappear in new guises.

For instance, as you continue to minister in our postmodern, relativistic society, you will be helped by the doctrinal history since the Reformation. It will show you how Enlightenment thought spawned humanistic relativism, which has opposed biblical Christianity in various forms (e.g., Religious Modernism, Neo-Orthodoxy, various even more radical theologies, and current Postmodernism). And as you study this history, you can receive guidance from how Christians and churches responded to this opposition. For example, you will be able to see how the Fundamentalist movement was formed in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century -- and how it defended biblical doctrine and advanced its cause through new churches and organizations, like the IFCA. A study of the history of doctrine since the Reformation will help you know how and why your church was formed -- and how your church can progress in the future without compromising its doctrinal basis for existence.

Again, as you and your people confront the overt and covert promotion of New Age ideology, it is well for you to read and heed the early Church's response against second century Gnosticism. Do you know what Gnosticism believed? New Age proponents do, and they consciously adopt and advocate those tenets (e.g., mystical monism, serpent worship, androgynous denial of the distinction between the sexes). The early Church triumphed over Gnosticism -- and yet was partly compromised by its elitist dualism and mysticism. By studying the ancient confrontation between Christianity and Gnosticism, you and your people can develop some strategies for opposing New Age teaching today -- while remaining free of its corrupting influences.

Second, Church History can help with biblical interpretation. As you prepare a sermon or Bible lesson, it is helpful to look at past interpretive options. Is it possible that you have overlooked a significant observation or interpretive possibility that some expositor of the past has included in his commentaries or sermons? The interpretive solutions offered by past scholars might prompt further reflection on and then further understanding of a passage. A recently begun commentary series that will assist in knowing biblical interpretation in the early Church is the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (InterVarsity Press). Of course, the commentaries of Reformers, like Luther and Calvin, should be helpful, especially in soteriological passages. And the conservative commentaries of the 19th century (e.g., Hengstenberg, Keil & Delitzsch, Zahn, Westcott, and Lightfoot) will help you in responding to Liberal biblical criticism's handling of biblical texts.

Third, Church History will further confirm your own non-denominational ministry. As you study how the Protestants of the 1500s broke away from the Roman Church to form churches with purer doctrine based on the Bible, and as you study the history of the non-denominational church movement that reacted to the Liberalism of the mainline denominations in 20th century America, you will be more fully persuaded that the form of ecclesiastical relationships is not as important as the biblical doctrine that founds and permeates your ministry.

Fourth, through the lives of people in the past, Church History can encourage and instruct you in your ministry. In 1 Cor 3:21-22, the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, "all things are yours." Instead of boasting in one teacher, they should have been grateful that God had given them all of their teachers as gracious benefits. Even so, Christ has given people to His Church through the years. The Christian today has a wealth of people in the present and the past to look to for example -- and warning. In this sense "all things are yours."
So accept and make use of your gifts. Draw strength from Athanasius (A.D. 296-373), who was exiled five times from his ministry for his stand for the doctrine of the Trinity -- and yet did not compromise his convictions. Be encouraged by Martin Luther (A.D. 1483-1546) risking his life at the Diet of Worms as he stood for the truth of justification by grace alone through faith alone, asserting "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me." Be motivated by the tireless commitment of evangelists and missionaries like John Wesley (A.D. 1703-1791), George Whitefield (A.D. 1714-1770), Charles Spurgeon (A.D. 1834-1892), William Carey (A.D. 1761-1834), and J. Hudson Taylor (A.D. 1834-1905). Be comforted by the life of Jonathan Edwards (A.D. 1703-1758), who was forced to leave his pastorate, in spite of his doctrinal and personal integrity -- only to then have time to write some of the finest theological treatises in history. Be emboldened by the martyrs of the past and the present, like Polycarp, who, when asked to recant or die, said "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never wronged me: how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?" Be instructed in ministerial conduct by great pastors, like Richard Baxter (A.D. 1615-1691) (The Reformed Pastor) and Charles Spurgeon (Lectures to My Students). Be warned how Martin Luther's anger, so instrumental against the errors of Romanism, also cost him union with other Reformers and support from many people who could have helped his cause. Be warned about how the Church was helped and yet corrupted when Christianity became the official state religion in the later Roman Empire.

