

God moving mightily in Pacific Northwest church planting

In the mid-1960s there were only a handful of independent Baptist churches in the entire Pacific Northwest. Then, in the late 1960s and surging throughout the 1970s, a generation of independent Baptist preachers with a zeal for church planting blew into Oregon and Washington blazing new trails for Jesus Christ. Within 15 years dozens of churches were planted in a virtual church planting revival.

Today a new generation of preachers armed with the same home missionary zeal are marching to this field of growing multitudes to proclaim the soul-saving Gospel message. They're no less pioneers of faith than those who came a generation before them as God is demonstrating in awe-inspiring ways. Actually, if anything, these men face a more daunting task as they invade a high-income, high-education, high-tech, Starbuck's-sipping culture which sees a much more significant issue in saving "Mother Earth" than the salvation of their own souls.

What follows are capsules of the exploits of just a few of these 21st Century church planting pioneers to the Pacific Northwest.

Rick Carter, The Dalles, Ore.

Located about 85 miles east of Portland on the Columbia River, The Dalles, Ore., is headquarters to Google, which operates the world's most popular internet search engine. While using the search engine is free, just about everything else in "Google Land" is quite pricey. Well, to just about everybody, except God.

Pastor Rick Carter and his newborn congregation were more than fortunate to be able to rent a Seventh-Day Adventist facility to hold services starting at \$40 a month. Yet, even that, it seems, was greater than the Lord wanted them to pay. Besides, they needed a building of their own.

Carter came into contact with a church which planned to sell most of its six acres for \$300,000 and then give its building to a charismatic group. When that fell through the Baptist preacher and his 1 ½ year-old church offered to buy all the land, plus the building, for the \$300,000. This despite having nary an extra dollar in the bank. The group accepted the offer, provided that they receive the money within a narrow timeframe. Quickly getting word out to sister congregations across America, Carter was contacted by a church willing to loan the still infant work \$150,000 from her building fund.

He then came into communication with a local businessman who was seeking prime acreage. After checking out the property the man agreed to buy four acres for \$400,000. The problem was, Heritage Bible Baptist Church didn't own the property yet. So with the \$150,000 promised from the sister church Carter found a local bank willing to finance the other half of the \$300,000 needed.

After all was said and done, the baby church not only possessed

The miracle on Bennett Street

"The state wants to buy the building and remove it for bridge construction," the landlady reported. "The man said that we shouldn't let your church move in."

Those are not the words a church planter wants to hear six days before well-advertised first services are to be held. If I were a brand-new home missionary it may have thrown my whole world out of orbit, but now a long-time veteran of the church planting wars, I realized such happenings were just par for the course.

Not only did Liberty Baptist Church of Chandler, Okla. hold her inaugural services in the building that Sunday, but also for the next six months of Sundays. Yes, we would be forced to leave the facility for bridge construction; however, the Lord used the whole situation to incredibly bless our baby church.

To make the proverbial "long story short," the State of Oklahoma ended up paying more than \$15,000 to renovate and move us to another building. We now have a nicer facility, with a much larger auditorium, a kitchen (wasn't one in the other building), an additional bathroom, and a better location at \$325 per month less rent. And, on top of everything else, our last two months in the former facility were rent free.

Renovations (all labor and materials paid by the state) include carpeting throughout, completely redone bathrooms, new front and interior doors, refurbished and repainted walls, and a large two-stair platform. In addition, the owners put in a new heating and cooling system and installed a lowered ceiling in the auditorium at their own expense.

Could there be any better use of tax money than to fund a building for a fundamental, independent Baptist church?! Oh yes, God is good!

To borrow from an old major league baseball slogan, "Church Planting Fever... Catch It!!!"

Locusts & Honey

By Cary Monaco



Soaring gas prices, economic woes may lead to wonderful positives

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” – I Timothy 6:17

I doubt that most American Christians realize that this admonition applies directly to us because we tend to interpret things from our modern perspective. Therefore, when the typical believer reads this passage he applies the “rich in this world” to people with six figure incomes and higher. However, the truth is, by first-century A.D. standards, the overwhelming majority of Americans are “rich” in both monetary and material wealth. Fact is, most living within our nation’s “poverty level” would be considered quite wealthy within the societies of Bible times.

