

B A P T I S T B I B L E

TRIBUNE

SEPT/OCT 2017

THE
REFORMATION
...500 years later



p.6 Luther: A Baptist Assessment

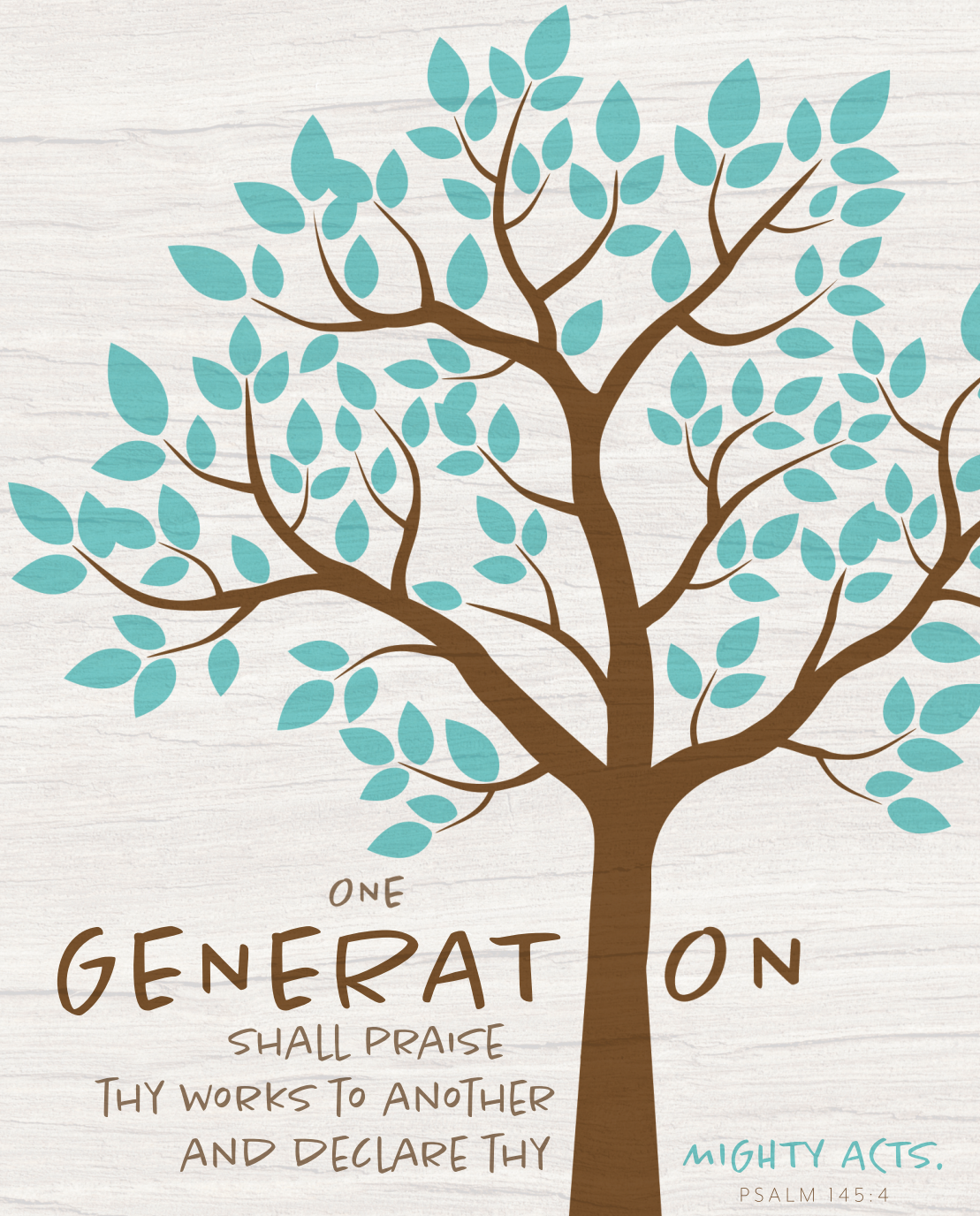
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p.12 Anabaptists: The Reformation's Heroes

BBFI

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

OWASSO, OK | SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2017



ONE
GENERATION
SHALL PRAISE
THY WORKS TO ANOTHER
AND DECLARE THY

MIGHTY ACTS.

PSALM 145:4

SCHEDULE

Monday PM

Max Harmon, Peru

Lonnie Lehrman, Granbury Baptist Church, Granbury, TX

Tuesday AM

"In the Trenches" Breakouts:

Children's Ministry: *Steve Harney, Stephanie Loderhose*

Student Ministry: *Reuben Herrin, Jon Slayden*

Senor Adult Ministry: *Tom Porter, Loran McAlister*

"Can You Hear Me Now?" Sound Systems: *Josh Kaylor,
Mike Gleason*

Budgeting Stewardship: *Steve Chittenden, Injoy Stewardship*

Dealing with a Sexually Confused Society: *Kevin Carson*

Developing Lay Leadership: *TBA*

Recruiting Volunteers: *TBA*

Stress Intervention: *Dr. Skip Pilgrim*

TED Talks:

Michael Woodward, *Ocean States Baptist Church, Smithfield, RI*

David Klass, *Friendship Baptist Church, Montana City, MT*

Keith Gillming, *Lighthouse Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO*

Ladies Meeting

10:00 - 12:00 in the Event Center: *Anita Renfro*

Tuesday PM

Skit Guys

Jerry Thorpe

Wednesday AM

Missions Approvals

Wednesday PM

Duke Hergatt

Special Entertainment: *Comedian and Illusionist Matt Fore*

Find hotel information and register
today at www.bbfi.org/events



ON THE TABLE
20th issue

by Randy Harp | Editor

This issue of the *Tribune* marks my 20th issue as editor. Wow, how time flies! Probably the most common question I get asked is, “Do you miss being a pastor?” My answer is always the same, “Absolutely! Probably every day.” But at the same time, I love what God is allowing me to be a part of now. I have a unique perspective on all that God is doing in and through the churches, missionaries, ministries, and colleges associated with the BBFI. I have been in churches and fellowship meetings from coast to coast, from the northeast to the southwest. I have participated in building dedications and reported on hundreds being baptized. I am privileged to get to teach at Baptist Bible College and see the passion this generation has for the Lord. There is no doubt God is still working through the BBFI. I once again say thank you for allowing me to be a small part.

As we are approaching the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church, I felt it important to address the impact this event has on us today. As you read each article, you will notice that each author approached their writing from a different perspective. I will be honest, I learned quite a lot during my research for this issue. There might be a few things that you will learn as well.

As a reminder, this issue also marks the beginning of our new distribution frequency. This is the September/October *Tribune*. The next issue will arrive the first week of November. We are also making changes to our website, www.tribune.org, and will be launching a new *Tribune* eNewsletter. You can visit our website to sign up for this communication tool. Please continue to pray for wisdom as we navigate through these changes. Our goal is still the same – to tell the good news of what God is doing through the BBFI.

I look forward to seeing you in Owasso in just a few weeks. Linzy Slayden and Friendship Baptist Church have been working hard to prepare for a great meeting. I am confident it is one you will not want to miss. Details are on the page to your left as well as on the BBFI mobile app.

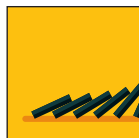
As always, thank you for allowing me to serve Christ as I serve you. If I can ever be a service to you, please let me know.

THE REFORMATION



Luther: _____ 6 A freewheeling Baptist assessment

As you look into the life of Martin Luther, there's a lot more to note than just his incendiary late-night post (church doors, not social media).



500 years later: What we have learned _____ 9

Was the Reformation just a movement in history, or do we see lasting effects today? A missionary to Germany shares his thoughts from the epicenter of the Reformation.



The real heroes of the Reformation _____ 12

When the Anabaptists set out to reform the line of thinking on true Biblical baptism, they faced unbridled persecution ... often at the very hands of the Reformation's leading figures.

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Don't miss any of the *Tribune's* digital offerings on our website www.tribune.org.

The *Baptist Bible Tribune* (ISSN 0745-5836) is published bi-monthly, by the BBFI, 720 E. Kearney, Springfield, Missouri 65803. Periodical class postage paid at Springfield, Missouri, and additional entry offices.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Individual subscriptions are \$15 per year anywhere in the U.S.; \$20 per year in foreign countries. Postmaster send address changes to: *Baptist Bible Tribune*, P. O. Box 309, Springfield, Missouri 65801, 417-831-3996, fax 417-831-1470.

By-lined opinions expressed in the Baptist Bible Tribune are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

FROM THE PRESIDENT 500 YEARS LATER

As I think about Luther nailing his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church 500 years ago, a few things come to mind. First, the Bible alone is our highest authority. Second, we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ and by the grace of God alone.

Growing up in the Philippines in a BBFI missionary family, I saw first-hand the preaching of the Gospel to people immersed in religion and ritual. I observed the biblical truths often associated with the Reformation at work in people's lives.

In those days, few people had Bibles. My parents encountered the mindset that the Bible was only to be read by priests, not ordinary people. It was amazing to watch someone begin to read the Bible for themselves. We witnessed Scripture bringing light and understanding to many people.

When my wife's father, Bob Hughes, realized people did not have Bibles, he launched a project to print one million Bibles. His ministry was known as, "What does the Bible say?" The passion for the Word of God led to a vibrant and enduring church-planting movement in the Philippines.

Most people believed religious rituals and good works were the path to salvation. I will never forget watching three people literally nailed to crosses in what appeared to be a heroic act of penance and good works. Our message was focused on the freeness of salvation through the finished work of Christ and the grace of God. The simple truth of Ephesians 2:8-9 brought freedom and salvation to all who would receive it.

As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is celebrated, the world will revisit these important biblical truths. I am grateful to be a part of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International where these truths have been the foundation of our message since the beginning.



Eddie Lyons
BBFI PRESIDENT

WORLD MISSIONS COMING TO US

It is estimated that nearly 50 million migrants currently reside in the USA. God has set before us an unprecedented mission opportunity to which we can ask, "What can we as Christians do to reach these communities with the Gospel?"

God's redemptive plan is for every nation. He is now bringing the mission field to us. We need to seize the opportunity and consider ways to reach these people living outside their native land. For years, our primary focus has been sending missionaries to reach the lost on the foreign field, yet we cannot neglect those in our own country. There is no difference between reaching out to the Vietnamese in Dallas, the

Ethiopian in Washington D.C., or the Honduran in San Diego.

Hundreds of people groups in the world have no Gospel witness and many are scattered throughout our nation. In order to reach them, we must:

- See the need
- Ask God to give us a desire to minister to them
- Develop a plan
- Equip our people
- Go out and meet them
- Learn about them
- Bring them to Jesus

With the right attitude and an effective plan, God can use us to spread His Gospel among the people groups who find

themselves far away from their familiar cultural influences. Imagine the possibilities of God calling those reached on US soils to take the Good News back to their home country. What an amazing opportunity churches have in reaching both an accessible mission field right here and sending a potential mission force into unreached places of our world. God is bringing them to us – is your church considering them?



Jon Konnerup
BBFI MISSION DIRECTOR

BBFI LEADERSHIP

CHURCH PLANTING ONE OF THE BEST PIECES OF ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED

In more than 55 years of ministry, one of the greatest lessons I have learned and one of the best pieces of advice I could ever give a church planter would be to just be yourself. Don't be a copycat. Be you. No one is more vital to your ministry than you. It is you God has called to do this ministry of church planting.

Do not try to copy another's success. Don't try to be something or somebody else. No one can be you except for you. It's not the way they dress that makes them successful. It's not the music they play that makes them successful. It's not the way they put their hands in their

pockets, the Levi's they wear or the shirt and tie. It's not their delivery, it's not their method, it's not their style, but it is them being themselves.

Discover who you are, your strengths, your weaknesses, and your passions. God's calling on your life is more important than somebody else's personality or method in your life.

Yes, study the success of others. Explore different approaches and styles, gather information, read and collect as much knowledge and wisdom as you possibly can from others, but be yourself. God has a designed a ministry for your life, for your

talents, for your gifts, and for your vision. No one else can perform the vision and mission God has given you, but you.