Finally, Church History will strengthen your faith in the sovereignty of God as you see the results of His work to preserve His Word and the Church. Seeing the results of God's work in the past can help you trust in His sovereign faithfulness in the future. For example, John Wyclif (A.D. 1328-1384) would probably never have had the freedom to put forth his proto-Reformation views (e.g., the primacy of Scripture, unmerited grace, opposition to the Mass, denial of papal power), if the papacy had been a strong force in Europe of the time. But the papacy was experiencing "The Great Schism," which involved three claimants ruling as Pope. This division split Europe as each nation chose which Pope to support. The papacy was divided and weak -- and lost prestige in the eyes of the people. No wonder that Wyclif was able to challenge the power of the papacy so successfully -- and leave teachings in England and elsewhere that prepared the way for the greater success of the Reformation.

Speaking of the Reformation, Martin Luther and those pastors and princes who supported his cause would not have prospered in advocating their beliefs unless at critical times the Ottoman Turks did not try to invade his empire through the Balkans. Because of these activities, often the Holy Roman Emperor had to focus his attention on the Turks rather than on stopping the growing Protestant movement in his empire.

God sovereignly helped Wyclif and then Luther to restore and preserve the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone. As you study the sweep of Church History, you will discern God's work in history and have further cause to trust him to advance His cause through you and your church.

Baseball pitcher, Satchel Paige, was reportedly asked his secret for longevity. He supposedly replied, "Never look back -- Something might be gaining on you." Pastors and churches cannot afford to follow this advice. We must not ignore the past as we minister in the present and plan for the future. The past continues to influence the present and the future, for both good and evil. Unless we study the past, we will fail to use God's gifts of guidance and encouragement in the past, we will fail to understand the present, and we might not be fully prepared for future challenges to our ministry. Unless we "look back," we will not see clearly to "look around" or "look ahead."

BOOK NOTICE: Two basic sources that will give you a basic overview of Church History: Christianity Through the Centuries, 3d edition, by Earle E. Cairns (Zondervan, 1996); Chronological and Background Charts of Church History, by Robert C. Walton (Zondervan, 1986).

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In Sacramento, California on Friday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. the first of our IFCA International "Vision for the 21st Century" Banquets was held. It was a glorious success!

Our Executive Director Designate Les Lofquist traveled to Sacramento to be a part of the evening. Newly elected IFCA International President Robert Graves served as the Master of Ceremonies. The evening was hosted by Northern California Regional President Bud Haskell also in attendance was Dr. Cal Probasco, one of the past Presidents of IFCA International.

The special guest of honor was Glen Lehman, former IFCA Executive Director from 1959-1972 who was in the area visiting friends and surprised everyone when he came. (Dr. Richard Gregory, current IFCA International Executive Director, was scheduled to be at the banquet but had to cancel due to a funeral in the family.)

The banquet was held at the Hart Senior Center with a privately catered meal of prime rib, pasta in red sauce, and lettuce salad. The banquet organizers wanted a nicer meal for the evening instead of the normal church-carry-in-cuisine of tuna casseroles and jello. They also wanted a true banquet atmosphere, so the teens from Foothill Bible Church (Lincoln, CA) elegantly served each table. A special feature of the evening was the professional banner displayed over the podium. The sharp-looking banner had been donated by one of the men in Foothill Bible Church. It had the beautiful IFCA International logo on one half, and on the other half it had the words: “VISION FOR THE 21st CENTURY - We are Independent Churches Working Interdependently."

After the meal, Master of Ceremonies Bob Graves led us in singing, then sang a solo himself. For the program, Glen Lehman shared where IFCA International has been in the past, Bob Graves shared where IFCA International is today, and Les Lofquist shared where IFCA International is going in the future. Every place setting had a bookmark containing the IFCA International Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and the fourteen headings from the Goals Statement.

