

Evangelical Forum Newsletter



Vol. 4. No. 3
Summer 2007

2007 Evangelical Forum Meeting Friday-Saturday, October 5-6

You are invited to the sixth annual meeting of the Evangelical Forum that will take place on Friday-Saturday, October 5-6 at Jefferson Park Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Virginia (see more specific details on next page).

The 2007 theme will be "Baptists and the Bible." The Conference will focus on the doctrine of Scripture, especially as it is interpreted in Article One of the historic Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689).

This will be the first time that the Forum is being held over two days. The Forum is open to anyone, Pastors and laymen.

We continue our tradition of inviting a respected scholar and a seasoned Pastor to address our meeting. This year, Dr. Michael Haykin, a noted Church Historian, and Gregory Barkman, a veteran Pastor, will be our speakers.

There are many conferences that Pastors and laymen might attend in any given year. We hope that many will take advantage of this opportunity to attend this event right here in the Commonwealth. We also know that many Pastors are underpaid, and there is little or no provision for Conference expenses. It is our desire that cost would not be an obstacle to participation in this conference. Therefore, we are offering overnight hospitality for anyone who might like to attend this meeting.

So you see, there is really no excuse for missing this valuable meeting. Solid preaching, sound teaching, convenient location, encouraging fellowship. Come join us!◆

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Highlights In This Issue

In this issue of the *Evangelical Forum*:

Is there anything more important for a church than its worship of God? Pastor Rob Stovall's article champions a puritan versus a pragmatic view of worship based on the Regulative Principle.

Those churches close to universities or any church with college-age young people will profit from reading Ben Parziale's critique of para-church student ministries.

You can get better acquainted with the writing of Michael Haykin by reading the review of his book, *Defence of the Faith*.

There has been much controversy of late in Baptist circles regarding the exercise of spiritual gifts. For Southern Baptists this has included debate on the guidelines for mission appointment. Those contemplating cessationism versus non-cessationism will profit from the review of Sam Waldron's book *To Be Continued*.

Finally, this issue's *Paradosis* column reprints the influential first article in the *Second London Baptist Confession* and *Philadelphia Baptist Confession*. This article on the doctrine of Scripture will be the focus of our October 5-6 Evangelical Forum.

Purpose: The Evangelical Forum is a fellowship of concerned evangelical Pastors and laymen who desire to see renewal and reformation within Baptist churches in Virginia. We affirm the *Second London Baptist Confession* (1689) and the *Baptist Faith and Message* (2000).

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To delete from or add your name to this mailing list: email Bonnie Beach at jeffparkchurch@juno.com or phone: 434-293-6175.

Contributions to support the Forum and this newsletter may be sent to JPBC and marked for "Evangelical Forum."

This is a quarterly newsletter. Projected publishing dates for Volume 4: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall 2007.

Unsolicited articles, book reviews, and comments are welcomed by email or conventional mail.

2007 Evangelical Forum Annual Meeting

Friday-Saturday, October 5-6, 2007 at Jefferson Park Baptist Church
Charlottesville, Virginia.

2007 Theme:
Baptists and the Bible

Featured speakers:

- ***Dr. Michael Haykin, Principal and Professor of Church History and Reformed Spirituality, Toronto Baptist Theological Seminary, Toronto, Canada.***

Dr. Haykin is a noted Baptist Church Historian. He has published scholarly articles in such journals as *Scottish Journal of Theology*, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, and *The Banner of Truth* and is also the author of numerous books.

- ***Gregory N. Barkman, Senior Pastor, Beacon Baptist Church, Burlington, North Carolina.***

Dr. Barkman has over 30 years of experience in pastoral ministry in a single congregation, having founded the Beacon Baptist Church in Burlington, North Carolina in 1973. Beacon is “Reformed in Doctrine, Baptist in Polity, Expository in Preaching, and Evangelistic in Attitude.”

Schedule:

Friday (October 5):

7:00 pm Session I:

Greg Barkman: “The Inspiration and Infallibility of Scripture”

Michael Haykin: “The Gifts of the Spirit: Early Baptist Thinking in the 17th and 18th Century”

Saturday (October 6):

9:30 am Session II:

Michael Haykin: “A Spirituality of the Word: Scripture in the 1689 Confession”

Greg Barkman: “The Canon of Scripture”

11:30 am Lunch break on site

1:00 pm Closing session: Open dialogue with speakers

2:00 pm Meeting concludes

Book Tables: There will once again be a good selection of books to purchase on site.

Directions to Jefferson Park Baptist Church: From I-64, take exit 118 onto 29 North. Take the first exit onto 29 Business/Fontaine Avenue heading toward UVA. At second traffic light, turn right onto Jefferson Park Avenue. Church building is ¼ mile on right.

Hospitality:

Any out of town guests who are attending the conference are invited to receive complimentary housing on Friday evening and breakfast Saturday morning in the home of a local believer. An online request form may be found at www.jpbc.org/pdf/ef_hospitality.pdf. Just complete the form and return it by September 15, 2007.

Information: For more information call or email Jefferson Park Baptist Church: (434) 293-6175; jeffparkchurch@juno.com.