Apart from integrity and loyalty, one of the greatest characteristics that people follow and admire is authenticity. Someone has well said, "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time." Just be you because no one else can.



John Gross
BBFI CHURCH PLANTING (APEX)

BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE MAKING A LIFELONG DIFFERENCE IN OTHERS

I attended David Lingo's funeral in August. David served for many years as a missions professor at Baptist Bible College. Based upon the crowd and the testimonies shared, he was a huge influence for Christ. This stirred my heart as I realized the profound importance of those that serve here at BBC.

Alumni around the world tell of the impact and motivation they received from their college professors. BBC has been blessed by loving, helpful, interested and godly men and women who dedicate their lives to helping train a new generation.

It is my privilege to observe the effort, time, love, and concern our professors have for their

students. These godly men and women set an example with their lives and teach from experience.

Not only are our professors committed believers, but so are the people who serve in offices and maintain facilities. And they share the things of the Lord and encourage our students too. Those who shine the floors, fix the pipes, and make sure the lights work are at BBC because this is their ministry. I am sure I have neglected to give them the great appreciation they all deserve.

I am blessed – we all are – to have such servants giving their lives to educate and train these spiritually hungry and determined students.

Would you take a moment and reflect on someone who made an impact on your life?

If there was a professor, a staff member, or a local pastor who made an impact on your life, would you write a note about it and share it with us through email or Facebook?

I am so thankful for those who poured themselves into me and I am thankful this still happens at BBC today.



Mark Milioni
BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

PERSPECTIVES

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE ANCESTRY

I'm a history guy, not only by innate interest, but by training, so I cringe when a student here in Boston gives me the "I don't like history" line. Ugh. I know they do like history ... they just don't know it. Everybody likes history. If you bother to look at your pay stub to be sure they got your salary right, you are looking at a historical document. Ever celebrate a birthday? You are celebrating history. Even if you try to remember what you wore two days ago, you are doing historical analysis.

Nothing proves we are all historians to some degree better than the growing interest in ancestry. The website searches, the DNA profiles, the nostalgic

television shows ... all of those and more address our desire (I would argue our *need*) to understand where we come from, as a part of who we are. A friend of mine had me rolling recently when he told me about his trial membership on an ancestry website. He got back three or four generations only to find the limbs on his family tree crossed awkwardly when two cousins turned out to be spouses. My friend ended his search and canceled his membership immediately.

I find students and others who sometimes treat church history similarly. A quick look can be confusing, even maddening, so we stop. Bad

move. More and more we all agree that our physical health cannot be best understood without knowing our genetic history. Why would we think our spiritual health would be otherwise? Church history is rarely simple or tidy or embarrassment-free. But it is our story. And it is His story. Our ancestry is what it is, mingled with dollops of grace. You can't not like history.



David Melton
BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE PRESIDENT

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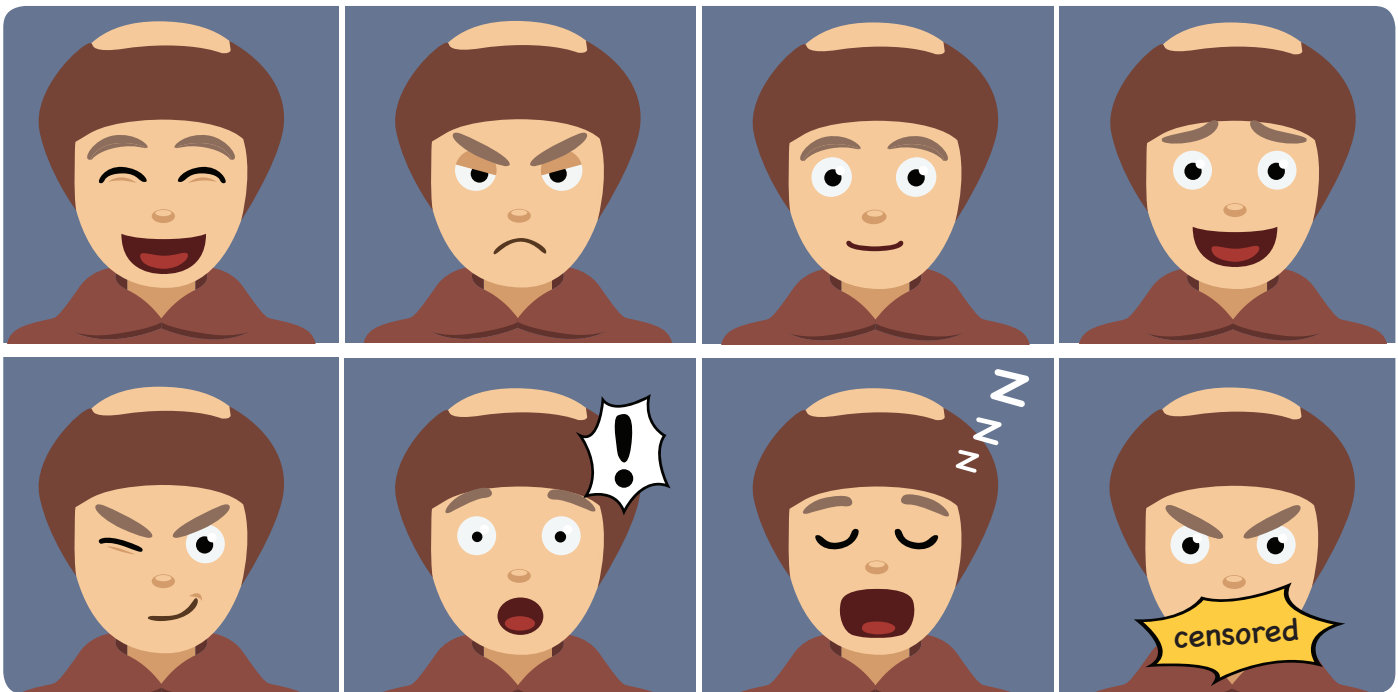
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Luther

A freewheeling Baptist assessment



By David Melton

Everybody who knows me knows I'm a Baptist guy, so it's not only strange for me to write about Protestant history, but stranger still for me, to write a piece about Martin Luther. To write on a 16th century European when my primary training is in Greco-Roman history may be ill-advised. Beyond the invitation to do so, what drove me to publicly accept a task to engage Martin Luther? It's a fair question. The answer, I like Tabasco. If you like spice ... any time, anywhere, in any amount ... then you have to have at least a little taste for Luther.

Leo X famously said of Luther that, "a wild boar was loose in the vineyard of the

Lord." Leo was often wrong, but not that time. In the sturdy Luther, Christianity saw a prolific seasoning in the history of the faith. It was not always sweet. In fact, it was not always even palatable. If it is bland you seek, then Luther has to be hands off. But if you dare, there is much to take away.

Why in the world would an obscure German priest with a marginal job in a marginal theological school in a tiny village of no recognized consequence, barge up to the Castle Church door on the eve of All Saints' Day and begin pounding? Have you ever read his 95 theses? You really should. It's spicy stuff. But it's surprising stuff to most of

the students I assign the task to. The theses are not a brilliantly constructed critique of all things papal. Not in the slightest. Luther takes 95 swings at what is clearly under his skin. And there are no change-ups ... it's just fastball, fastball, fastball. Looking for theological purity? You too will be disappointed when you read Martin's 95. There is near constant mention (read "acceptance") of purgatory. There is repeated acquiescence of papal authority, though with limits. I think anybody under 25 who reads the theses today would include the word "rant" when describing Luther's door decor. He is obviously steaming mad, and I would be

willing to suggest that his premeditation for the hammer job was pretty short. The theses read as though they are virtually spontaneous – like a desperate undergrad trying to churn out a term paper on the night before it is due. It reminds me of a guy who takes a bite of a bland sandwich and then almost unconsciously reaches for hot sauce and gives it a good baptism under the lid. “Things are not ok, so here goes.” And Luther kept it flowing for 95 shots.

That’s what Luther did, but why? I’ve long heard Luther wanted to start public discussion about the abuses of the selling of indulgences. At the exact time of Luther’s 95 theses, the Church of Rome was looking for money to finish the construction of St. Peter’s Basilica. Indulgences were raising good cash for the pope at a time when cash flow needed a shot in the arm. According to common theory, Luther, knowing a large crowd would file into the sanctuary the next morning for All Saints’ Day, was deliberating starting a reformation by putting a provocative notice on the church door on Halloween. But why then write and post the theses in Latin, the language of academics, rather than in the German of the common man? I’ll repeat again that I am not a Lutheran historian by either training or inclination, but I would say the explanation is “Luther being Luther.” I don’t see any long range plan in October of 1517. I see somebody who has smelled a skunk and he lets out a 95-point shriek. The theses are not beautiful prose, nor theologically symmetrical. The timing was purely a Luther explosion. Why nail this rant to the church door? So somebody, anybody, everybody would see it. Then what? Who could have ever imagined.

I’m neither fair nor honest if I do not mention that Martin Luther was a giant of intellect. He would eventually write prolific theological treatises even if the 95 theses are no example of such. For heavens’ sake, the man hid in the Wartburg castle in 1521 under an assumed name and proceeded to produce the very first translation of the New Testament in German (actually creating grammar as he went!) and finish it all in 10 weeks. Let that sink in. In roughly the equivalent of a summer break between semesters, Luther, alone, under duress, and without adequate research tools, single-handedly put the New Testament in the hands of the common people. With a

price on his head the whole time. Even when you cannot tolerate what Luther says, never doubt his cerebral capacity.

Luther also had piety. Just do a search for a few of his inspirational quotations.

“A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, suffers nothing, is worth nothing.”

How about this?

“We need to hear the Gospel every day because we forget it every day.”

And one of my very favorite Lutherisms...

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

One more, that shows Luther’s thoughtfulness,

“There are some things about God that are more to be adored than to be pondered.”

Not only during his trial in Worms, or during the many years when threat to his life was a constant, but Martin regularly left footprints on the path of discipleship. His

»»»
I think anybody under 25 who reads the theses today would include the word “rant” when describing Luther’s door decor.



CALENDAR ALERT
All-Saints Day
October 31

SEND TO:
CHURCH_OF_ROME,
All Contacts,



OUT OF LOVE FOR THE TRUTH AND THE DESIRE TO BRING IT TO LIGHT, THE FOLLOWING PROPOSITIONS WILL BE DISCUSSED AT WITTENBERG, UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REVEREND FATHER MARTIN LUTHER, MASTER OF ARTS AND OF SACRED THEOLOGY, AND LECTURER IN ORDINARY ON THE SAME AT THAT PLACE. WHEREFORE HE REQUESTS THAT THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO BE PRESENT AND DEBATE ORALLY WITH US, MAY DO SO BY LETTER.

IN THE NAME OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.

1. OUR LORD AND MASTER JESUS CHRIST, WHEN HE SAID POENITENTIAM AGITE, WILLED THAT THE WHOLE LIFE OF BELIEVERS SHOULD BE REPENTANCE.

2. THIS WORD CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN SACRAMENTAL PENANCE, I. E., CONFESSION AND SATISFACTION, WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY THE PRIESTS.

3. YET IT MEANS NOT INWARD REPENTANCE ONLY; NAY, THERE IS NO INWARD REPENTANCE WHICH DOES NOT OUTWARDLY WORK DIVERS MORTIFICATIONS OF THE FLESH.

4. THE PENALTY [OF SIN], THEREFORE, CONTINUES SO LONG AS HATRED OF SELF CONTINUES; FOR THIS IS THE TRUE INWARD REPENTANCE, AND CONTINUES UNTIL OUR ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

5. THE POPE DOES NOT INTEND TO REMIT, AND CANNOT REMIT ANY PENALTIES OTHER THAN THOSE WHICH HE HAS IMPOSED EITHER BY HIS OWN AUTHORITY OR BY THAT OF THE CANONS.

He is a historical giant...

but with
giant-sized
warts.

trek may not be predictable, at times not even acceptable, but his path is unmistakable.