Les Lofquist used the bookmark along with the "Introducing the IFCA International" promotional booklet during his presentation of where the IFCA International is going. In the pre-planning stages of the banquet there was more than a little concern about how many would come, according to banquet coordinator Pastor Loren Peters (Faith Bible Church, Sacramento). "We had no idea what to expect, but thought that we at least should give it a try."

The banquet organizers were thrilled when over 100 people attended the banquet, thanks in part to the strategic location within two hours for many of IFCA International churches in the Regional. But one couple even drove 300 miles from Eureka, California just to be present. Pastor Grant Mackenzie of Sequoia Bible Church in Eureka said he would not have missed it!

Fourteen churches were represented and if you figure it out, that would be twenty-eight pastors and wives. This means many of those in attendance at the banquet were laymen from IFCA International churches of Northern California. When hearing this report, Dr. Gregory rejoiced. It is his goal in the "Vision for the 21st Century" Banquets to involve the laymen from our churches all across the country. It is his conviction that the laymen must catch the vision for IFCA International's future along with our pastors: "The success of this first banquet, despite our initial fears and concerns with the number who would attend, is a great encouragement to all our other Regionals. Laymen will get involved if we do our best to include them. And they must help us achieve our goals of working interdependently in the next century."
What was it that made this banquet a success? It certainly was not the amount of time given to advance planning, since the banquet was scheduled less than two months before September 12. It also was not the close proximity for all the attenders, since almost half of them drove two or more hours to be there. Perhaps it was simply that the Regional Executive Committee was willing to take the risk. They risked a lot of work for what could have been an embarrassingly small turn-out. But God blessed despite their worry. This may be a lesson for all of us: never underestimate the ability of God to bless our efforts at working together as IFCA International churches.
Challenging Secular Sectarianism: The Church and Education in the Twentieth Century

Sweeping changes during the nineteenth century altered twentieth century education in America. The growth of the common or public school movement in the nineteenth century is well documented in such works as Warren Nord's *Religion and American Education* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995) and Eugene Provenzo's *Religious Fundamentalism and American Education* (Albany: State University of New York, 1990). Though much could be said about the church's interest in education around the world, the focus here is on the American church and education.

Moving Toward "Secular Sectarianism"

There is debate within the scholarly community about what motivated those promoting the common schools in the first half of the 1800s. However, there is little doubt that these schools were officially non-sectarian and intended for children of the *entire* community. Thus began the slow journey of religion toward marginalization in the common schools.

The process of marginalization passed through several stages. Earlier in this journey tolerance was given to the Bible. Horace Mann in the north allowed for Bible reading in the schools, but the reading was to be without explanatory comment. William Ruffner in the south allowed for a type of common or non-sectarian sort of Christianity principally through Bible reading. By 1870 the National Teacher Association, though passing resolutions allowing Bible reading, nonetheless acknowledged that partisan religious principles in the schools was inappropriate to American education. By 1900 most states had prohibited the use of public funds for sectarian purposes.

Nord (*Religion and American Education*, p. 74) summarizes the result of this marginalizing.

The logic of secularization was clearly at work. In a religiously pluralistic culture, peace is achieved by eliminating what is divisive—that is religion—from public institutions. In the twentieth century Bible reading and prayer became increasingly uncommon as the schools attempted to become truly common schools, acceptable to all religious and secular communities. Of course, in eliminating all religion from schools it may be that a new sectarianism—a secular sectarianism—has been established in the place of the old Protestant hegemony. The process of marginalizing religion could be seen in curriculum, textbooks, patterns of funding, restrictions placed on school personnel, etc. In this way the common schools were at first religiously neutralized. This led to the entrenchment of a "secular sectarianism."

Of course, conservative evangelical Christians had not been silent during the 1800s nor were they during the 1900s. The true church responded on several fronts to the exclusion of religion from the public schools. This review of the church and education in the twentieth century certainly cannot be exhaustive. However, several educational initiatives and influences are noteworthy.