So, as this verse reveals about rich people, we’re very prone to being “highminded” and trusting in “uncertain riches,” neither of which are conducive to producing faith in the Lord nor fervently living for Him.

That’s why, from a spiritual viewpoint, soaring gas prices and the severe economic hard times they may breed, can be seen as positive developments. While carnally I’m fearful and repulsed when considering the awful ramifications of a modern “Great Depression,” the heart in me which longs for souls to be saved and our lukewarm

Would you sacrifice your riches to live off the land if it meant a dramatic increase in saved souls, zealous Christians and hotter churches?

Christianity to become hot desires it. Notice I used “our.” Just like the rest of professing Christianity, the independent Baptist movement is obviously becoming more and more lukewarm. Sure, our temperature is a few degrees higher than those whom we lump into the “evangelical crowd” but, honestly, isn’t it just a little warmer version of lukewarm? I hope there are still some churches in America which could be genuinely classified as “hot” by Bible standards. However, I must admit, I don’t know of any.

Our riches are undoubtedly a major reason for this sad reality. After all, how many in our independent Baptist churches are truly trusting more in God on a day-to-day basis than in uncertain riches? Perhaps we have become so highminded that we can’t, or won’t, honestly answer that question.

Therefore, rather than running around like headless chickens complaining about rocketing gas prices and the

soaring cost of living just like lost people do, maybe we can see a glimmering silver-lining in it all. In fact, I know we can if we look with eyes of faith in God rather than trusting in uncertain riches.

Would you sacrifice your riches to live off the land like the poor dirt farmers of our nation’s pioneer days if it meant a dramatic increase in saved souls, zealous Christians and hotter churches?

You knock on people’s doors today to witness Christ and most see no need for Him in their lives because they worship and depend upon “riches.” Most professing Christians who

come to the door are the same way only they keep God in a bottle like a genie to release into their lives and call upon when problems arise which money alone can’t solve. They may even go to church for awhile, but soon after the problems subside they put the Lord back into the bottle and start living like the devil until the next crisis arrives.

I don’t know that even the most horrid of economic collapses would bring the majority of America to its knees seeking the God of the Bible. We’ve become just that prideful, self-righteous and hard-hearted. Yet, even in the midst of the dangerous times which would surely come, wonderfully, countless thousands would be saved; and, many churches would truly become hot for Jesus Christ.

“...thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked...” – Revelation 3:17

Our Future

World’s most expensive places to buy gas

| Rank | Country | Price/gal |
|------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. | Eritrea | \$9.58 |
| 2. | Norway | \$8.73 |
| 3. | United Kingdom | \$8.38 |
| 4. | Netherlands | \$8.37 |
| 5. | Monaco | \$8.31 |

Note: U.S. ranked 108

Our Past

World’s least expensive places to buy gas

| Rank | Country | Price/gal |
|------|--------------|-----------|
| 1. | Venezuela | 12 cents |
| 2. | Iran | 40 cents |
| 3. | Saudi Arabia | 45 cents |
| 4. | Libya | 50 cents |
| 5. | Swaziland | 54 cents |

Note: U.S. ranked 44

Source: CNNMoney.com (5/8/08)



Increasing gas prices shouldn't mean decreasing tithes and offerings

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

— Malachi 3:8

Church Planting ● *From Front Page*

a 6,000 square-foot building sitting on two acres of land completely debt-free, it had a General Account filled with tens of thousands of dollars. Talk about receiving “running over!” (Luke 6:38)

Now 3 ½ years old, the church has already reproduced itself twice, birthing churches in nearby Hood River and all the way down in Stratford, Texas.

Randy Donahoo, Centralia, Wash.

Randy Donahoo is sent out of Olympia (Wash.) Bible Baptist Church, which itself is one of the most exciting church planting stories in the U.S. Established six years ago by Pastor Rick Wilder, the church has experienced incredible growth, reaching many for Christ. The former music man and assistant pastor at Yakima (Wash.) Bible Baptist Church definitely has a church which is blessed musically, sporting 21 piano players alone at last count.

Wilder’s church birthed Cascade Baptist Church, Centralia (30 miles away), in March. Both Wilder and Donahoo developed relationships with a Christian businessman who was transforming a building into a dental office complex. God has used the gentleman, who doesn’t attend a Baptist church, to be an extraordinary blessing to the newborn work and the Donahoo family.