Quick Quotes

- ***John Colquhoun (1748-1827) on Self-Examination***

Survey minutely your inclinations and thoughts, your words and actions, even from your earliest years. Put to yourself seriously questions such as these: What have I been intending and pursuing all my days? What has been the rule of my conduct? The maxims of men or the Word of God? The customs of the world, or the example of Christ? What has the supreme love of my heart been fixed on? Have I given to Christ, or to the world, my strongest desires and warmest attachments? Has it been my habitual intention to please God, or to please myself? Has it been His glory that I have aimed at in every pursuit, or my own gratification, wealth or honor? Is it in heaven or upon earth that I have been chiefly aiming, to lay up treasures for myself? Has God in Christ been the delightful subject of my frequent meditation and conversation? Or have I regarded religious thoughts and converse as insipid and wearisome? Have I been out of my element when employed in the delightful work of prayer and praise, of reading and hearing the glorious Gospel? And have I found more pleasure in licentious mirth and trifling conversation? Have I kept the Sabbath, and with holy reverence frequented the sanctuary of the Lord? Or have I profaned His Sabbath, and poured contempt on His ordinances? And have I relied for all my right to eternal life on the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ, and trusted cordially in Him for all His salvation? Or have I relied for a title to life partly on my own works, and trusted in Him for a part only of His salvation? Propose with impartiality these questions to yourself, and suffer conscience to return a faithful answer, in order that you may so discern your self-deformity, as to abhor yourself, and repent in dust and ashes.

-In *True Repentance* (Old Paths Gospel Press, n.d.): 23-24. ◆

Purity in Worship: The Forgotten Priority

By Rob Stovall

Perhaps no greater crisis has been faced by the people of God in recent years than that which has swirled around the perennially divisive question of what does – and what does not – constitute biblically faithful worship within the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest amount of “scorched earth” lies between the mutually hostile camps of the *pragmatists* and the *puritans*. Given recent trends in popular worship praxis, the pragmatists, who argue that personal and/or congregational preference is the primary criterion in deciding the legitimacy of any component of public worship, appear to be holding the “high ground” of popular opinion. This piece is designed to argue for the priority of purity in worship, maintaining that the pragmatic position, though it remains the dominant philosophy of worship among the masses of professing Christians, is nevertheless a blight on the face of the church which dishonors God and exalts the human “worshipper” through a refusal to order worship according to the revealed will of God in Scripture.

The First Principle in Worship

In Malachi 1:6, God upbraids the priests for their complicity in the precipitous spiritual declension which characterized the religious atmosphere of the restored remnant, and which had rendered the worship of that day unacceptable in the sight of God. Jehovah inveighs against the sinful disposition of these ministers: “A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where is mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.” Here is a statement of the basic prerequisite underlying any worship that is approved of God – the honor and fear of the Lord. Indeed, our English word ‘worship’ (derived from the Anglo-Saxon, ‘worthship’) suggests that it involves the acknowledgment of God’s absolute worth. The great Puritan churchman William Perkins once defined the act of worship in general as “the exhibiting and giving of reverence and honour to another.” More particularly, Perkins defined *divine* worship as “the ascribing of Divinitie to the thing we honour, whereby we make it unto us some divine thing above the order of any creature.”

‘Honor’ goes hand-in-hand with ‘fear,’ according to Malachi 1:6; while ‘honor’ acknowledges superior value and worth, ‘fear’ admits of inferiority and inadequacy. A classic exemplar of this sense of fear in approach to God is found in Moses, who, after witnessing a singular display of the divine glory, “made haste, and bowed his face toward the earth, and worshipped” (Ex. 34:8; cf. Gen. 17:3; Ex. 4:31). Its New Testament counterpart is found in the person of Simon Peter, who, after witnessing a miraculous display of Jesus’ power, “fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8; cf. 1 Cor. 14:25).

A biblically faithful and pedagogically helpful definition of worship is therefore proffered by Malcolm H. Watts, pastor of Emmanuel Church in Salisbury, England: *it is an approach to almighty God, acknowledging his transcendent excellence and our utter unworthiness, in order to give him the honour and devotion he so obviously deserves* (Heb. 10:19-22; 1 Peter 5:6; Rev. 4:10-11). If this ‘first principle’ of worship were more faithfully observed, it would foster an appetite for the true worship of God – in purity and simplicity – and make distasteful to the people of God any ‘worship’ that is more at home in the Radio City Music Hall than before the burning bush.

Worship by the Book

The divine assertion of Malachi 1:6 raises the question (a question which the priests themselves subsequently ask): specifically how have the priests despised God in the course of their Temple service? They offend by offering to God a gift which He had not authorized. In Leviticus 22:21-22, God informs His people that animals eligible for sacrifice must be “perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.” In Malachi 1:8, God indicts His rebellious ministers for offering the “blind for sacrifice.” He challenges them: “*Is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.*” These priests have despised the name of the Lord by offering inferior animals on His altar, while Scripture reveals that He requires nothing less than the best.