Initiatives by the Church

During the twentieth century true followers of Jesus Christ have aggressively invested in a variety of formal and informal educational responses. This investment has cost millions and millions of dollars and has required many of Christianity's leaders.

Formal Responses

Formal responses by the church have occurred at all levels, from kindergarten through graduate education. Organizations have been formed and associations have developed. Multiple publications have crowded the market. As the grip of secular sectarianism strengthened, the church undertook educational initiatives on multiple fronts.
For a variety of reasons hundreds of Christian K-12 schools were founded. Some were developed as reactions to single or multiple traits of public schools. Christian schools were formed because of the public school's perceived failures regarding prayer and Bible reading, creation, American freedoms, sex education, enforcement of a high moral code, high standards and expectations, more individualized instruction, inclusion of parents in the educational processes, etc. Educational rationale has been developed and marketed for each of these varied responses. Other Christian K-12 schools, however, were formed due to a deep commitment to an education founded upon an all-encompassing Christian world-view. Individuals founding these schools saw that the Christian faith had broader educational applications than simply as a corrective for this or that failure of public schooling. These Christian schools worked at developing and implementing a Christian philosophy in all aspects of institutional life. Large coalitions of Christian schools have joined together in such organizations as the Association of Christian Schools International.

As nearly every school district in America will attest, home schooling, is a rapidly growing educational response. Of course, a number of home schooling parents do not profess to be Christian. However, many Christian families have seen this approach as a viable means for correcting the perceived failures of public education. Due to the rapid growth of home schooling state departments of education have moved, not always quickly, to make needed provisions for this approach. Associations have emerged to service the various needs of home schooling parents.

Yet many Christian parents have responded to public education by sending their children to these schools. In these cases homes, local churches, and Christian organizations with campus ministries are important resources for nurturing the student in Christian maturity.

These varied responses to public education have sometimes led to intense discussions and strong opinions about which one is the best Christian response. It is not uncommon for ministry leaders in local churches to be caught in the crossfire of these intense opinions.

The church's response to undergraduate and graduate education in America has been somewhat similar. Responses range from outright suspicion and rejection of all undergraduate and graduate education to sending young people to public universities hoping their Christian faith will survive and thrive with the right mix of local church and para-local church support and encouragement.

George Marsden in *Soul of the American University*, p. 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) notes that "by the 1920s the evangelical Protestantism of the old-time colleges had been effectively excluded from leading university classroom." The church responded by establishing new Bible institutes, junior colleges, Bible colleges, liberal arts colleges, and graduate schools. This gave the church the opportunity to educate the next generations of its leadership. The institutions ranged across a spectrum of types and levels, some denominationally connected, others independently founded. At one level were two- and three-institutes which focused their curriculum essentially on Bible training. Four-year Bible colleges or liberal arts colleges were at another level. These institutions were accredited either by the Association of American Bible Colleges and by nationally recognized regional accrediting bodies. Christian colleges formed alliances such as the 100-member Council of Christian Colleges and Universities. Christian graduate education was also developed in order to extend Christian education for the church's growing and diversified leadership needs.

In particular Christian seminaries grew in number as graduate theological education was marginalized from public universities. Even though departments of religion exist today in public universities and schools of divinity persist in selected private universities, Christian seminaries have provided centers for ongoing evangelical Christian ministry education.

Evangelical presses poured publications onto the markets, establishing bookstores and mail order networks for distributing textbooks and collateral resource materials to a Christian public hungry for information.

**Informal Responses**

Space does not permit anything other than a summary overview. Reinforcing the formal responses, the informal ones spread Christian educational work among the church's masses. Radio and television linked the Christian public to the teaching ministries of widely scattered leaders. These leaders became acknowledged and appreciated sources of daily and weekly Christian teaching. These ministries changed the listening appetites and expectations
of church-going people. They insisted on higher levels of presentation skills and used such ministries as independent streams of instruction alongside local church ministries.