But don't run out and name your firstborn "Martin" just yet. That same patriarch of the Reformation who could courageously inspire, could be ruthless, vile, hateful, and I would say, even despicable. His anti-Semitism is so detestable that repeating it here gives me serious pause. Luther said, "What shall we do with...the Jews? ...set fire to the synagogues or schools and bury or cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them." Abominable language. Language that makes it easier to understand how the hellish blight of anti-Semitism could fester into genocide centuries later – the father of the German church could be freely quoted for backup. Luther was no better to my religious forebears, the Ana-Baptists. Luther hated them, literally. Any study of Luther's considerable grammatical knowledge of Greek lexicographer is mind-numbing. He knew what New Testament practice was, yet he maligned and confronted those who faithfully adhered to the text he vigorously believed. Who knows what the Reformation might have looked like had Luther been even mildly consistent in his textual devotion. He was not only a ravaging boar in the vineyard, but he could and did frequently deviate from text – ravage it really – just as dramatically as did his papal nemeses.

Outlandish is yet another trademark of Luther. Anytime I send Boston students rummaging through the Luther archives for memorable quotations, several will dredge this one up...

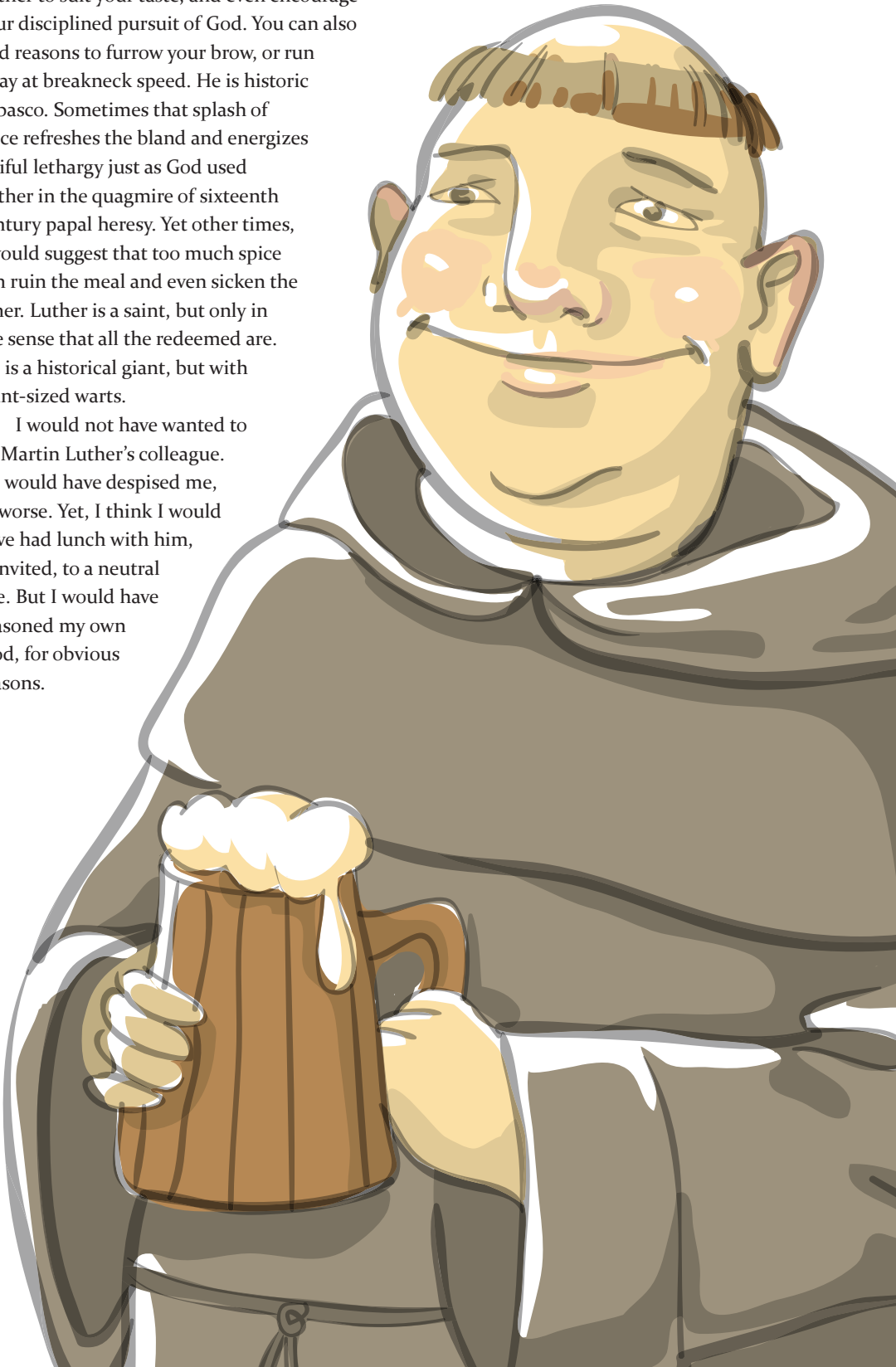
"Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep, whoever sleeps long does not sin; whoever does not sin enters Heaven! Thus, let us drink beer!"

Well, I'm wondering if Martin wasn't almost to "sleep" when he spewed forth that little ditty. And finding a Luther quotation to spin your head won't take much research. He could say just about anything at any given time. Often he did.

So the spice rack gets emptied quickly for the man with the 95 theses in his hand.

We are nearing the 500th anniversary of that harbinger Halloween night, and nobody can question that, in terms of influence, few in all of Christian history rival the impact and legacy of Katharina's husband, the former priest of Rome. You can find something in Luther to suit your taste, and even encourage your disciplined pursuit of God. You can also find reasons to furrow your brow, or run away at breakneck speed. He is historic Tabasco. Sometimes that splash of spice refreshes the bland and energizes pitiful lethargy just as God used Luther in the quagmire of sixteenth century papal heresy. Yet other times, I would suggest that too much spice can ruin the meal and even sicken the diner. Luther is a saint, but only in the sense that all the redeemed are. He is a historical giant, but with giant-sized warts.

I would not have wanted to be Martin Luther's colleague. He would have despised me, or worse. Yet, I think I would have had lunch with him, if invited, to a neutral site. But I would have seasoned my own food, for obvious reasons.



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

500

YEARS LATER by Keith Gandy

OCTOBER 31, 1517



The date is three days following the 9/11 attacks and the setting is the Washington National Cathedral. The country is searching for some form of comfort. The strains of “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” could be heard drifting through the portals of the gigantic cathedral. It was part of the National Service of Prayer and Remembrance.

I have spent my entire adult life planting churches in the land of Martin Luther, the reformer who penned that hymn, the man who found comfort in a personal God who cares. Living and ministering in Germany so long has provided me a perspective for this culture, I have learned to love this people – I know this culture by immersion. The following is my take on the lasting effects of the reformation, 500 years downstream.

Even our city of ministry, Aschaffenburg, located a 30-minute drive east of Frankfurt,

where we have planted a strong, viable church, played a trivial role in the reformation. It was here in this city on the river Main, that Luther’s direct boss, Albrecht von Brandenburg, resided. Luther had a copy of the 95 theses sent to his direct report. Albrecht, who held little desire to be a theologian, forwarded them on to Rome and the Pope. Albrecht later died in Aschaffenburg on September 24, 1545.

Of the event, David Mathis, the executive editor of www.desiringGod.org says,

“On All Hallows’ Eve, October 31, 1517, the Roman Church received the world’s most memorable trick-or-treater at its door — though barely noticed at the time — when a lowly priest named Martin Luther approached the threshold of the Wittenberg branch in Germany and posted his 95 measly theses

(they aren’t nearly as impressive as you would expect). The coming All Saints’ Day seemed like an excuse for sparring about the Church’s deplorable sanctioning of indulgences, and Luther was angling for some good-spirited debate.”

REFORMS DO NOT STAY REFORMED

Reforming is a common struggle. Do you have an unused membership to a fitness club – even when you pay the monthly fees and are convinced of the benefits? What likelihood would you give congress in bringing health care reform? University of Scranton research suggests that just 8% of people achieve their New Year’s goals and, according to a *U.S. News* study, approximately 80% of resolutions fail by the second week of February. In other words, lasting reform is difficult at best. Germany is a prime example.

LASTING EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION

In Germany, Lutherans are 27.1% of the population. It is one of the two state churches – ***there is no separation between church and state in this culture.***

The ***German-speaking world has a reliable Bible*** in its own language.

The publication of the Bible in German ***unified a common language.*** Prior to Luther's Bible, Germany was fractured in regional dialects. This influence cannot be overstated. Much of present-day appreciation for Luther has less to do with his theology than for his cultural and social impact.

Sola Scriptura Following Luther's initial translation in 1522, an estimated 5,000 copies were sold in two months. The Bible was an instant best seller, the must-have book to read at the time of its publication.

Most important, the Bible left a permanent impression on a great translator of the English Bible. William Tyndale, one of the Reformation's champions, had fled from England to the Continent about the time Luther was publishing his German New Testament. He too was translating from the original manuscripts, and possibly he and Luther met in Wittenberg.

Luther's strong influence on the father of the English Bible is unmistakable. Since Tyndale's English translation makes up more than 90 percent of the King James New Testament, Luther's legacy is clearly visible.

"It is not possible to reproduce a foreign idiom in one's native tongue," Luther wrote. "The proper method of translation is to select the most fitting terms according to the usage of the language adopted. To translate properly is to render the spirit of a foreign language into our own idiom. I try to speak as men do in the market place. In rendering Moses, I make him so German that no one would suspect he was a Jew."

Every serious student of scripture will have access to language and historical reference materials. ***Many of the authoritative resources are from German authors,*** so thorough and reliable in their research. Among them would be Keil and Delitsch, as well as Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

Biblical Archeology In 1864 or 1865 the German engineer Carl Humann was charged with the geographical investigation and excavation of acropolis ruins in the ancient city of Pergamon. In 1878 the German government acquired a license to dig in Turkey. The temple described by the apostle John as being the seat of Satan was removed in its entirety to Berlin. Since the beginning of the 20th century, museum visitors can visit this temple on exhibit (although museum renovations have this section off limits until it reopens in 2019). Additionally, the processional walls of Babylon seen by Daniel, buildings from Ninevah seen by Jonah, the marketplace of Milet – where Paul met with the church leaders of Ephesus are a must-see stop when visiting the reunified capital of Germany.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE SCRIPTURES HAD GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN GERMANY

Then entered philosophy (for example, Friedrich Nietzsche) and the influence of a new field: science. At the end of the 19th century, new thought questioned the veracity of Scripture and a widespread doubt seeped its way into mainstream society. The Modern age was born where truth is determined logically via what can be observed. The telescope and microscope became the go-to source for answers.

With Scripture undermined and human logic the guide, theologians were swept into the popular decision to question anything that did not make common sense, so even the bedrock of the Gospel message would be renegotiated and redefined. The background was now set for a dictator to sweep into power – it was no longer assured that every soul was created in the image of God. Fifty million people would die as a result of World War II.