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, died after offering “strange fire before the Lord” (Lev. 10:1). Their fire offering is described as ‘strange’ because it is not authorized by the Lord. In v. 3, the Lord asserts, “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” The lesson here is obvious: God is properly sanctified and glorified when His people strive to worship Him according to His scriptural directives; only then may He be approached safely. Pure worship is therefore divinely regulated worship. This is not simply an Old Testament phenomenon (as if that fact would automatically disqualify the point); the Lord Jesus Himself restricts that which may be taught in His churches to “all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20).

John Calvin, in his tract, “The Necessity of the Reforming the Church” (1544), wrote the following concerning worship: “We may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe... God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word.” Later, the English Puritans adopted the same position. Thomas Manton, one of the 2,000 Church of England ministers ejected from their ‘livings’ on St. Bartholomew’s Day, 1662, wrote: “God loveth to be the appointer of his own services, and can best prescribe the way of his own worship. Now God’s way is a revealed way; he hath written his counsel in his Word; therefore, if we do otherwise than is written, we offend.”

Both the Calvinistic Reformers and the English Puritans, therefore, held that the Church was entirely bound by the Word of God in matters pertaining to worship and so was restricted *either* to what was enjoined by

inspired instruction *or* to what was sanctioned by approved scriptural example. The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession, at the outset of a chapter entitled, “Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day,” states the case in these terms, “...the acceptable way of worshipping the true God instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.” Note how exhaustively inclusive is this rule; every component of our worship must pass this test. Only the so-called *circumstances* of worship (i.e., pews vs. chairs, large pulpit vs. small lectern, electric lights vs. oil lanterns, etc.) are exempted: “some circumstances concerning the worship of God...which are ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed” (1689 Second London Baptist Confession: Chapter 1, Paragraph 6). This is the Regulative Principle (as it has come to be called) and it is the divinely revealed standard for our worship.

Indeed, the Regulative Principle is the only safe measure for evaluating the purity of our worship. Without it, congregations have no stable standard for validating some elements of worship and prohibiting others. For example, some Christian assemblies have recently added dance and drama to their order of worship; one Lutheran church has gone so far as to inaugurate “clown communion”; certain large Southern Baptist congregations have organized Sunday services around body-builders and power-lifters who bend iron and smash concrete blocks as part of a presentation of the gospel. How do we assess the legitimacy of these worship innovations? If the standard is congregational preference, then weekly worship is held captive to the whims of the majority; the governing standard is never fixed – it is always a moving target. If one adopts the Anglican or Lutheran approach (i.e., the Normative Principle, which accepts as a legitimate element of worship that which Scripture does not explicitly prohibit), then there is no convincing basis for rejecting such innovations as gospel puppet shows and juggling evangelists.

Reformation in worship requires a return a holy disposition as we approach the God “*who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15). We must return to worship that is characterized by reverence and awe. In the words of Revelation 15:4, “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou art holy.” Reverence for God demands that we seek to approach Him on His terms, terms that are clearly revealed within the pages of Scripture. Otherwise we face the threat of Malachi 2:2, “If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart.” Perhaps the present spiritual declension of our day is evidence of the curse of God upon our congregations that will not be removed until we once again make purity a priority in our worship. ♦

Rob Stovall is Pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Suffolk, Virginia.

What's Wrong With Para-Church College Ministries?

By Ben Parziale

There has been a rise in the popularity of para-church ministries on the college campus in the past few decades. Organizations such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM), InterVarsity, and Campus Crusade have sprung up all over the United States. Para-church organizations have done some good things, such as lead missions trips and provide a wholesome alternative atmosphere for believers to the college party scene. Many times they are places where a believing student might find a spouse. There are many areas of concern, however, with such para-church ministries. This paper will discuss some concerns with para-church ministries, and how they might create obstacles for Christian growth and maturity.

First, many of these organizations are not centered on the biblical gospel. Students will rally under the banner of the organization and not the gospel of Jesus Christ. In their zeal to be relevant, these ministries are often guilty of not clearly presenting and centering upon the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the gospel is mentioned, then it is usually watered-down so as not to offend many people. This leads to the practice of easy-believism evangelism, in which people are persuaded to pray a prayer to accept Christ rather than wait on authentic regeneration.

Not only do para-church ministries often lose sight of the gospel, but they are also guilty of insufficient focus on Scripture. Often the emphasis is more on music or entertainment. Since the Bible is not properly taught, then the gospel becomes truncated and compromised. Without biblical grounding, these groups are vulnerable to doctrinal distortions like tending toward a health, wealth, and prosperity gospel or a social gospel. There have been numerous campus ministry meetings that I have personally attended in which a Bible has never been opened. This is a cardinal error.

Many of these organizations have basically become youth groups for college kids. The emphasis is on music and entertainment and not on the gospel or on Scripture. If the gospel is not properly proclaimed, this will only lead to misunderstanding and falsehood.

Secondly, para-church ministries are not the local church. Jesus Christ established the church: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Para-church organizations are often a group of twenty somethings led by a person who is in his or her late 20s or early 30s. One of the marks of a church is that it is cross-generational. The church is described as a body and as a family in Scripture. Mark Dever in *The Deliberate Church* rightly notes that the church is "place where children and adults of all ages can and should be relating to one another for mutual encouragement and edification" (p. 111).