Christian music became a business and informally taught generations of Christians about values, Bible doctrine, and which things pleased God and which did not. The Christian music industry spawned generations that sometimes used songwriters as the principal source of Christian teaching.

Evangelical churches invested increasing amounts of resources in educational ministry. These investments included expansive educational facilities, growing operating budgets to support an ever-broadening array of educational and discipleship initiatives, ministry trips intended to increase a global vision for serving Christ, and other such undertakings. The church's informal responses also included an increasingly diversified and specialized staff to serve local congregations. Preaching pastors, youth pastors, worship pastors, education pastors, campus pastors, senior pastors, administrative pastors, counseling pastors and associates of all types and configurations are staffing local church ministries. A cottage industry has mushroomed to provide continuing education needs for these ministry leaders. A review of almost any Christian publication highlights far-ranging seminars and workshops to update ministry leaders.

Church programming has grown remarkably sophisticated, if not productive. High-tech educational tools to empower local church educational programming support it. PowerPoint is becoming standard fare for everything from corporate worship to elder training to budget presentations to Sunday School to small group Bible studies. A plethora of para-local church organizations have developed specialized educational services and resources that either complement or compete with local churches. These various initiatives are intended to meet the needs of novice and sophisticate. These attempts either fill a selected Christian educational need or seek a market niche for their Christian products.

The church's work throughout the twentieth century is intertwined with education, whether to stand in opposition to it or to found it and promote it. This deep interaction with education by church has also left marks of influence on it.

**Influences on the Church**

Education has influenced the church in a number of ways. While some of these ways are good, others are not. There is little doubt that the church's twentieth century interaction with education has led to ministry leaders with more formal education. In many respects this has promoted more in-depth exegetical study of God's Word. At the same time this increased exegetical focus has in some quarters led to spiritual dryness in the church. Education per se is not the problem. Rather, it is the unwarranted assumptions that Christian people make about the power of education to do the work of God. Every Christian educational institution must grapple with how to encourage both careful, detailed, exegetical study of the Word and the absolute importance of an ever-deepening passion for knowing Christ and following Him. Reliance by the church on its educational resources has in some cases disempowered the church's ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The church's educational response has resulted in the development of a huge supply of published resources to meet most every need in the church. Those who write also lead seminars and workshops based upon their publications. Such training sessions promote the sale of books. Publications, seminars, workshops, and conferences are readily available and continue influencing the church in direct and indirect ways. A good deal of what the church practices results from the influences of these sources of training.

Educational responses from the church have provided it with a full complement of specially trained ministry leaders who are prepared to serve God's people in numerous ways. But it also seems that as the services provided for God's people have grown, the practice of servanthood among His people has declined. Strange that in the process of attempting to serve others the end product has become a lot of self-interest on the part of those being served.

As one reviews budgets of the church's multiple educational organizations, there is plain evidence of the tremendous funding load carried by the church. Add to this the educational facilities built by local churches and the presence of numerous para-local church organizations seeking support through radio and television and the number of dollars required to sustain all of this is pretty frightening. Resources required for all these operations are stretched. The emergence of Christian radio and television ministry personalities has created a layer of
ministry leaders who are frankly removed from the very Christian people who acknowledge them as leaders. Yet these Christian people require on-site, not remote, spiritual encouragement and help.

Should our Lord tarry, the church is faced with how to become increasingly better stewards of education that will promote God's work in the twenty-first century.

Dr. Ronald E. Manahan has served Grace College and Seminary as President since 1994. He hold M.Div. Th.M., and Th.D. degrees from Grace Theological Seminary. He is an elder and member of the Community of Hope GBC, Columbia City, IN. He and his wife, Barbara, are the parents of two children—Kelly Manahan, M.D., on a gynecological oncology fellowship of the University of Michigan, and Nathan, a 1999 Grace College graduate in youth ministries and youth pastor at Grace Brethren Church at Willow Valley, Lancaster, PA.
Occasionally something is shared in a chapel service at Centinela that I have pass on. This morning as I went to work I wished that it was a day off as I already had a headache and Kathie was feeling bad. However, the Lord had a blessing in store and I would like to share it with you. I will relate it in the first person as it was told to me.