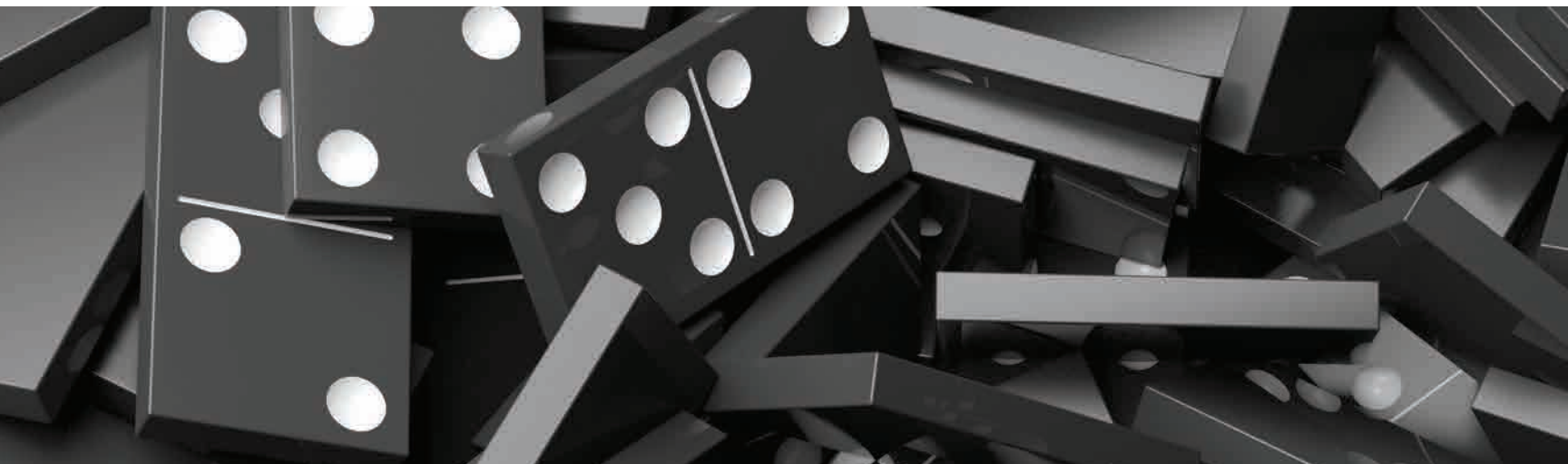
THE DRIFT OF NOT HOLDING TO THE REFORMATION

Modern Germany rose from the literal ashes of 1945 alongside assistance of allies and the Marshall plan, yet has struggled to find any major motivation to turn God-ward.

The influence of a divided Germany

In the former East Germany, 85% of people have no religion. In 1950, 90% of people claimed Christianity. At the fall of the iron curtain in 1989, 30% were Christian and 70% had no religion.

"The Protestant state church is fairly dead. The percent of committed Christians



in Germany is maybe at 3 or 4 percent. Eighty percent belong to a church nominally, Protestant or Catholic. A mere 0.5 percent belong to a free evangelical church. The percent of people believing in life after death is fewer than 50 percent.” (Sarah Pulliam Bailey, <http://www.christianitytoday.com>, November 9, 2009)

From Sarah Pulliam Bailey’s interview of a Lutheran pastor:

Question: “The 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s 95 theses is coming up in 2017. Do you think that will spark any renewal or interest in the church?”

Reply: No. When did an anniversary spark anything? Two hundred years of Jonathan Edwards preaching. Wow. Let’s have another revival. I don’t think so.

It’ll be just another celebration. But who will remember the real Luther? Luther was rude, Luther was a revolutionary, Luther was a punk. The church leaders in Germany are so unlike Luther. The current mainline Protestant church is the opposite of Luther. Luther would have driven most of our bishops from their pulpits.”

The impact of affluence

Germany has a great system for developing intellectual talent. University study is paid by the government, but is only available to an elite group – selection is decided by the fourth, yes fourth, grade. As a result, “Made in Germany” has become a worldwide branding reputation that equals high quality. Exports have allowed Germany to produce 25% of the entire Gross Domestic Production of Europe.

This has brought a higher salary for workers and the standard of living is very high. Being a socialistic society, taxes are extremely high, even if income tax is not the highest. Sales taxes are 19% along with an incredibly long list of other ways to tax people: TV and radio tax, road taxes, energy tax

That has also had a trickle-down effect – millennials are waiting longer and longer to establish families. Two income families are the norm. One of the ways that many are lowering their tax burden is to leave the rolls of church membership, since “donations” are deducted from wages and given to the church. Over 300,000 are unregistering from the state church annually. This disconnect is difficult to surmount, once established.

This is one of the dangers of affluence and a challenge for the European church planter. General spiritual disconnect or apathy is prevalent.

General discontent

The German news magazine *Spiegel* published a widespread study of the average German, revealing interesting aspects...

“The radio will be on, day after day, and so will the TV – for at least three hours a day – and the message it will convey to viewers is that some people make 1,000 times as much money as they do, that their lives are 1,000 times as exciting, even though they cannot possibly be working 1,000 times as much.”

Another edition of *Spiegel* quotes a study:

“During the course of the study, the researchers managed to unlock a typically

German sequence of steps to enjoyment, which they named “pleasure DNA.” The first step involves the feeling of having earned something. This is followed by preparation for the longed-for pleasure, such as booking a day of wellness treatments. But then comes the biggest hurdle: letting go and clearing the mind.”

“Many Germans apparently lack crucial components to this “pleasure DNA.” Though some 91% of the study participants said that pleasure makes life worthwhile, only 15% could recall moments in which they were able to forget their worries and feel truly happy.”

Absence from work due to depression has increased almost 70% in Germany from 2000 to 2013.

Could it be that this postmodern spiritual disconnect has lasting pragmatic consequences? Augustine stated: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”

IN CLOSING

History is not isolated to another cultural group, in this case Germans – everyone is in danger of drifting from essentials. We would do well to reaffirm the *Solas* of the reformation: By faith alone, by Scripture alone, Christ alone, alone by grace, alone to God’s glory. We are witnessing a societal shift. We would be wise to continually reassess where our culture is negatively impacting our walk with Christ. Indeed, a mighty fortress is our God. And in times of uncertainty as these, it is a good reminder.



Anabaptists

The real heroes of the Reformation

By Doug Kutilek

Five hundred years after Martin Luther posted his 95 proposed topics for public debate regarding Roman Catholic doctrine and practice, this audacious act is generally regarded as the opening salvo in the Protestant Reformation. In spite of Luther's fame, in fact, there had been other challenges to Catholic Church dogma and actions for several years around Europe.

One watchword of the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 1500s was "*Sola Scriptura*," Latin for "Scripture alone." It promoted the Bible as the sole authoritative source of theological truth. This avowal was in stark contrast to what had been long-claimed by the Roman Catholic Church as the bases for its doctrines: Church tradition, decrees of councils and papal declarations, oh, and the Bible (with the apocrypha inserted) as well, last and least important of all.

Martin Luther strongly advocated a "Bible alone" position in his finest hour — his appearance, really his trial, for heresy, before

the Diet of Worms in April 1521. In response to a demand that he renounce his own writings, he boldly declared,

I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning,—unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted—and unless they render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience.

Had Luther been more consistent in practice with what he professed in theory at Worms, he would have left a greater legacy with far fewer warts.

How did the *Sola Scriptura* view arise, or rather, how was it reclaimed as the heritage of Christians? When Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1450s, the first document he published was the Bible

Time of ministry from denouncing the Church of Rome and/or being re-baptized as part of the Anabaptist movement until death or execution.

Periods of imprisonment.

Hans Denck

Balthasar Hubmaier

Pilgram Marpeck

George Blaurock

Conrad Grebel

M. Sattler

Felix Manz

Jacob Hutter

1525

1526

1527

1528

1529

1530

1531

Wilhelm Reublin

Peter Riedemann

Hans Hut

c. 1450

1517

Gutenberg's printing press begins the process of making the Bible more accessible

October 31: Martin Luther nails his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenburg

— in Latin. The Bible of Roman Catholic Church was very much a closed book to the great majority of contemporary Europeans, who were either illiterate, knew no Latin, or owned no Bible. The printing of the Bible in the original languages was slow in coming — the Hebrew Old Testament was first printed in 1488, while the Greek New Testament was first published in 1516, more as a commercial venture by the printer Froben of Basle, than out of zeal for Divine truth.

The availability of the original language texts sparked intense widespread interest in studying the Scriptures firsthand, which often meant learning the Greek and Hebrew languages, necessary tools for that study. And studying the Bible directly for oneself immediately exposed the gross and frequent departures of Catholicism from the plain teaching of the Bible. It soon became apparent that one must follow either the Church or the Bible, because one could not follow both. A flurry of modern language Bible translations appeared in short order, enabling the common people to hear and read for themselves God's written revelation in their own native languages, and freed them from slavish dependence on the priests for what little knowledge of Scripture they might be allowed.

The Reformers collectively adhered, to a large degree, to *Sola Scriptura* on the matter of salvation by grace through faith alone, apart from human works or merits. But on a great many other doctrines and practices, they failed to abandon the unbiblical ages-long errors of medieval Romanism and practices which had no basis in Scripture. Of the major Reformers, Luther departed the least from the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and Zwingli probably the most, with the Anglicans and Calvin somewhere in between. All of them kept a great deal of the theological and practical baggage of the medieval Catholic Church, including infant baptism, union of church and state, persecution of dissent (Luther approved of the execution of heretics, and Calvin personally sanctioned the burning of Michael Servetus, while also acquiescing in the drowning of dozens of Anabaptist parents for refusing to baptize their infants; Zwingli actively persecuted Anabaptists), an ecclesiastical hierarchy, an Augustinian view of predestination, and amillennialism.

The name "Anabaptist" — literally re-baptizer — was an accusatory term pinned on those scattered and diverse people who concluded, based on a close examination of the Bible, that true Christian — Biblical —

baptism can only occur after an individual personally exercises faith in Christ, and that therefore no infant baptism was valid.

Anabaptists arose more or less spontaneously in various locations in Europe throughout the 16th century — Switzerland and south Germany (among the followers of Zwingli), Moravia, north Germany and the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, and even Romania. A common consistent commitment to the Bible as the sole source of Divine truth led them, though widely scattered geographically, toward converging and common theological views. While there were some lunatic-fringers among professing Anabaptists (chiefly the Munsterites of 1535) as there are among self-identified Baptists today, the great majority were of a serious type who sought only to follow the teachings of Christ and the Apostles as closely as possible, without any addition of human tradition.

Not a few of the leaders of the various Anabaptists groups were highly educated men, including university graduates and former Catholic priests. The knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin was not rare among them. By way of example, it is notable that Anabaptist scholars Ludwig Haetzer and Johann Denck first translated the OT prophets

Rare was the Anabaptist leader who enjoyed an extended ministry of as much as a decade, and **ministries lasting a year or two, or even just months, were commonplace.**

531 1532 1533 1534 1535 1536 1537 1538 1539 1540

(departed from Anabaptist position)

from Hebrew into German in 1527. Luther's translation of the same, first appearing seven years later in 1534, made large use of their work.

The Anabaptists individually and collectively left relatively little in writing with regard to their beliefs and practices or recording their history. Balthasar Hubmaier was the single most voluminous Anabaptist writer, and is acknowledged as being as learned a scholar as existed in Europe at the time. The reasons for this are not far to seek, since the Anabaptists were regularly harried and harassed by both Reformers and Catholics, lived commonly as exiles, were often in prisons, and frequently sealed their faith with their blood. An estimated 80% of the martyrs in England under the brief reign of bloody Mary I (1553-1558) were Anabaptists. As many as 300 Anabaptists were judicially murdered in one location on a single day. Rare was the Anabaptist leader who enjoyed an extended ministry of as much as a decade, and ministries lasting a year or two, or even just months, were commonplace. Short and immensely busy ministries left little time for writing. Then again, there was no centralized body or denomination to preserve and propagate Anabaptist views and writings, in contrast to, say, Luther or Calvin. And their adversaries among both Protestants and Catholics were quick to commit any and all Anabaptist writings to the flames, as well being prone to grossly misrepresenting

Anabaptist views and actions in their own writings, presenting them in the worst possible light.

Few Anabaptists are widely known today — perhaps only Menno Simons, and maybe Balthasar Hubmaier. But the list of devout, faithful, fervent men who labored diligently, blazed brightly, and suffered mightily for their sincere adherence to the Bible alone is lengthy. Time prevents us from speaking in detail of Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock, Felix Manz, Michael Sattler, Hans Hut, Jacob Hutter, Pilgram Marpeck, Wilhelm Reublin, Peter Riedemann, Hans Denck and others, many now known only to God, who lived, labored, and all too often died for their fervent commitment to the Bible as their solitary guide.