First, rather than using the building as originally planned, he has opened it for the church to use free at least a year. Secondly, he has welcomed the Donahoods to live in the house behind the facility, also free of charge. In addition, as if the other items weren’t enough, the man is giving Wilder’s church \$2,000 per month to be used to provide Donahoo with a full-time salary.

Cascade Baptist Church is running six faithful families and has plans to organize within the next several months.

The ever-fruitful Olympia Bible Baptist Church is preparing to start a boy’s ranch ministry on 80 acres adjacent to the church with Wilder’s son, T.J., set to serve as point man.

Matt Farinella, Sammamish, Wash.

Foundation Baptist Church, Sammamish, Wash., was birthed by Woodin Valley Baptist Church, Woodinville, Wash., where Rich Farinella, Matt’s dad, is pastor. With both Farinellas believing it to be God’s will to get the work up and going as soon as possible without having to await a lengthy deputation process, the sending church determined to initially provide a major portion of needed support. Since starting the work in November 2006, the younger Farinella has been able to obtain additional support and some salary which has allowed his sending church to considerably reduce funds directed to providing for the infant ecclesia.

Located just 10 minutes from the headquarters of Microsoft, Sammamish is a wealthy locale that offers plenty

CONSIDER COLORADO

Colorado is among the Western states experiencing tremendous growth with several locations exploding in population. Pray that a new generation of church planting pioneers would also surge into this needy field which is ripe unto harvest.

| City | 1990 pop | 2006 pop | City | 1990 pop | 2006 pop |
|------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|
| Avon | 1,798 | 6,399 | High. Ranch | 10,181 | 70,931 |
| Broomfield | 14,203 | 29,750 | Johnstown | 1,597 | 8,237 |
| Delta | 3,789 | 8,366 | Lone Tree | 1,261 | 9,003 |
| Erie | 1,258 | 14,125 | Parker | 5,450 | 41,405 |
| Firestone | 1,358 | 7,124 | Superior | 255 | 10,262 |
| Fountain | 10,754 | 19,374 | Thornton | 55,031 | 109,155 |

of rain but is a spiritual desert.

“It’s (church growth) is extremely slow here, with one person attending one service for every 15,000 doors knocked,” Farinella reported. “The affluent have a false sense of security that they don’t need God. But, when someone is reached here, they really get dialed in.”

The church meets in a lodge building located in a city park.

“It normally rents for \$200 an hour, but because I work part-time for the city parks department, we get it for \$50 an hour,” said Farinella

Aaron Shipman, Kent, Wash.

Birthing by Bible Baptist Church, Puyallup, Wash., in July 2006, Tahoma Baptist Church is running a solid 40 people on Sundays under the leadership of Pastor Aaron Shipman.

“We have had two saved this month and are baptizing a family in a couple weeks,” Shipman said.

Shipman and his baby congregation must deal with the exorbitant facility costs in the Seattle area, paying \$1,800 per month for a small area within a store-front building which only provides an auditorium and nursery.

He’s excited about the growth in and near Kent with some 300,000 people within a 15-mile radius.

Additional Church Plants

Other members of this generation of 21st century church planting pioneers to the Pacific Northwest include **Dusty Bryan**, Seattle; **Josh Carter**, Grandview; **Ray Isenberger**, Oroville; **Dave Warner**, Omak; and, **Joshua Zuray**, Issaquah. Certainly there are several others of whom we’re not aware, but the Lord knows intimately about them all, and He rewards the faithful.

Conclusion

With just these few stories here, the truth of God’s continued desire to plant churches in America can be easily discerned. May the Lord strike every independent Baptist preacher and church across our fruited plain with “church planting fever.”

(Editor’s Note: Special thanks to Pastor David Brown, Yakima Bible Baptist Church, for his contributions to this article and his love for church planters.)

I had heard about the “Body Mass Index” (BMI) long ago, but laughed it off as typical medical “experts” nonsense after hearing that most of the linebackers in the National Football League would fall in its “Obese” Category. After all, standing 6 feet 3 inches and weighing 255 pounds, I was NFL linebacker size. Problem is, I possessed about 50 pounds more fat than them, and they were the proud owners of approximately 50 pounds more muscle than me. They’re built like Hercules, me like Homer Simpson.