The inmate is a black gentleman doing about 18 months of a 3 year sentence on a rather minor felony.

"I came to Centinela in February of this year lost and unable to read or write. The week after I got here I went to a Bible study on the yard and as M (another inmate) led the study I began to cry. Not out of weakness but because I began to understand that God loved me and His Son died for me. M and L prayed with me that night and I was born again. Every week since then I have been in the chapel services and I have learned so much.

M and L have made me study and they even taught me to read and write. I have been in school here also and that has helped me, but the most help has been here in chapel.

I will be leaving to another prison on Tuesday or Wednesday (note: there is a very good chaplain at the institution he is going to). When I got the notice to prepare to transfer, I called my auntie who raised me to tell her. During call I took my Bible and began to read to her from I John. She didn't know that I have learned to read yet and she was excited. Then I began to pray for her on the phone. I heard the phone drop and auntie yelling, 'John, John, come in here, you have got to here this prayer.' My cousin picked up the phone and asked what I had said to his mom.

Two months ago my aunt had a stroke and has been so weak that she could not walk without a walker. 'She just jumped up and ran to the door calling for Dad. She left her walker next to the chair and moved faster than she has in years.'"

As I watch the tears of joy running down his face, I thanked the Lord that I had come to work today. He had a blessing for me when I needed it. The inmate went on to praise the Lord and ask for the congregation to pray for him as he left and pray for his family.

As you remember him, please, add him to your prayers.

At Centinela I am very fortunate that the only cult coming in is the Jehovah Witnesses. They have a tendency to be difficult to deal with and as I have to supervise them it causes problems for me. Anytime there is a problem with their services they claim that I am trying to undermine their program and that I would like to keep them out.

While I definitely have BIG problems with their doctrine and what they teach them men, I do support the constitutional rights of the inmates to worship God in whatever way they feel they must (with some limitations). They have as much right to be at Centinela as I do.

God has been doing some great things with our evangelistic efforts toward the Jehovah Witnesses. Recently an inmate on D yard got a new cell mate that was upset because there was not TV or radio in the cell. He didn't like the fact the his new cellie had nothing but Christian materials as he was a Jehovah Witness. The two did not speak but tolerated each other for several weeks. However, the Christian was praying for his cellie.

One day the believer was studying two manuscripts which had been sent to him by Ariel Ministries. Ariel is a mission to Jews out of Tustin, CA founded by a friend of mine, Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum. The manuscripts were "Satanology" and "The Names of God." The next day he could not find them and thought that they had been borrowed while he was not in his cell.
Several days later his cellie engaged him in conversation and stated that he had seen the studies and could not understand why a Christian would be interested in Satan. He read the study out of curiosity and said that it, "scared the hell out of me." It was the first time he was ever confronted with the possibility that Satan was real. Next he studied the "Names of God" manuscript and was confronted with the fact that he had been led astray by the Jehovah Witnesses. He then made a profession of Christ as his Savior.

We are praising the Lord here at Centinela for this conversion. Since his conversion he has led two other Jehovah Witnesses to the Lord. Pray for him as he continues this ministry.

Chaplain David Pipping shares the wonderful impact of bringing the Good News to inmates at his new assignment in Florida's Liberty Correctional Institution. David has been a correctional chaplain for more than 25 years.

Prison ministry at Liberty is filled with blessing. I have the opportunity to conduct two worship services each Sunday morning and two Bible Studies each Monday evening. Volunteers lead two additional worship services during weekdays.

Inmates who hear the Good News presented clearly in chapel ministry and from fellow inmates respond. Most professions of faith that produce noted change are by inmates leading other inmates to Christ. During this first year, one hundred ten men received Christ as Savior and Lord and twenty-six were baptized. Inmates have time to devote to growth in the knowledge of God's word and they do so eagerly. 150 Bible Courses were completed during my first year at Liberty.