The Anabaptists established precedent for most distinctive present-day Baptist principles, including the Bible alone as the source of theological truth, believer's baptism (though pouring, along with immersion, was commonly practiced by them), separation of church and state, soul liberty, freedom from persecution, regenerate church membership, local church autonomy, and congregational church government. It must not be forgotten that the Reformers and their theological heirs, including the Puritans of New England, formed government-supported state churches, and frequently invoked the civil authorities to persecute, even to death, those who believed in liberty of conscience. And during the

16th century, it was the Anabaptists, not the Reformers, who displayed a fervent missionary spirit as they sought to literally fulfill the command of Christ in Matthew 28:18-20. (It must also be noted, in contrast, that in some matters the general, but not uniformly held, beliefs of Anabaptists diverged from common Baptist views today, notably in pacifism, refusal to take oaths, and non-participation in government.)

The issue of direct lineal descent of 17th century English Baptists (and subsequently modern Baptists) from 16th century Anabaptists is a disputed matter, much debated by historians, but there is no doubt of a spiritual kinship. Baptist Greek scholar A. T. Robertson matter-of-factly declared, "Give a man an open Bible, an open mind, and a conscience in good working order, and he will have a hard time not being a Baptist." We, too, like the Anabaptists, profess "*Sola Scriptura*" and we genuinely strive to adhere to that principle.

The published literature on Anabaptists is extensive. An excellent summary of Anabaptist history and beliefs, with a substantial bibliography of works for further study, is The Anabaptist Story by W. R. Estep (1963). A concise summary article "Anabaptists," can also be found in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

In March 1526, a council in Zurich ruled that adult baptism was punishable by drowning. Many Anabaptists would face this punishment during the Reformation, but the first was Felix Manz who was sentenced in January 1527:

"Manz shall be delivered to the executioner, who shall tie his hands, put him into a boat, take him to the lower hut, there strip his bound hands down over his knees, place a stick between his knees and arms, and thus push him into the water and let him perish in the water; thereby he shall have atoned to the law and justice."

THE RIGHT ANGLE

BIBLICAL WISDOM FOR A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Q. Why is the Reformation important for daily living?

By Kevin Carson

A. As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, I have heard people ask, “Why is this important to us?” The five main doctrines around which the Reformers united stem from the very Gospel that impacts daily living. In the midst of turmoil with the Roman Catholic Church, many Christians chose to die for the sake of the Gospel rather than to accept the false teaching of Roman Catholicism. These same doctrines are just as important today.

Sola Gratia (by grace alone)

Grace alone is at the heart of the Christian life. It occupies a fundamental position in the truth we confess and the lives we live in Christ. As Paul wrote, our world is corrupt and broken, under the influence of the devil who seeks to devour. Mankind lives according to the lusts of the flesh (Ephesians 2:1-3). In spite of this, God demonstrated grace toward us, “... that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7). God saves, sustains, and grows us by grace. As we live by grace, we must be committed to sharing it with others who need it. We cannot face the pressures, difficulties, and burdens of a broken world outside the grace of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we celebrate grace and seek to live by it daily in service to Christ and others despite our weaknesses and limitations.

Sola Fide (by faith alone)

The Catholic Church taught that faith, although essential, was not sufficient for

salvation; works were also needed. However, the Reformers boldly pronounced that faith alone saved. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation and daily living are contingent upon faith in Christ. We must constantly remind ourselves, the answer to life’s difficulties always begin with faith in Christ. The writer of Hebrews proclaimed, “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, the answers to life’s problems must focus on faith in Christ alone.

Sola Scriptura (by Scripture alone)

The conflict between the Reformers and the Catholic Church dealt with the authority in the Christian life. Rome taught that the Christian’s authority was in the Church’s tradition and teachings (known as the Magisterium), plus the Bible. The Reformers taught the authority for daily Christian living was in Scripture alone. The Bible exclusively maintains the authority for the Christian in all matters of faith and life. While there are many sources for helpful information, only the Bible maintains authority. Regarding the Scriptures, Paul wrote, “All Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, in all matters of living, the Scriptures maintain formal and functional authority.

Solus Christus (by Christ alone)

Jesus Christ is the person behind all the other solas. Salvation comes only by and through Jesus, as He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Paul wrote, “But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many” (Romans 5:15). Peter preached, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Christ alone is the mediator between God and man. He is the message we preach. He is the person we trust. Jesus is the center of the Christian life. Therefore, Jesus alone is the heart of daily living.


Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone)

Christians are to proclaim and live for God’s glory alone. God is glorious (Psalm 138:4-6). Jesus manifested the glory of God among men (John 1:14). As Christians, we are to live our lives in bringing glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31). God receives the glory for anything good, honorable, and notable that is done. All fruit of righteousness is produced through Jesus Christ for the glory of God (Philippians 1:11). Our salvation and sanctification resound to the praise and glory of God alone (Ephesians 1:3-14). Therefore, we live daily in the power of Christ for God’s glory.

Have a question?

Submit your question to TheRightAngle@Tribune.org. Due to space limitations, not all questions may be answered in print. Questions that do appear in this section will have all personal identification removed. For questions requiring answers beyond the scope of a simple Q&A forum such as this, the Tribune recommends you contact a local biblical counselor. The advice given here is not a substitute for a personal conversation with your local biblical counselor.

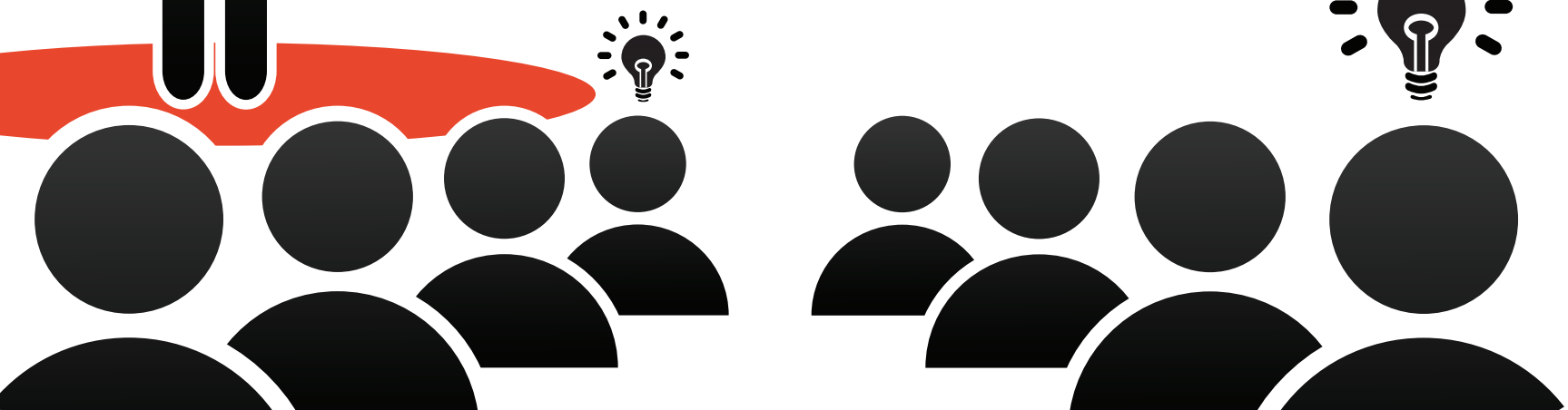
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It was an awkward venue, and the speaker might have whispered “tough room” under his breath, if he hadn’t been standing outside on a hill. But the speaker was determined to succeed. He looked into the eyes of those in his audience. What he saw was indifference. Everyone’s body language seemed to be saying, “Go ahead, we dare you. Just try to get our attention.”

PREACH LIKE

TED?



But the speaker nailed it.

He established rapport. He was brief. He even quoted a few lines from an obscure poet familiar to his audience. He made the points he wanted to make without compromise. He even changed a few minds.

The scene was 2,000 years ago on a hill in Athens, Greece. The audience was a group of men known as the *Areopagus*. And the speaker was the Apostle Paul—passionate convert, zealous preacher, expert church planter—and the man who was the first to share what we would likely describe today as a TED TALK centuries before they became a cultural phenomenon. TED is an acronym for “Technology, Entertainment, and Design,” and every second of every day 17 TED TALK videos are opened on the internet. The subject matter is broad, from science, to engineering, to psychology, to philosophy of living, to humor.

One hundred and fifty years ago in America, people encountered public speakers at political rallies, or on the lecture circuit—or in church. That was great for preachers. In those days, the pulpit was a major source for wisdom, information, history, and even entertainment. The preacher never had to compete with Sunday sports, Netflix, 24/7 News, or seemingly endless political campaigns. Back then, preachers were high-profile. In fact, the most famous man in America, Henry Ward Beecher, was a preacher.

In those days, people who went to church, did so several times a week—even more often when there was a revival campaign. Sometimes those would go on and on. And so would the sermons. People endured lengthy and dramatic messages, usually well over an hour in length. Sometimes two. But what else did they have to do?

Today, the average preacher has only a few minutes to capture the attention of a congregation. People want fast-food. The preacher's job is to make sure it's good food.

MAYBE WE CAN LEARN FROM TED

There is, of course, real danger when we take cues from culture. We risk compromise, not to mention watering-down

the message. And, yes, most preachers today have at least a fleeting fantasy about how cool it must have been when a sermon could last as long as a feature film and the pastor was a bit of a celebrity in town. But those days are long gone in this age of the sound-bite, Twitter — and TED.

Why are TED TALKS so popular? More important, why are they so effective?

BE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE MESSAGE

In his book, *TALK LIKE TED: The Nine Public-Speaking Secrets of the World's Top Minds*, bestselling author Carmine Gallo analyzes the phenomenon, and I see four of his “secrets” that easily apply to preaching as a unique communication form. First, Gallo suggests: “You cannot inspire others unless you are inspired yourself. You stand a much greater chance of persuading and inspiring your listeners if you express an enthusiastic, passionate, and meaningful connection to your topic.”

Steve Jobs was an unlikely model for preachers, but in his last major public presentation he said, “It's the intersection of technology and liberal arts that makes our hearts sing.” Well, that's not quite my song, but I get the point. What makes me sing? What pushes my passion buttons? Want to see pictures of my grandkids? Want to talk about Churchill? The '68 Detroit Tigers? Don't get me started. We all have passions, but our first passion must be for Christ and His Kingdom. Have you ever tried to preach on empty? It's not pretty, nor is it effective. And when that happens, we need to take a cue from Christ's admonition to the church at Ephesus. The one about what we need to do when we have lost that loving feeling.

John Wesley understood the place for passion in preaching. He drew massive crowds in the most unusual venues and at the oddest hours. How? He said, “I set myself on fire, and people come to watch me burn.”

Remember Stephen? He put his life on the line when he poured his heart out to the Sanhedrin, bearing witness to the law, prophets, and Jesus. The Bible says, “None of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke.” (Acts 6:10 NLT)

The great expositor, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote much about something called

HAVE YOU
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“unction.” He believed that unction produces greater clarity, power and boldness in preaching. It is more than a merely human expression of urgency. It is being lifted up by God's power as the Word preached is going forth. Lloyd-Jones believed this unction has a mysterious element to it, and it is something to be desired above all other aspects of the preaching. He described it this way:

It gives clarity of thought, clarity of speech, ease of utterance, a great sense of authority and confidence as you are preaching, an awareness of a power not your own thrilling through your own being, and an indescribable sense of joy. You are a man “possessed,” you are taken hold of, and taken up. I like to put it like this—and I know of nothing on earth that is comparable to this feeling—that when this happens you have a feeling that you are not actually doing the preaching, you are looking on. You are looking on at yourself in amazement as this is happening. It is not your effort; you are just the instrument, the channel, the vehicle: and Spirit is using you, and you are looking on in great enjoyment to this. That is what the preacher himself is aware of.

TAP INTO THE POWER OF STORIES

Bryan Stevenson is a successful civil rights attorney and the executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative. He gave a TED

TALK back in 2012 and holds the record for the longest standing ovation in TED history. His audience was so moved that they donated more than \$1 million to his nonprofit organization. Sixty-five percent of his 18-minute talk involved two stories, one about a janitor, and the other about his grandmother. Her name was Rosa Parks. He had, what the Greeks called *pathos* — the ability to produce an emotional response.