I’m not sure exactly why, maybe it was recently turning the big “5-0,” but I decided to find out what the BMI really had to say about me. What it said hit me hard. That chart genuinely hurt my feelings. It said that I was “obese.”

“Cary Monaco, *obese?!... a bit chubby maybe, but OBESE!* I’m the same guy nicknamed “Stick” in high school for being so skinny. I wanted to laugh it off again; however, the Holy Spirit wouldn’t let me. It was true. I acknowledged my obesity and the sinful eating habits that got me there to the Lord, promising with His help to repent. Less than a month later I’d lost 35 pounds. Within six weeks it was 40, and it continues with a drive to hit 199 pounds which will put me in the BMI “Healthy” Category.

My weight-loss system is nothing new, and it will never become a widespread fad like the “Atkins” and “South Beach” diets. Yet, despite these facts, if truly carried out, it’s the best weight-loss method on the planet. That’s because it includes the assistance of Almighty God. It’s just as much a spiritual enterprise as a physical one. I call it the “Repentance Diet.”

Step 1: Admit to yourself and God that you have a weight problem

The first step to overcoming any sin problem is to acknowledge it as such in one’s psyche and then confess it to God seeking His forgiveness with a sincere heart. (I John 1:9) While our weight problem will stare out at us from the mirror everyday and be constantly manifested through the physical symptoms of obesity, we can easily live in denial about it. This denial is especially true concerning the sinful aspects involved with becoming and staying fat.

It’s common for we overweight preachers to joke about our being fat,

The Repentance Diet

This is the best weight loss plan on the planet because it includes the assistance of Almighty God. It’s as much a spiritual enterprise as a physical one. And, talk about edifying, the Lord could use it to save your life.



often from the pulpit. However, few, if any, would find a preacher joking about his smoking cigarettes or drinking beer to be appropriate. This demonstrates that the sin typically involved in producing and possessing an obese body is minimized and condoned, even by the most spiritual of individuals.

Indeed, I’m certain that sincere Christians are excessively prone to behaviors which cause obesity because gluttonous eating is the only acceptable carnal addiction in churches. It’s rarely, if ever, preached against, and these days it seems that just about everybody is doing it, including most pastors. The vast majority of folks attending our churches can’t feel comfortable drinking alcohol, using tobacco or gambling; however, we can be horribly addicted to gluttonous eating and no one has a problem with it.

Therefore, it’s not always easy to break out of denial to acknowledge and confess this sin problem. However, the Holy Spirit will reveal the reality of the situation to us if we’ll open our hearts.

Step 2: Resolve to repent

As difficult as accomplishing “Step One” might be due to our pride and other weaknesses, actually repenting of sin is usually much more trying than acknowledging and confessing it. This is no more true than when it comes to repenting of gluttony and other unhealthy eating habits.

I Corinthians 6:19,20 should provide all the motivation we need to fight and keep fighting to repent of the behaviors which create obesity. Those verses read, “*What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.*”

The born-again believer’s body is

both the home and property of the Lord. So, how are we taking care of His property? Some of us have added a lot of unwanted rooms to God’s house. In fact, the foundation is deteriorating under the weight of it all as seen with the leg and foot problems that eventually come with being fat. In many cases, the whole thing is perilously close to falling down and being planted in a freshly-dug hole called a grave.

Repenting, truly repenting, of the things we do to damage God’s temple is worth it for so many reasons, beginning with bringing Him greater glory. This occurs not merely by looking better, but by enjoying increased energy to more fervently serve Him, obtaining greater confidence and boldness, possessing additional joy and less depression, and having more money to give back to Him rather than being forced to spend so much on doctors and pharmaceuticals.

Step 3: Engage in prayer and fasting

As mentioned in the introduction, the Repentance Diet is as much a spiritual enterprise as a physical one. It involves an exercise of faith which produces both a more healthy body and a closer walk with Christ. As the Repentance Diet thins your body it will fatten your faith.

God promises in I Corinthians 10:13 to provide the believer a way of escape from any temptation. That doesn’t mean that it will be easy. I quit tobacco for good way back in 1980. It was an excruciating experience, especially for the first several days. Up to that point in my young Christian walk it was by far my most extreme exercise of faith. Overcoming gluttonous and other unhealthy eating is even more difficult because we have to continue consuming food in order to live. The only thing “cold turkey”

Diet ● See next page

Diet ● From page 4

about losing weight is that it might be on the menu. One has to keep going back to what's killing him or her, only in much smaller portions. Often that just plain doesn't seem fair.