The church has been given elders and leaders as gifts from God for its edification: "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). Pastors and elders of churches are called by God to lead and shepherd the church. Para-church ministries have no form of eldership to shepherd the group.

Without proper leadership as established by God, para-church ministries face further problems. A root problem with these ministries is that, unlike local churches, they have no membership or discipline. Churches have membership rolls, so that they can oversee those who are of their flock. This is something found in Scripture. Paul, for example, continually addresses the church in the beginning of his letters (see 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal. 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1). There is a distinction between those who are of the flock and those who are not. Thus, when a member strays from the flock, the spiritual leaders of the church and its members are able to exercise loving discipline. This is for the protection and purity of the church. Para-church ministries, however, do not have this. Students are able

to walk in and out without anyone scrutinizing their beliefs or holding them accountable for their actions.

To go along with the absence of membership and discipline, most para-church ministries do not have a confession of beliefs. This leads to a huge diversity of beliefs with little unity. For instance, when I attended Athletes in Action, there were students there who were Presbyterian, Baptist, non-Denominational, Catholic, and others. Of course, it is not bad for Presbyterians and Baptists to be together! What I am saying is that these organizations often open themselves up to such a variety of unbiblical beliefs because there is no stated covenant of beliefs. For example, many Catholics attend these organizations and are accepted as Christians without any consideration of the fundamental differences between Catholicism and Biblical Christianity in basic Biblical doctrine.

In addition, many students neglect the attendance of a local church, because they think that their participation in these groups is enough. The para-church meetings become a substitute for attendance and involvement in the local church. Para-church ministries, thereby, de-emphasize the importance of the local church as established by Jesus Christ.

Many para-church ministries were not primarily founded as outreach ministries, but they were designed for Christians to have fellowship in the college setting. What has now happened is that these groups have become much more outreach oriented with an easy-believism gospel, so that they can bring in more students. The problem, once again, is that the most precious thing—the gospel—is vulnerable to compromise. Para-church ministries want numbers just like many churches today. Many of those who are involved with para-church organizations are unregenerate. Para-church ministries are sometimes building their organizations on the bones of the unconverted. This provides a false sense of salvation for those who attend, and those who really are saved do not grow because the gospel has been compromised, and the people they are around are not born again.

Here are some suggested solutions for the para-church ministry problem. First, I would suggest that probably half of all para-church ministries need to be dissolved. I have nothing against students getting together, and I am not saying that God has not used some para-church ministries to save people or to help Christians grow. What I am saying is that para-church ministries are not God's plan for building the kingdom. Jesus established the church. In my opinion, para-church ministries (if they are to be done properly) should do one of two things. First, they should be an encouragement and a resource for students to find gospel-centered, Bible-believing churches. They can help students get involved in a local church. Para-church ministries should be a supplement to the local church and not a substitute. For instance, a Baptist campus ministry should have a primary responsibility to assist students in finding biblical Baptist churches near their campuses.

Second, if someone has a heart for college students, then he should go through his local church to develop a ministry. The local church should be at the heart of the ministry. The ministry should be under the direct leadership of the local church and in line with the church's teaching and beliefs. The ministry should be an encouragement for students to attend and be faithful to the local church. Everything must be done in the context of the local church under the influence of the gospel. College students and twenty somethings are the ones who typically understand the gospel the least, and they are usually the worst group of faithful church attendees. This is another reason why para-church ministries, in particular, need to be accountable and under the direct supervision of the local church. ◆

Ben Parziale is a May 2007 graduate of the University of Virginia and a member of Jefferson Park Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Virginia.



Book Review

Samuel E. Waldron, *To Be Continued: Are The Miraculous Gifts For Today?* (Merrick, New York: Calvary Press, 2005): 116 pp.

In this booklet, Waldron, an avowed cessationist (one who holds that the miraculous sign gifts ceased after the establishment of the canon at the close of the apostolic era), offers a concise and persuasive response to those who hold to “Continuationism” (or non-cessationism). He defines “Continuationism” as “the teaching that (at least some of) the miraculous gifts assumed and described in the Bible ought to continue in the church and, in fact, do continue to be given to the church” (p. 11). Waldron suggests that a new cessationist response is needed, given the emergence of the so-called “Third Wave” of the charismatic movement. The discussion has shifted from claims “with regard to baptism of the Spirit and the so-called doctrine of subsequence” (which he suggests continuationists have now largely abandoned) to the claim that “the preaching of the gospel should be accompanied by the exercise of miraculous gifts” (p. 13). He notes that many evangelicals have taken “an open, but cautious approach on this issue” (p. 13). Waldron writes to challenge this easy acceptance of charismatic inroads among evangelicals.

Central to Waldron’s argument is that since the office of apostle no longer exists in the church today, this means that other miraculous gifts (prophets, tongues-speakers, miracle workers) are also excluded. He refers to this as “the Cascade Argument” (p. 16). Waldron insists that proving the cessation of the gift of Apostle “provides a vital premise for the argument against Continuationism” (p. 15).