The late Don Hewitt, creator and producer of the CBS news program *60 Minutes*, was often asked about the success of the longest running program in television history. His standard reply was: “Four words. Tell-me-a-story. It’s as old as the Bible.”

Sometimes I think too many of us regard story-telling as good preaching’s homiletical step-child — something not quite on par with heavy-duty exegesis. I don’t know why this is, because so much of the Bible is narrative. Television interviewer Charlie Rose recently said, “What sets TED TALKS apart is that the big ideas are wrapped up in personal stories.”

When Jesus was asked to define the concept of “neighbor,” he told a story about an unlikely man of mercy. When he wanted to teach about the virtue of mercy and the sin of self-righteous pride, he told a story about two sons. When he wanted to teach his followers about the frustrations and vicissitudes of ministering to people, he talked about a man who went about planting seeds. Stories. Truth connected to tale.

Stories are everywhere. Life-changing stories. The Bible is full of them. Our lives are full of them. Our churches are full of them. We watch. We read. We imagine. And we tell stories. Kipling was right, “If history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten.”

INCLUDE ELEMENTS OF NOVELTY

This is where we come back to the Apostle Paul — the man who gave the first TED TALK. His audience was a group of people interested

in ideas. “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” (Acts 17:21 NKJV)

I don’t think I have to spend any time trying to prove how similar twenty-first century Americans are to first-century Athenians. The new—the novel—tends to fascinate us. Does this mean that too many people in this day and age are averse to depth? Certainly. And this is a challenge to

STORIES ARE
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the preacher. In some of his final words, Paul talked about a future time when people would not “endure” sound doctrine. His prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes each time we approach the pulpit. We are aware that many church-goers want to be entertained and, as Paul said: “Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” (II Timothy 4:3 NIV)

How does the preacher manage to capture and keep the attention of people

whose ears are begging to be scratched? Do we simply ignore them as beyond help and move on to those who appear to be more studious? If so, we may be missing an opportunity to transform ears that itch into ears that receive and hear.

One key to success might be to actually find something new in the old text. You may be familiar with the story about one nineteenth-century student at Harvard. His professor brought a fish to class and told them, “Look at the fish and let me know your observations.” After a mere ten minutes of observation, the student thought that he knew all there was to know about the specimen. So, he went and sought out his professor. The professor had left the building and would not return for some time. So, he returned to the smelly specimen. After many more hours of study, the professor returned and asked what the student had learned about the fish. After reeling off numerous amounts of data about the structure of the fish, the professor became upset and told him that he had missed the most obvious point about the fish. He was told to look harder. After thinking about the fish night and day, the student had an “aha” moment and finally told the professor that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs. The professor was quite pleased with his response.

The lesson for the preacher should be obvious — look at the text. Then look again. Then look again. Just when you think you’ve exhausted a phrase, you can always trust the Spirit of God to show you something new. An insight. A breakthrough. Something that excites you enough to say, “that’ll preach!”

Another way to include an element of novelty without compromising might be to find a new way to tell an old story. Change the “point of view” (POV) — maybe explore trying to tell a story from the first person

perspective — be the Prodigal Son, or Elijah by the receding brook.

And there is always the option of teaching something familiar, but applying it in a new way. A while back, I preached about Elijah and the ravens God sent to feed him and how odd it was that God should seem to violate so many clean/unclean standards to help this man of God. I made the application that God will sometimes use the most unclean and unlikely source to teach us or help us.

ACCEPT THE VALUE OF BREVITY

Probably the most well-known fact about each TED TALK is that, although the subject matter covers a broad spectrum, there is one area requiring strict conformity: no talk is to last more than 18 minutes. I may have lost some readers at this point. “Are you suggesting that we cut our sermon time back that far?” Not at all. But I do think, like it or not, we must be better time managers. Most pastors today have fewer opportunities to preach to an entire congregation, and we should be aware that our congregants have decreasing attention spans, for a variety of reasons. Sure, the Puritans delivered three-hour sermons. But I think they had bouncers, too.

Back in the autumn of 1863, when a cemetery was dedicated in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania—a place to honor those who died in an epic battle on that same soil a few months earlier, a man named Edward Everett was hired to deliver a speech. He was the most famous, not to mention eloquent, public speaker in the nation. The next day, the complete text of his two-hour oration, all 13,000 words, was widely published.

President Abraham Lincoln was invited to the dedication almost as an afterthought. As he shared a few thoughts that day, he talked about how what he had to say would not be “long remembered.” He spoke for less than three minutes and shared about 270 words—we know it as “The Gettysburg Address.”

DID YOU KNOW?

- * Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech lasted less than 17 minutes?
- * When JFK said, “Ask Not...,” it was part of a 14 ½-minute address?

* When Franklin Roosevelt talked about “fear itself,” his speech came in at less than 18 minutes?

* When FDR asked congress to declare war after Pearl Harbor, the speech lasted 4 1/2 minutes?

* When Churchill offered “blood, toil, tears, and sweat,” it was during a 5-minute speech?

The late Miles Davis, a legendary jazz trumpet player, used to say: “I’m always looking for notes to leave out.” But most preachers are more like the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost and his “many other words.”

To be clear — I’ve seldom preached a Sunday message that lasted only 18 minutes. But over the past few years, I’ve made a conscious effort to trim 10-12 minutes off my previous average. I even installed a backwards clock that only I see — similar to what I use in radio. Some weeks I have it set at 22 minutes, other weeks, 25 minutes, but never longer.

But doesn’t brevity sacrifice content? Not if we adjust rate of speech a bit—and not if we look for words, or ideas to leave out. Some years ago, I began having my messages transcribed “word for word.” Reading the transcripts was painful, because I realized how many words were simply unnecessary. As a young preacher, I heard the admonition: “Stand up. Speak up. Shut up.” But I’ve always had a hard time with that third one.

Not everything in the world of TED TALKS transfers neatly to the preaching context, but it’s a phenomenon worth exploring.

This article first appeared in Preaching Magazine and appears here with their permission. www.preaching.com. David R. Stokes has served as the Senior Pastor of Expectation Church in Fairfax, VA since 1998. His fifteenth book, a thriller set against the backdrop of Winston Churchill’s funeral in 1965, will be published in 2017. David’s personal website is: www.davidrstokes.com.



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URBAN CURRENT

10 Largest Cities ... and who cares?

Tracking urban population can be tricky. Some numbers reference the city proper, others the entire metropolitan area. Also, there is the matter of people who are residing illegally, therefore remaining invisible and uncountable.

#10 New York

While New York City proper is counted at **8.6 million** people, the metropolitan area numbers **18.6 million**. Of course, this includes counties in New Jersey, Connecticut, & Pennsylvania.

#9 Cairo, Egypt

Teeming streets, crowded tenements, soaring high rises, the ancient alongside the modern, this historic city boasts **19 million** residents.

#8 Osaka, Japan

Known for delicious food and a top spot for trending family destinations in a recent survey conducted by Air B&B, Osaka has a population of **20.3 million**.

#7 Mexico City, Mexico

Terrible traffic, great street food, in addition to 40,000 restaurants, are all part of this sprawling metropolis numbering **21.2 million**.

#6 Beijing, China

21.2 million people. Here you will find the largest palace in the world and Tiananmen Square, the largest public square in the world.

#5 Sao Paulo, Brazil

Bustling and hustling for sure with **21.3 million souls**, the city never sleeps. It is chock full of arts, culture, nightlife, and shopping.

#4 Mumbai, India

One of the cheapest places to live in the world, this urban center is home to **24.4 million**.

#3 Shanghai, China

This city is China's shopping capital and boasts Disney's newest park, Shanghai Disney.

24.5 million residents comprise this stacked and sprawling urban center.

#2 Delhi, India

With **26.5 million people**, it is no surprise there are many languages emanating from its many ethnicities. The great diversity of this vast city makes it a world unto itself.

#1 Tokyo, Japan

Do you know what a subway pusher is? Railway operators employ them to jam and cram rush hour commuters into subway cars in the world's largest city. Can any of us even imagine a population of **38.1 million human beings** in one metropolis?

So, does this matter and who cares? We should.

First, these cities represent what God has been doing in His world in the last century. "The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it." (Psalm 24:1). This is the world He loves sacrificially. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3:16).

We know God is always behind the headlines. The headline has been "The World Urbanizes." God has used various forces to move masses of people all over the globe to urban centers. The world God has planted us in is organized around its major urban centers. These cities represent 235.1 million souls.

It should matter to us what God is doing in His world. He has charged us to make sure every soul in His world hears the Good News.

Secondly, this list reminds us of how cities function. These cities run the world's politics, business, education, entertainment, culture, and arts. The reach of these urban areas is far beyond regional boundaries. They influence the world.

How? Cities are amplifiers and distribution engines. The voices sounding in these cities reach the rest of the world. The good, bad, and ugly, are distributed throughout the world via cities.

Thirdly, these cities challenge our awareness and alertness. Nine of the ten are outside the United States. Read, far away. Do we equate *foreign* and *far away* with irrelevant? Are we oblivious to the fact that they represent millions of lost souls? Are we out of touch with the potential these cities have as basis for worldwide Gospel outreach?

These cities challenge our alertness to the world evangelization strategy found in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit dispatched Paul to the cities of the Roman Empire to sow the Gospel so the voice of truth and the power of the Gospel would not only be heard and felt locally, but flow in the currents of the influence of these cities beyond their boundaries.

The New Testament church was astonishingly fruitful without the tools we have today. Don't you think we should pay attention?

Remember, there are believers already in these modern cities, people who have been evangelized, baptized, and united with local churches. They have amazing stories of conversion, service, and faithfulness. We will meet these brothers and sisters one day in glory. They are painfully aware that they are a sliver of a sliver of a minority. They agonize and pray for the millions surrounding them who have yet to hear the gospel. I'm sure they wonder, "Does anybody care? Would any of our brothers and sisters be willing to support us or come labor alongside us?"

These cities challenge not only our awareness, but our engagement. How many of these cities are represented in your mission giving? Are any of these cities on your personal prayer list? How about your church prayer list?

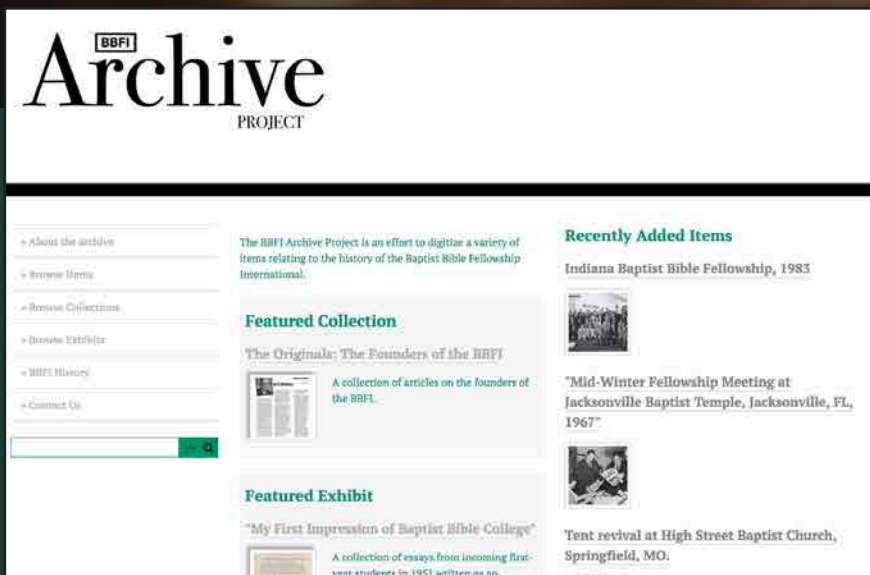


by Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church,
Chicago, Illinois
charles.lyons@armitagechurch.org

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OWASSO, OK

LINZY SLAYDEN CELEBRATES 25 YEARS AT FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST

Friendship Baptist Church in Owasso, OK celebrated the 25th anniversary of Linzy and Carla Slayden on July 16, 2017.

The church celebrated with special guests Jon Sladyen, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Midland, TX and Lance Harrington, executive pastor of Abundant Life Baptist Church of Lee's Summit, MO both preaching during the morning service.