The long term results of the evangelism and discipleship behind walls was well illustrated when one of our ex-offenders was called back from the mission field to become Senior Pastor of a Bible Church in Houston, Texas. Another has been a prison chaplain in the Florida system for over four years.

Our prison chaplains are often in need of volunteers who are sound in God's word and will help with Bible studies and (if gifted- preaching). You are encouraged to consider participating in this life changing ministry. Please pray for the ministries of our prison chaplains. What Steve and David reported here is typical of the way the Lord is working in the lives of inmates served by our other prison Chaplains:

Bob Bleisner- Pelican Bay State Prison, California
Lloyd Doerbaum- Hendry Correctional Institution, Florida
Bob Weideman- Hendry Correctional Institution, Florida
Ed Holsworth- Handlon Michigan Training Unit
Art Skinner- Tacoma Pre-Release Facility, Washington
Ford Spink- Tacoma Pre-Release Facility, Washington
Joseph Essington- Salem County Correctional Facility, New Jersey
A Heart for Ministry
Mrs. Cindy Loubet

Sometime ago when I was asked to speak to the women at one of our Regionals I about had apoplexy. But when I was told the theme for the Regional was "A Heart for Ministry" I was excited for this topic has been on my heart for a long time.

In over thirteen years of full-time ministry, Tony and I have observed many unhappy marriages among pastors and their wives. Many of these problems could be traced to the fact that the husband considers full-time service as his ministry but that commitment is not shared by his wife. They are not a team. Now, I don’t mean that the wife should work 40+ hours a week doing things for the church, but in a team ministry her heart should be in complete unity with her husband’s in their service to God and His people. When pastoring is the husband’s "thing," and the wife wants to do her own "thing," it always causes problems. One manifestation of this is when a husband neglects his wife then strife is the result. I have seen many pastors who are so totally consumed with the needs, or supposed needs, of their congregation that, when they arrive home, they are completely drained and have nothing left for their wives.

Our enemy, Satan, loves to see a marriage fail, whether it ends in divorce or not. There are many so called "marriages" among pastors where two people live in the same house and merely exist. But God wants so much more for us. The Bible tells us that a marriage is supposed to be a picture of Jesus Christ and the Church, His Bride, but so many times the picture is marred or distorted (Eph 5:21-33) and pastoral marriages instead of being models to God’s people become hindrances to a healthy church.

Tony and I have had our share of problems over the twenty years of our marriage but I knew God had called me to serve Him side by side with Tony. We work so much better as a team than separately. I try to support him as much as possible and make myself available to meet his needs. I want our home to be as much of a haven as possible. Tony knows that when he comes home, I'm waiting.

I do not want to indict those wives that work outside of the home. They, too, can provide a loving home atmosphere if their priorities are right. I just prefer to be a homemaker, and God has always provided for our needs so that I didn’t have to work. Even being home, I’ve had my difficulties. I went through some struggles where I was extremely jealous of Tony’s time with others. I admit that I sometimes felt left out and nagged him about it. I found that making such a fuss just added to the problem and created an atmosphere where he did not enjoy coming home. Finally, God convicted me and I broke and confessed my sin. I began to do more praying instead of nagging and doing more for Tony instead of demanding he meet my needs. Wow! What a difference it made.

I find I have much more quality time with Tony as we work together and this also results in more quantitative time. It enhances developing more in common. We get to visit and share as we work in the office or go on visitation together. Of course, I don’t always keep up with the house because we’re gone so much, but then he helps me with it. We’re partners.

When Tony and I went to our first church, I was twenty-one years old and scared to death. I had no idea what I was to be doing except support Tony and be a mom. I did my best and that’s how God used me. He gradually gave me a ministry to the ladies of the church with Bible study, prayer time and sharing with them in their problems. As I look back on it, I think I learned more from them than they from me. But I was willing, and God blessed my life accordingly. The ministry is a huge responsibility, but God wants us to keep our relationship with our mates and our children healthy. (1 Tim. 3:4-5). If these relationships are not then we forfeit our right to be in the ministry.