After laying out his thesis in the Introduction, Waldron proceeds to examine the Biblical understanding of the Apostles. Again, he asserts that “the admission that the apostolate has ceased is a fatal crack in the foundation of Continuationism” (p. 23). Apostles were eye-witnesses of the Resurrected Christ, were directly appointed by Jesus Christ, and had the ability to confirm their mission by miraculous signs. They thus served as “the legal representatives of Christ” (p. 30), an authority which no present day Christian can claim.

Waldron, therefore, insists upon “a historically limited apostolate” (p. 38). He presents the cessation of the apostolate as “indisputable,” thus providing “a kind of doctrinal filter suggesting that miraculous gifts do not exist in the church today” (p. 42). This, again, is “the crack in the foundation of Continuationism, the fatal flaw in their thinking” (p. 42). Waldron maintains that if one admits the passing of Apostles, then he must also grant “the very real possibility” that other “extraordinary gifts” have also ceased (p. 42).

Building on these conclusions, Waldron moves on to a discussion of prophets and prophecy. First, he examines the Old Testament office of prophet. Waldron notes that Old Testament prophets were regulated by an expectation of total reliability (citing Deut 13:1-5; 18:15-22). The prophet served as “a spokesman, the very mouth of God” (p. 54). Waldron notes that many Continuationists contend

that New Testament prophecy allowed “for something less than infallibility in its deliverances” (p. 65). Some see New Testament prophecy as mere inspired, yet fallible, preaching. In contrast, Waldron insists there is no difference in Old Testament and New Testament prophecy, and all is held to the same standard of perfect reliability. If prophecy exists today, therefore, it would also be held to this same standard. He concludes: “What is the point? It is simply that if biblical prophecy exists today and can be verified as such, it is canonical. If it is canonical, then the canon is not closed, but open” (p. 78). Waldron asserts that there is prophecy in the church today (but only as it is found in the Scriptures! See Rev 1:1-3), but there are no living prophets in the church today.

Waldron proceeds to look at “the next waterfall” in his cascade argument, tongues and tongue speakers (pp. 83-93). He asks, “Do tongues-speakers continue in the church today?” (p. 83). First, Waldron argues that tongues in the New Testament refer exclusively to human languages and not to “angelic, heavenly, ecstatic, prayer language” (see pp. 84-87). Second, he notes the rigid regulation of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14. Third, Waldron concludes: “*Tongues-speaking was a form of prophecy, and therefore, when accompanied by the gift of interpretation, functionally equivalent to prophecy. As we have seen, there are no living prophets in the church today. Thus, neither can there be any tongues-speakers*” (p. 89; italic original). Finally, he asks how then we are to understand contemporary tongues-speaking by sincere Christians. Unwilling to condemn all as demonic, Waldron notes that doctrine is ultimately based on the Bible, not experience. Some might experience “free vocalization” in prayer and we cannot rule out the rare miracle of God allowing someone to speak in a foreign language. Still, Waldron firmly denies that the apostolic gift of tongues-speaking is given to the church today.

The final area of investigation is that of miracle workers and miracle working. Waldron affirms that there are miracles in the church today, but he rejects the notion that there are contemporary miracle workers. Those who were miracle-workers in the Bible were also “organs of new and direct revelation” (p. 101). Since we believe that God no longer gives new revelation (following the closing of the canon) then “we should expect a complete cessation of miracles” through miracle workers (p. 101).

The booklet concludes with a number of expository remarks on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-26), arguing that Scripture alone is sufficient to meet spiritual needs. “Without closely reasoned, lengthy arguments about them or external evidence being added to them, the Scriptures are sufficient to warrant the infallible confidence in their truthfulness required for saving faith” (p. 112). Waldron’s rejection of the continuationist position finally rests, then, in his firm confidence in the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture.

Waldron offers an effective and logically coherent argument. As he often notes, the key to his thesis is the cessation of the office of Apostle. This booklet is also timely. Indeed, the influence of charismatic theology is currently widespread in evangelical and Baptist church life. Among Southern Baptists, this has been evident in recent debate over guidelines for International Mission Board missionary candidates with regard to their exercise of charismatic gifts. Beyond the leverage of the so-called charismatic “Third Wave” on evangelicalism in areas like worship music and church life, many Baptist seminarians and pastors have been doctrinally influenced, in particular, by Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*, which is Baptist, Reformed, and non-cessationist in outlook. Waldron’s work, alongside books like Walter Chantry’s *The Signs of An Apostle* and John MacArthur’s *Charismatic Chaos*, offers a helpful challenge to easy acceptance of the claims of non-cessationists. ♦

Jeffrey T. Riddle, Jefferson Park Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia

Book Review

Michael Haykin, *Defence¹ of the Truth: Contending for the Faith Yesterday and Today* (Evangelical Press, 2004): 149 pp.

This work by the Baptist church historian Michael Haykin is a refreshing combination of patristics and apologetics. In six brief chapters, Haykin examines six controversial topics in the early church which hold contemporary significance. In so doing, Haykin reminds his readers that most of the controversies of today were also alive and well in the early years of the Christian movement.