Slayden graduated from Baptist Bible



College in 1983 and moved to Owasso in 1992 after serving nearly 10 years on staff in churches in Illinois and Oklahoma. Over the past 25 years, Friendship Baptist has grown from 39 people meeting in a living room to around 2,000 members who gather in their current 106,000 square-foot facility.

Slayden states, "God has done some neat things over these past 25 years. I like to celebrate victories in people's lives. I like to see what we've done for missions."

He goes on to state, "We are a strong church family. I'm a shepherd, not a rancher, so I'm interested in lives and marriages and families as a shepherd." Slayden shared three "secrets to success" in pastoring at the same place for 25 years. First, you have to be faithful to what the Word of God says. Second, you have to embrace and support other's giftedness. Finally, you have to be well balanced and blended in ministry and life.

FREDERICKSBURG, TX

LARRY FOSTER RETIRES AFTER 32 YEARS AT FREDRICKSBURG BAPTIST

June 2017, at the age of 82, Larry and Betty Foster retired from pastoring Fredericksburg Baptist Church. Larry began his ministry serving as finance director for Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College in San Dimas, CA. While living in California he also pastored Bible Baptist Church in Glendora, CA. After open heart surgery in 1983, doctors recommended he leave southern California because of the poor air quality.



The Fosters moved to Fredericksburg, TX to be closer to family and, in 1985, started Fredericksburg Baptist Church. They erected their first building in 2001. Due to a second heart surgery and health issues, doctors advised Larry to retire after 32 years of leading the church. The Fosters still reside in Fredericksburg and attend the church they started and support the new pastor, Donnie Dyer.

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Church Planting Session

6:30 PM

Welcome by Texas Governor Greg Abbott

Bruce O'Neal (*MANNA Worldwide*)

Jon Konnerup (*BBFI Mission Director*)

TUESDAY

8:30 AM

Church Planting Session

9:00 AM

Breakouts

10:00 AM

Don Mingo (*Ministry to Missionaries*)

11:00 AM

Larry Maddox (*Central Missionary Clearinghouse*)

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SPRINGFIELD, MO

WEST DIVISION STREET BAPTIST HOSTS MO BBF

On August 14, the Missouri Baptist Bible Fellowship gathered in Springfield, MO at West Division Street Baptist Church, pastored by Rob Hoffman. Speakers were Phil Cunningham, director of guest services at First Baptist Church of Woodstock and Mark Milioni, president of Baptist Bible College. Phil spoke on the importance of first impressions for a church as well as sharing his personal testimony of failure and restoration in ministry. Mark shared a message titled “God in the Hands of Angry Sinners” where he addressed the false doctrine of Christian Universalism. His message can be viewed on the BBFI mobile app. The meeting also included breakout sessions with Randy Harp, Paul Ebert and Steve Sanders. During the business meeting, reports were given by several missionaries and Missouri church planters.



MIAMISBURG, OH

LIFT MINISTRIES IMPACT YOUTH WORLDWIDE

This summer, LIFT Ministries hosted summer youth camps in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas with over 100 students placing their faith in Christ as Savior. BBC's worship team, Breakaway, traveled with LIFT Ministries to lead worship and represent BBC at each camp. BBC recruiting director, John Decker, also served as a camp speaker.

In January 2017, MANNA Worldwide, led by Bruce O'Neal acquired LIFT Ministries, a camp ministry devoted to leading students in knowing, loving and following Christ. Jason Harmeyer of Camp Chautauqua in Miamisburg, OH was installed as the new director for LIFT Ministries. He has installed new vision called E3 to expand the traditional one-week camp ministry.

The E3 experience starts at summer camps where students are engaged with the Gospel. The heart of each camp is to share that Jesus Christ loves them, died for them and offers them a new life. The spiritual journey continues to what is called Next Step Retreats in the fall where students and youth pastors/leaders will be quipped by discovering, “the me I was created to be.” The goal is to empower students and local churches by providing opportunities to experience life on mission by serving on short-term mission trips.

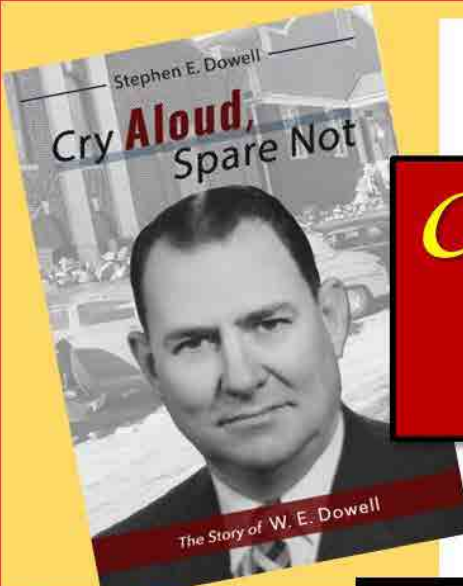
Next Step Retreats and short-term mission trips have been planned for the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018. For more information visit www.e3experience.org.



John Decker



BBC's Breakaway band



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ROACH, MO

OVER 500 ATTEND LINK CAMP; 25 SAVED

Link Camp celebrated its eleventh year of summer camps with over 500 junior and senior high students attending over a two-week period with 25 making professions of faith. This year's speakers were Caleb McClure, family pastor at Seminole Baptist in Springfield, MO, for junior high week and Michael Elkins, lead pastor of New Hope Community Church in Bryan, OH, for high school week. Worship was led by BBC's Breakaway band. BBC's Rec Team ran many of

the games and events during the week.

The camp is held annually at Camp Windermere in Roach, MO. This year's camp consisted of churches from Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Kansas and Ohio.

Camp dates for 2018 are July 9-13 for junior high and July 23-27 for high school. For more information about Link Camp visit www.thelinkcamp.com.



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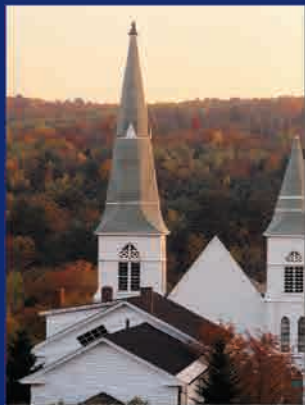
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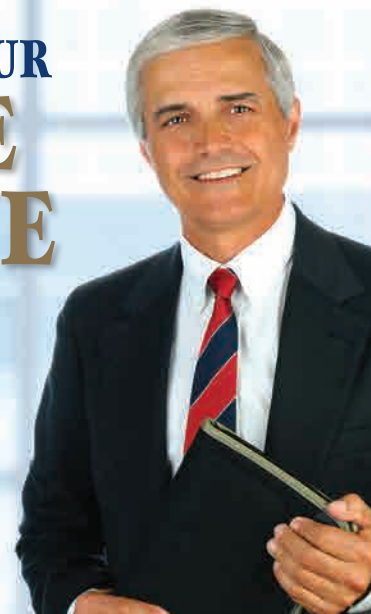
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SPRINGFIELD, MO

MISSION TRIP HELPS ROMANIAN CHURCHES WITH OUTREACHES FOR CHILDREN

By Craig Stevenson

The week after a mission trip is always one of my favorite weeks. You have the opportunity to reflect on how God worked in the hearts of the people connected to the trip and you look through pictures and relive the parts of the trip that really spoke to you.

This summer I had the privilege to lead a group of 28 individuals from several states to Romania where they worked incredibly hard while also building relationships with each other and the Romanian people.

The team hosted a VBS and a carnival for the church in Rogova that saw close to 150 kids

show up to hear the Gospel, play games and get connected to believers in their community. We also had the privilege of clearing out the church's backyard so it could be used for a play area for children and we helped finish a youth room that will be used to reach teenagers for years to come.

In Severin, our team provided a family carnival and had over 100 children (plus family members), most of which have never been to church before. They too heard the Gospel, played games and connected with our missionaries and other believers in the church. Some of these families came back to church the following

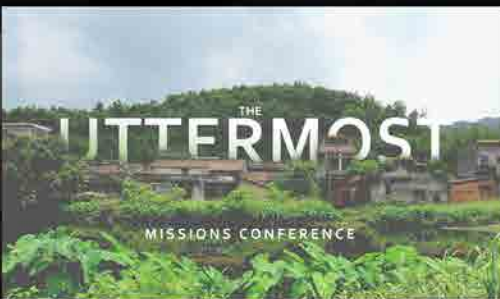
Sunday and some even signed up for the upcoming youth camp.

After five days of ministry, we drove to the central part of the country to visit several famous places in Romania including the Bran Castle (Dracula's Castle), the city of Brasov, and the Peles Castle (King's Castle built in the 1800's).

It was truly an incredible trip that will have lasting impact on the lives of the Romanian people as well as the American team that came together for the common purpose of reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



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BOLIVAR, MO

DAVID EUGENE LINGO

David Eugene Lingo met his Savior Jesus Christ face to face August 2, 2017. David was born August 26, 1947, to Joseph and Alta Lingo in West Plains, MO. He accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior at the age of six, and moved at the age of eight to Santiago, Chile, where his family served as missionaries.

After ten years on the mission field, David returned to Springfield, MO, to attend Baptist Bible College. During his college years he met Barbara Chandler, who he married on June 1, 1968, in Halstead, KS. While in college, David pastored in Preston, MO. Following graduation, he served as associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Hollywood, FL.

In 1976, David and Barbara, along with their two daughters, moved to Bogota, Colombia, to serve as BBFI missionaries, planting churches and training students at the Bible institute. In 1986, the then family of five moved to Santiago, Chile, where they opened a Bible institute and planted a church with another missionary family. In 1991, the family returned to Springfield, MO, so David's oldest daughter could attend BBC. That same year, David and Barbara began to teach and train future missionaries at BBC, a calling they followed for 20 years. During that time, God opened the door for David to pastor Berean Baptist Church in Bolivar, MO, where he served for 18 years. As his health declined, he retired from the pastorate in August 2012.

David is survived by his wife, Barbara; his daughters and sons-in-law Kristi and Scott Hudgins, Kelli and Mark Garms, and Karri and David Perry; grandchildren; and his mother Alta Lingo.

Funeral services were held at Berean Baptist Church on August 7, 2017.

INKSTER, MI

JONATHAN ALLEN

Jonathan Allen, 63, passed away August 8, 2017. He was born April 24, 1951. He was pastor of Community Baptist Church of Garden City, MI.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, children James, Johnny, Ethan, Amy and Taylor and eight grandchildren. Services were held at Community Baptist Church on August 13.

DUPONT, WA

ROBERT ELAM

Robert A. Elam, 78, left his earthly home August 18, 2017. He was born July 18, 1939 in Albuquerque, NM. After high school, he entered the US Army. Upon leaving the Army he enrolled at the University of New Mexico in electrical engineering. Two years later he surrendered his life to preach the Gospel and entered Baptist Bible College. During his first semester he surrendered to be a missionary. Robert and his wife, Margery, were approved as BBFI missionaries to Brazil September 1972 and served faithfully until their retirement in July 2008.

A celebration of life service was held at Grace Baptist Church of Dupont, WA on September 10, 2017.

BLUE SPRINGS, MO

GARY EUGENE QUEEN

Gary Eugene Queen, 73, went to be with his Lord and Savior on August 13, 2017. He was born July 9, 1944 in Independence, MO where he grew up as part of a family of nine children. He married Judith Varney in 1965.

After graduating from Baptist Bible College he spent the remainder of his life serving on the mission fields of Peru, Venezuela, and Mexico. He pastored several churches and taught at the Baptist Bible Seminary in Lima, Peru. He also served as an assistant and lead pastor of La Biblia Abierta in Caracas, Venezuela, and taught Bible classes at Universidad Cristiana de Las Americas and pastored Iglesia Bautista Genezaret in Monterrey, Mexico.

He is survived by his wife, Judith, children Elizabeth and Meredith, and eight grandchildren. Services were held at Tri-City Baptist Church of Blue Springs, MO.