Some of the causes for marital discord that Tony and I have observed are:
1. The wife (or husband) is not recognized as a part of the ministry but is often an afterthought, and taken for granted.

2. Her (or his) feelings are ignored and she is unable to see beyond her own hurt.

3. The husband doesn’t stand in between the congregation and his wife (or the kids) when they are unduly criticized but fears congregational reaction more than the confidence of his family. This puts a terrible strain on a marriage.

4. The husband doesn’t protect his wife from over-involvement and over-commitment so she eventually begins to withdraw and become a passive and resentful participant or does things grudgingly.

What is the solution?

1. Recognize that family obligations are very much a part of the ministry. Our relationship to God, then our mate, then our family, is ministry. If we don’t have a consistent walk with God and much personal time along with our mate and family, then we can’t have a fulfilling ministry.

2. Wives, guard your heart against resentment (1 Pet. 3:1-6) Avoid the waiting game where you wait for him to apologize first. Go to God and submit to Him, then talk to your husband. We can’t change others, only ourselves, and we have to get out of God’s way so He can work. I like to say, "Duck and let God hit him," otherwise you get clobbered and your husband and doesn’t. Either we cooperate with God or we become a hindrance to His work.

3. Don’t be jealous of the time your husband spends with others, whether it’s justified or not. Be careful not to get over-involved yourself. (If some things are not done, then leave them in God’s hands. If it’s supposed to get done, then He’ll bring someone along to take care of it, in His timing.) God will deal with your husband if He’s wrong, or you, if that is the case. Pastoring is a twenty-four hour a day, seven days a week ministry. There are some things that can wait and others that can’t. As wives, we need to make sure our homes are a haven where he can get away from the busyness of life and feel loved and wanted even though the world, and sometimes the church, may be hostile. Make your home a loving, peaceful environment so he wants to come home.

4. Make sure you communicate your hearts to each other and avoid misunderstandings. A lack of communication or thinking "He ought to know" will cause all kinds of unnecessary resentment and bitterness. Your husbands can’t read your minds (which is probably good!), and they don’t automatically know what a woman likes or needs, so don’t assume they do. We have to lovingly communicate those thoughts to them without being selfish.

5. Pray for your husband to be the man of God that God wants him to be, not what you want or expect. Sometimes the two are vastly different.

6. Don’t always look at the negative. It just gets worse. Satan loves to point out all kinds of stupid little irritating things, and you don’t even realize you’re being critical. Try to see the positive traits and qualities in your mate and encourage them. Yes, sometimes we have to deal with certain attitudes or issues, but many times a negative attitude in our husbands is the direct result of a negative attitude in us. Those attitudes can be influenced to change when we repent and have a positive attitude ourselves. The woman’s attitude sets the tone or atmosphere of the home. If a woman is critical of her husband, then her children will pick up on it, too, and it will be reflected in them and in the people to whom they minister. If a wife shows a lack of respect toward her husband, it can cause a lack of respect toward him from others and hurt the cause of Christ (Titus 2:3-5).

7. Do things together or for each other, like flowers, candlelight dinners for two, love notes, walks, picnics, etc. Make it fun to be together. Don’t accept the same old routine with each other all the time, but use your imagination and see what God can do. A warning: If you aren’t accustomed to doing some
of these romantic things, don’t expect immediate results. Your mate may go into shock! Don’t expect immediate and marvelous changes: healing takes time.

8. You can’t expect your mate to meet all your needs; God has to do that. Men and women think differently and have different needs. Women need other women as men need other men. There are some things that only a person of the same gender understands, so make sure you have a friend you can confide in on those issues; someone you are sure will keep your confidence.

My prayer is that something in this short work will touch a hurting heart or bring encouragement to one who is struggling; that our hearts will be soft and moldable in the Potter’s loving hands. And I pray that, as wives and coworkers in leading the flock of God, we will always live on the side of mercy rather than judgment. May you serve Him faithfully and in unity, to the praise of His glory.