In chapter one, Haykin examines the *Letter to Diognetus* as a Christian response to paganism. He notes how the letter contrasts the merits of the Christian worldview vis-à-vis paganism. For example, Christians did not follow the pagan practice of “placing unwanted babies out in the streets or on the edge of town near the garbage dumps” (p. 27). In addition, though “sexual immorality was rampant within the Empire ... Christians were firm in their stand against it” (p. 27). One will find many gems in this discussion that will aid in evangelizing modern Neo-Pagans and polytheists.

In chapter two, Irenaeus’ rebuttal of Gnosticism in *Against Heresies* is explored. The Gnostics were concerned with “freedom from Biblical morality” and their teachings were assailing the church “before the ink on these inerrant texts [of the New Testament] were dry” (p. 36). Haykin notes Irenaeus’ reliance on a creedal Christianity built on the authority of Scripture in combating the Gnostics. He concludes that “this early Christian missionary and pastor recognized that the Lord feeds his people through all of the Scriptures, not simply select portions as the Gnostics argued” (p. 43).

Is debate over the end times a modern phenomenon? No, Haykins answers in chapter three, which explores the millennium debate in the Greek patristic tradition. Millenary views are traced in three major ancient authors. First, Irenaeus of Lyons is representative of those who held early historic premillennial views. His “defense of an earthly millennium is without doubt the most eloquent of the patristic era” (p. 53). Second, the amillennial position is traced in the writings of Origen (and Dionysius of Alexandria). So successful was the critique of premillennialism, according to Haykin, that the amillennial position prevailed and “after the Council of Nicea (325) it is rare to find a Christian leader who opts for premillennialism” (p. 48). Finally, Haykin traces the writings of Basil of Caesarea in his rejection not only of the heterodox Christological views of Apollinarius of Laodicea but also his premillennial perspective, which Basil insisted was “both bizarre and unhealthy” (p. 64). Haykin concludes from this survey, that “premillennialism was not a heresy” (p. 66, contra Basil). He notes how modern evangelicals “have come through similar divisions over eschatology” (p. 66). He concludes that eschatological disagreements “are not about the essence of the faith” and such

¹ Note the English spelling. Americans prefer *defense*.

debates “need to be shaped by humility, open minds and, ultimately, a willingness to agree to disagree” (p. 66).

In chapter four, Haykin explores the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, “among the greatest achievements of the early church” (p. 69). He first provides a helpful survey of the New Testament basis for the Nicene Creed. Next he traces the conflict between Arius and Athanasius. Finally, he looks at the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianus, and Gregory of Nyssa). In conclusion, Haykin laments the fact that “in far too many evangelical churches the fact that our God is a triune God is hardly mentioned from week to week” (p. 88). This overlooks a foundational claim of Christianity: “If God is not triune, we cannot be saved!” (p. 88).

The fifth chapter investigates Augustine’s articulation of the distinctive Christian view of history in the *City of God*. This chapter includes a helpful biographical sketch of Augustine, of whom Haykin says, “apart from the scriptural authors, no other figure had a greater impact on Christian life and thought up to the time of the Reformation” (p. 91). Augustine articulated his view of history in response to the cataclysmic fall of Rome while pagan blame was being cast upon the Christian movement. In a time of great uncertainty, Augustine reminded believers that they are a pilgrim people whose hopes do not rest in the success of a secular city. Haykin concludes that Christians of today facing “Islamic terrorism and the fear that has gripped the West since 11 September 2001, need to hear the same message” (p. 107).

The final chapter looks at the defense of missions in the life of Patrick of Ireland. Like Augustine, Patrick lived in the time when Rome was crumbling. Despite the uncertainty of the times he had a passion for evangelizing Ireland. Patrick’s “passion for mission in the midst of such difficult days is worthy of emulation by today’s church” (p. 122).

How are Christians of today to respond to the resurgence of paganism, attacks on the authority of Scripture, debate over the end times, doctrinal confusion as to the nature of God, political upheaval, and apathy in missions? Haykin wisely reminds us to look to the great heroes of the early church who faced these same challenges. He sends us back to learn from men like Irenaeus of Lyons, Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Augustine of Hippo, and Patrick of Ireland and reminds us that we have passed this way before, endured, and, with God’s help, emerged victorious. It might be said of these heroes as it was of Abel that “through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4 NASB).◆

Jeffrey T. Riddle, Jefferson Park Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia

In the blogosphere

Blogs from EFN Steering Committee members:

Baptist Reform (Travis Hilton):

www.baptistreform.blogspot.com

Stylos (Jeff Riddle): www.jpbcstylos.blogspot.com

The Old Baptist (Rob Stovall):

www.oldbaptist.blogspot.com

**Evangelical Forum
Newsletter**



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News and Analysis of Interest

- **Where'd all these Calvinists come from?**

Mark Dever, Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., recently posted a series on the blog of 9 Marks Ministries (<http://blog.9marks.org>) under the theme, “Where'd all these Calvinists come from?” Dever’s top ten explanations for resurgent Calvinism:

1. The writings of C. H. Spurgeon.
2. The Ministry of D. Martin Lloyd-Jones
3. The Publications of the Banner of Truth Trust
4. Calvinists evangelizing—D. James Kennedy and *Evangelism Explosion*
5. Calvinist Leadership in the Inerrancy Controversy
6. The Founding of the Presbyterian Church in America
7. J. I. Packer and *Knowing God*
8. The Teaching Ministries of R. C. Sproul and John MacArthur
9. John Piper
10. The Rise of Secularism and Decline of Christian Nominalism

- **“The Gospel Coalition” is formed**

A new evangelical organization, “The Gospel Coalition,” has formed. The group was initiated by scholar D. A. Carson and Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. It includes a forty plus member council including a wide number of well known Pastors and academics from various evangelical churches and denominations.