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Pastor Dave McIntosh

Bethel Baptist Church

23899 Hwy 30 • Carroll, Iowa 51401
Pastor Mike Salati

KANSAS**Millington Street Baptist Church**

1304 Millington St • Winfield, KS 67156
(620)221-4700 • Pastor Jeff McCaskill

Friendship Baptist Church

2209 E. Pawnee • Wichita, KS 67211
(316)263-0269 • Pastor Ray Melugin

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1898 Florence Pk • Burlington, KY 41005
(859)586-6090 • Pastor Wayne G. Cox

Oak Hill Baptist Church

2135 Oak Hill Rd • Somerset, KY 42501
(606)679-8496 • Pastor Gary Phelps

MASSACHUSETTS**Temple Baptist Church**

540 Manley St • West Bridgewater, MA 02379
(508)583-5190 • www.templebaptist.info
Pastor Bill Smith

NORTH CAROLINA**Northside Baptist Church**

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(704)596-4856 • Pastor Brian Boyles

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Trinity Baptist Church

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(704)254-2187 • www.tbcasheville.org
Pastor Ralph Sexton, Jr.

Central Baptist Church

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(910)892-7914 • www.cbcdunn.com
Pastor Tom Wagoner

Berean Baptist Church & Academy

517 Glensford Dr • Fayetteville, NC 28314
(910)868-5156 • www.bbcfnc.org
Pastor Sean Harris

OHIO**Ashland Ave. Baptist Church**

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Norwood, OH 45212
(513)531-3626 • Pastor Jerry E. Jones

First Baptist Church

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(419)289-3636 • Pastor F. R. "Butch" White

OREGON**Tri-City Baptist Temple**

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(503)655-9326 • Pastor Ken McCormick

RHODE ISLAND**Ocean State Baptist Church**

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(401)231-1980 • Pastor Archie Emerson,
Co-Pastor Mike Woodward

TEXAS**Central Baptist Church**

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(281)492-2689 • Pastor Larry Maddox

First Baptist Church of Meadowview

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(214)391-7176 • Pastor Jack Alumbaugh

First Baptist Church

Hwy 64 • Wright City, TX 75750
(903)839-2700 • www.firstbaptistwrightcity.com
Pastor Rohn M. Boone

North Park Baptist Church

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(281)821-2258

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trbc@satx.rr.com • Pastor Myres Drew

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Central Baptist Church

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Pastor Brad Weniger

Heritage Baptist Church

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Pastor David Barton

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How to really appreciate your pastor *By Barb Milioni*

October has been set aside by many as “Pastor Appreciation Month” and I am often asked, “What can we do to show our pastor we appreciate him?” As a pastors’ wife for over twenty years, I think that I have some good insight on this. While monetary gifts are always a nice gift for a person in ministry to receive, I think that your pastor may truly appreciate these things even more and would make his job of leading you a job that he loves.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS

HEBREWS 13:1

Brothers and sisters have a unique relationship. They may fight and argue among themselves, but they are still family and no one else had better mess with them. Applying this principle to your Christian brothers and sisters would change your church. Stop talking about one another. Stop gossiping. Stop sharing how your Christian brother has disappointed you or let you down. If you have a problem with your brother or sister, go to them, not to the rest of the flock. Love them as your brother or sister – you are a part of the same family, act like it.

DO NOT FORGET TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS

HEBREWS 13:2

When a visitor walks into your church on Sunday, do you greet them? Show them where to go? Help get their kids to their class? Get them a cup of coffee? Offer to sit with them? Introduce them to the pastor?

Welcome that stranger – it may be that they need a friend, a word of encouragement, someone to pray with them or for them. Wouldn’t it be great if that stranger came to know Jesus because of the way that you welcomed him to church? Your pastor needs your help with this every service – he cannot be the only one who is welcoming to visitors.

REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE IN PRISON AND THOSE WHO ARE MISTREATED

HEBREWS 13:3

Compassion... Have compassion. Take time to love and help those who have a need. Sometimes

you need to quit focusing on your own hurts and see the pain that your brother is feeling.

HONOR YOUR MARRIAGE

HEBREWS 13:4

Love your husband. Love your wife. Protect your marriage.

DON’T PURSUE MONEY

HEBREWS 13:5

Do not let your desire for money and things keep you from serving God. Your family and your relationship with God is worth more than anything that money can buy.

BE CONTENT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

HEBREWS 13:5

Bigger is not always better. The race for more is never ending. Be content with what you have.

KNOW THAT GOD IS NEAR

HEBREWS 13:5

You are not alone. No matter what you are going through, God is there. He hears your cries, He knows your pain. He loves your laugh. He rejoices with you. He loves you and will never leave you.

DO NOT LIVE IN FEAR

HEBREWS 13:6

If you could do anything for God without the fear of failure, what would you do? Stop letting fear keep you from doing what God wants you to do and living the life God wants you to have.

HONOR YOUR LEADERS

HEBREWS 13:7

Ministry is hard. The job of a pastor is compared to the job of the shepherd. It is his job to feed, protect, and lead the sheep. But sheep do not always want to be led. Sheep sometimes see only the grass in front of them and not the whole field that the shepherd sees. The sheep may resist the prodding of the shepherd, not willing to leave their little patch of grass or they may think that the grass is greener on the other side. The sheep thinks that the shepherd would do a better job if he would do what the sheep tells him to do. They may not realize that what they

want is not what is best for them – the shepherd sees the entire field and recognizes the dangers and perils the sheep may face. The sheep may revolt against the shepherd when he does not give in to their ways, not realizing that the shepherd is only looking out for their good. Let your shepherd be the one that leads.

KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES SO YOU DO NOT FOLLOW FALSE TEACHINGS

HEBREWS 13:9

The greener grass you see is Astroturf, it is not real. Learn what the Bible teaches about Jesus, salvation, heaven, and hell. Do not fall for a gospel that says that you can name it and claim it, get an abundance for your seed offering, that there is special power in a prayer cloth that has been blessed by the evangelist.

GIVE PRAISE

HEBREWS 13:15

There is power in praise. When we stop to take time to praise God for the blessings He has given us, it changes us. It lifts our hearts, it focuses our minds, and it reminds us of who God is and what He has promised.

DO GOOD

HEBREWS 13:16

Simply do good. The book of James reminds us that what we do is a proof of our faith. “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.”

SHARE WITH OTHERS

HEBREWS 13:16

Share what you have, but more importantly, share your life. It will be messy, time consuming, and painful, but it will also bring you a joy you have likely never known.

Share your gifts with your church! Maybe you join the praise team or band, volunteer to teach a class, produce video or run sound, rock babies in the nursery, clean bathrooms, serve coffee, help park cars, lead a small group, bake cookies, visit the sick, shut in or imprisoned.

Perhaps this is the greatest gift you can give your pastor for Pastor’s Appreciation month – a willingness to serve wherever and whenever.

**HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOUR LEADERS
AND SUBMIT TO THEIR AUTHORITY.***HEBREWS 13:17*

If your leader has been called by God and is following that call, then it is your duty to let them lead.

But, we hate that word, submit. We get mad at our leaders when they do not take our side or do things our way. We leave if we do not like what they say or how they say it. We talk about them and make sure everyone else knows our feelings about them. We scrutinize and criticize not only him, but his family.

That is just what Satan wants you to do. Destroy the leader, destroy the church. The verse reminds us that it is in our best interest to follow our leader, "Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

If your pastor is busy appeasing you, then he will have no time to do what God has called Him to do. If you allow God to work through your pastor, then you will reap the benefit and the blessing.

PRAY FOR HIM.

I truly believe that the greatest need of our spiritual leaders is to be bathed in the prayer of the saints.

What should I pray for my pastor?

- Pray for him to have time to be alone with God and to study the word so that he is prepared when he stands in the pulpit.
- Pray for him to be a shepherd that smells like sheep – one that is not afraid to be with and help the lost lamb.
- Pray for his wife.
- Pray for his family.
- Pray that God will bless him, his ministry, and your church.

This October, I encourage you to use this list to show him how much you care. It will take time, energy, and commitment ... or you could just give him a card.

PERSONAL

1. Pray for their personal relationship with God. Pray their time with God would be more than studying for a sermon. Pray for a fresh passion to know Jesus Christ.
2. Pray your pastor would have a deep love for the Scriptures. Pray he would be consumed with knowing the power of the Word of God.
3. Pray your pastor is the husband he needs to be. Pray he loves his wife just as Jesus loves the church. Pray for his wife that she would be a helper to him.
4. Pray for your pastor as a father. Pray he would be a godly influence and example to his children. Pray for protection for your pastor's family.
5. Pray your pastor would develop many great friendships. Pray for other men to come into his life who can be a source of encouragement and support.
6. Pray your pastor can find a proper balance. Pray he know how to balance the pulls of ministry and family.
7. Pray your pastor would find the rest he needs. Pray he would properly observe the Commandment to take a day of Sabbath each and every week.
8. Pray your pastor would use his time wisely. Pray he can focus at different times of the day on the different tasks he needs to accomplish. Pray he would avoid the many distractions that go along with ministry life.
9. Pray for your pastor's personal use of his finances. Pray he is a good steward. Pray the church makes it a priority to provide for the pastor.
10. Pray for good health for your pastor. Pray he would be aware of the requirements for good health and he would take care of himself.

SPIRITUAL

1. Pray for personal holiness for your pastor. Pray he would guard his heart and live a clean life. Pray he would have strength to avoid his personal sin struggles.
2. Pray the hand of God and the power of the Holy Spirit would be upon your pastor. Pray God would accomplish more through him than he would ever think.
3. Pray your pastor would find men to hold him accountable. Pray he would be honest and open with these men.
4. Pray for strength and protection during your pastor's personal spiritual warfare. Pray he would dress himself in the armor of God and prepare himself with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.
5. Pray for his humility. Pray pride never creeps into his life. Pray he recognizes all that is accomplished through him is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit in his life.
6. Pray your pastor would have the mind of Christ. Pray he would both think and act like Jesus. Pray he lives his life in response to the question, "What would Jesus do?"
7. Pray your pastor would develop the fruit of the Spirit in his life. Pray he grows in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
8. Pray your pastor would be obedient to Great Commission. Pray he would have a passion to see the lost become found. Pray it would be more than something he talks about in church. Pray it is something he puts into practice.
9. Pray your pastor would have a proper fear of God. Pray he understands that he serves a holy and righteous God.
10. Pray your pastor would have a servant's heart. Pray he leads as a servant leader. Pray he would not be afraid to get his hands dirty as he serves.

LEADERSHIP

1. Pray your pastor would understand his leadership role within your city. Pray for increased opportunities for him to have influence in your city. Pray for open doors in the schools, city council, and other community organizations.
2. Pray your pastor prioritizes his time in the pulpit. Pray he would proclaim the Word of God with boldness and conviction as well as grace and humility.
3. Pray for your pastor as a spiritual counselor. Pray God would give him wisdom as he helps those struggling with life's hurts and challenges.
4. Pray your pastor would lead your church well financially. Pray he would know how to balance the budget and prioritize spending where it most honors God.
5. Pray your pastor would lead the church staff and volunteers well. Pray he would understand one of his primary responsibilities is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Pray he properly empowers others to lead and serve well.
6. Pray your pastor would be prepared for conflicts. Pray he would trust God to show him how to respond and that he not take matters into his own hands.
7. Pray your pastor would lead as a shepherd. Pray he would love and care for the flock God has entrusted him with.
8. Pray your pastor would stay true doctrinally. Pray he would search the Scriptures daily to understand the ways of God.
9. Pray each week your pastor would have a passion to lead people to know and follow Christ. Pray his sermons are more than just information transfer, but focused on life-change.
10. Pray your pastor finishes well and stays true to his calling. Pray he stays strong in his leadership. Pray he knows when it is time to transition.

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WHICH THOU SHALT GO. PSALM 32:8**

LESSON 1

Understanding one is a sinner
and believing in Jesus Christ.

LESSON 2

Being obedient to the command
of Jesus and being baptized.

LESSON 3

Serving the Lord through one
of His churches.

LESSON 4

Sharing the good news
with everyone.

LESSON 5

Learning to follow
Jesus for life.