The organization held a one-day conference on May 23, 2007 at Trinity Divinity School in Chicago that was intentionally limited to about 500 attendees.

The Coalition has issued a statement titled “The Gospel for All of Life” in which the Preamble reads:

We are a fellowship of evangelical churches deeply committed to renewing our faith in the gospel of Christ and to reforming our ministry practices to conform fully to the Scriptures. We have become deeply concerned about some movements within traditional evangelicalism that seem to be diminishing the church’s life and leading us away from our historic beliefs and practices. On the one hand, we are troubled by the idolatry of personal consumerism and the politicization of faith; on the other hand, we are distressed by the unchallenged acceptance of theological and moral relativism. These movements have led to the easy abandonment of both biblical truth and the transformed living mandated by our historic faith. We not only hear of these influences, we see their effects. We have committed ourselves to invigorating churches with new hope and compelling joy based on the promises received by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

The coalition has a website (www.thegospelcoalition.org) which includes video and audio files from the meeting. D. A. Carson provided an explanation of the group's beginnings and a rationale for its existence at the group's conference (listen here: www.thegospelcoalition.org/plenary.php). He noted that the group is tentatively planning to host a national conference in April of 2009.

Analysis: It is interesting to note the growing emphasis on the recovery of the gospel as the center of the evangelical Christian witness. One wonders, however, at the wisdom of the multiplication and overlap of such organizations. The Gospel Coalition sounds much like the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals and Together for the Gospel and includes many of the same leaders. One also wonders about such supra-denominational groups. In the zeal to promote proper soteriology, do we run the risk of minimizing other doctrines (such as ecclesiology, pneumatology, etc.)?

- **Calvinism Conference Coming to Ridgecrest**

Lifeway's Ridgecrest Conference Center will host a conference November 26-28, 2007 under the theme, "Building Bridges: Southern Baptists and Calvinism." The meeting is co-sponsored by Southeastern Baptist Seminary and the Founders Ministry. Among subjects scheduled to be addressed: "The Historical Record"; "Calvinism: A Cause for Rejoicing, A Cause For Concern," "The Atonement: Its Design, Nature, and Extent," "Theological Stereotypes: Let's Be Fair and Honest With Each Other;" "Election and Calling: A Biblical/Theological Study," and "Working Together to Make Christ Known." Each subject will have at least two speakers addressing different perspectives. Among the speakers will be Tom Nettles, Al Mohler, and Vodie Baucham.

For more conference info, go to www.lifeway.com/buildingbridges. ◆

Quick Quotes

- **Richard Baxter (1615-91) on Family Ministry:**

We must have a special eye upon families, to see that they are well ordered, and the duties of each relation performed. The life of religion, and the welfare and glory of both the Church and the State, depend much on family government and duty. If we suffer the neglect of this, we shall undo all. What are we like to do ourselves to the reforming of the congregation, if all the work be cast on us alone; and masters of families neglect that necessary duty of their own, by which they are bound to help us? If any good be begun by the ministry in any soul, a careless, worldly, family is likely to stifle it, or very much hinder it; whereas, if you could but get the rulers of families to do their duty, to take up the good work where you left it, and help it on, what abundance of good might be done! I beseech you, therefore, if you desire the reformation and welfare of your people, do all you can to promote family religion....

Neglect not, I beseech you, this important part of your work. Get masters of families to do their duty, and they will not only spare you a great deal of labor, but will much further the success of your labours.... You are not likely to see any general reformation, till you procure family reformation. Some little religion there may be, here and there; but while it is confined to single persons, and is not promoted in families, it will not prosper, nor promise much further increase.

-In *The Reformed Pastor* (Banner of Truth, [1656] 1989): 100-02. ◆

Quick Quotes

- **Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-92) on the minister's need for "The Blind Eye and the Deaf Ear"**

To opinions and remarks about yourself turn also as a general rule the blind eye and the deaf ear. Public men must expect public criticism, and as the public cannot be regarded as infallible, public men may expect to be criticized in a way which is neither fair nor pleasant. To all honest and just remarks we are bound to give due measure of heed, but to the bitter verdict of prejudice, the frivolous faultfinding of men of fashion, the stupid utterances of the ignorant, and the fierce denunciations of opponents, we may very safely turn a deaf ear.

We cannot expect those to approve of us whom we condemn by our testimony against their favourite sins; their commendation would show that we had missed our mark. We naturally look to be approved of by our own people, the members of our churches, and the adherents of our congregations, and when they make observations which show that they are not very great admirers, we may be tempted to discouragement if not to anger: herein lies a snare.

When I was about to leave my village charge for London, one of the old men prayed that I might be "delivered from the bleating of the sheep." For the life of me I could not imagine what he meant, but the riddle is plain now, and I have learned to offer the prayer myself. Too much consideration of what is said by our people, whether it be in praise or in depreciation, is not good for us. If we dwell on high with "that great Shepherd of the sheep" we shall care little for all the confused bleatings around us, but if we become "carnal, and walk as men," we shall have little rest if we listen to this, that, and the other which every poor sheep may bleat about us.

Perhaps it is quite true that you were uncommonly dull last Sabbath morning, but there was no need that Mrs. Clack should come and tell you that Deacon Jones thought so. It is more than probable that having been out in the country all the previous week, your preaching was very like milk and water, but there can be no necessity for your going round among the people to discover whether they noticed it or not. Is it not enough that your conscience is uneasy upon the point? Endeavour to improve for the future, but do not want to hear all that every Jack, Tom, and Mary may have to say about it.

On the other hand, you were on the high horse in your last sermon, and finished with quite a flourish of trumpets, and you feel considerable anxiety to know what impression you produced. Repress your curiosity: it will do you no good to enquire. If the people should happen to agree with your verdict, it will only feed your pitiful vanity, and if they think otherwise your fishing for their praise will injure you in their esteem. In any case it is all about yourself, and this is a poor theme to be anxious about; play the man, and do not demean yourself by seeking compliments like little children when dressed in new clothes, who say, "See my pretty frock." Have you not by this time discovered that flattery is as injurious as it is pleasant? It softens the mind and makes you more sensitive to slander. In proportion as praise pleases you, censure will pain you. Besides, it is a crime to be taken off from your great object of glorifying the Lord Jesus by petty considerations as to your little self, and, if there were no other reason, this ought to weigh much with you.

Pride is a deadly sin, and will grow without your borrowing the parish water-cart to quicken it. Forget expressions which feed your vanity, and if you find yourself relishing the unwholesome morsels, confess the sins with deep humiliation.

Payson showed that he was strong in the Lord when he wrote to his mother, "You must not, certainly, my dear mother, say one word which even looks like an intimation that you think me advancing in grace. I cannot bear it. All the people here, whether friends or enemies, conspire to ruin me. Satan and my own heart, of course, will lend a hand; and if you join, too, I fear all the cold water which Christ can throw upon my pride will not prevent its breaking out into a destructive flame. As certainly as anybody flatters and caresses me my heavenly Father has to whip me: and an unspeakable mercy it is that he condescends to do it. I can, it is true, easily muster a hundred reasons why I should not be proud, but pride will not mind reason, nor anything else but a good drubbing. Even at this moment I feel it tingling in my fingers' ends, and seeking to guide my pen."

Knowing something myself of those secret whippings which our good Father administers to his servants when he sees them unduly exalted, I heartily add my own solemn warnings against your pampering the flesh by listening to the praises of the kindest friends you have. They are injudicious, and you must beware of them.

-From "The Blind Eye and the Deaf Ear" in *Lectures to My Students* (Zondervan, 1954): 330-31. ♦

Paradosis

Paradosis is the Greek word for “tradition.” It is also the title for this recurring section featuring voices from the Virginia Baptist past.

The year 2007 marks the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1707, the first association of Baptist churches in America. In 1742 the Philadelphia Association adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as its confessional standard. The Philadelphia Confession was identical with the Second London Confession of 1689 with the addition of two articles (one on hymn singing and the other on the laying on of hands). This confession was the most influential among early Baptists in America and became the confession adopted by many churches and associations in Virginia. Below is article one of both the Second London Confession and the Philadelphia Confession on the Doctrine of Scripture:

Chapter 1: Of the Holy Scriptures

1._____ The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

([2 Timothy 3:15-17](#); [Isaiah 8:20](#); [Luke 16:29, 31](#); [Ephesians 2:20](#); [Romans 1:19-21](#); [Romans 2:14,15](#); [Psalms 19:1-3](#); [Hebrews 1:1](#); [Proverbs 22:19-21](#); [Romans 15:4](#); [2 Peter 1:19,20](#))

2._____ Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments, which are these:

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation

All of which are given by the inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life.

([2 Timothy 3:16](#))

3._____ The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon or rule of the Scripture, and, therefore, are of no authority to the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.

([Luke 24:27, 44](#); [Romans 3:2](#))

4._____ The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

(2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 5:9)

5._____We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

(John 16:13,14; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20, 27)

6._____The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word, and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

(2 Timothy 3:15-17; Galatians 1:8,9; John 6:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; 1 Corinthians 11:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 14:26,40)

7._____All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

(2 Peter 3:16; Psalms 19:7; Psalms 119:130)

8._____The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

(Romans 3:2; Isaiah 8:20; Acts 15:15; John 5:39; 1 Corinthians 14:6, 9, 11, 12, 24, 28; Colossians 3:16)

9._____The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.

(2 Peter 1:20, 21; Acts 15:15, 16)

10._____The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit, into which Scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

(Matthew 22:29, 31, 32; Ephesians 2:20; Acts 28:23).◆

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Evangelical Forum



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