So, as far as the Repentance Diet goes, significant faith is required. In Matthew 17:20,21 Jesus reveals that mountain moving faith is only obtained through prayer *and* fasting. In relation to losing weight, we might identify it as "mountain shrinking faith."

As much as the typical saint struggles to obtain and maintain a consistent and effective prayer life, fasting probably isn't even a consideration to most Christians. For instance, how often do you fast?

The keys to an effective fasting life are to frequently and genuinely seek God's leadership about it, and then do what He directs. At first it may only involve 24-hour fasts. Later the Holy Spirit may impress you to fast for longer durations. Those who have certain medical conditions such as diabetes may not be able to engage in fasting. Above all else,

God's will needs to be sought on the matter. It's generally something which is to be kept as private as possible between the individual and the Lord.

There are items associated with fasting that provide an intimate communion with God which may not be exactly obtained through any other means. At the very least the hunger provides an acute reminder concerning our relationship with God, a desire to be passionately devoted to Him, and the thirst for increased faith. (Matthew 6:16-18)

Step 4: Change your eating habits

A virtually countless number of sources are available today for educating one's self concerning more healthy eating. The hard part isn't discovering what and how much to eat, the pain involves actually doing it. Repenting often means making hard and permanent changes to our entire lifestyles. Such is definitely the case when it comes to carrying out the Repentance Diet.

So much of our culture and very lives revolve around eating that it's incredible to ponder. It quickly becomes ingrained within us to derive enormous

amounts of joy and comfort simply based in eating. Personally, when feeling down, I'm intensely prone to binge eating for solace. Also, especially as a teen and young adult, I was able to derive self-esteem through the attention and approval received by eating extraordinary amounts of food, as strange as that may seem. Just as the beer drinker who is admired by peers for the ability to polish off a 12-pack by himself, there are those among us who receive positive attention for gluttonous eating feats such as consuming a half-dozen hot dogs.

Although wrong eating habits can basically become part of our beings, with a repentant heart and God's help changes can be made which will literally revolutionize our lives for the better. The repentance may need to be broken down to individual favorite foods which must be either greatly reduced or totally eliminated for the rest of our days. It may approach the purpose of heart required of young Daniel and his companions not to eat of the king's meat.

Among the most difficult and pain-

Diet ● See back page

Some Lo-Cal Snacks

To Help Get You Through!

Dill Pickles: One of my favorites because almost zero calories. Eat four or five as a hunger-buster.

Rice Cakes: About as tasty as sawdust, but better than nothing.

Small Baked Potato: Use salsa as topping instead of butter.

Sugar-free Jello: You can even have a dab of Cool Whip!

Pretzels: Slowly eat about 15 of them pretending that they're a pile of french fries.

Oatmeal: Kind of like eating glue, but sticks to your ribs.

V-8 Juice: The spicy kind makes you forget that you're hungry.

Popcorn: The low-fat, individual-serving bag has become a good friend of mine.

Body Mass Index Chart

DIRECTIONS: Find your height in inches in the far left column and then follow along to the right until you see the weight which is closest to yours. Then follow that column straight above to the very top row. (Example: Someone 61 inches tall and weighing 132 pounds would have a BMI of 25.)

| | | BMI (kg/m ²) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| | | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 35 | 40 | | |
| Height (in.) | Weight (lb.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 58 | 91 | 98 | 100 | 105 | 110 | 115 | 119 | 124 | 129 | 134 | 138 | 143 | 167 | 191 | | |
| 59 | 94 | 99 | 104 | 109 | 114 | 119 | 124 | 128 | 133 | 138 | 143 | 148 | 173 | 198 | | | |
| 60 | 97 | 102 | 107 | 112 | 118 | 123 | 128 | 133 | 138 | 143 | 148 | 153 | 179 | 204 | | | |
| 61 | 100 | 106 | 111 | 116 | 122 | 127 | 132 | 137 | 143 | 148 | 153 | 158 | 185 | 211 | | | |
| 62 | 104 | 109 | 115 | 120 | 126 | 131 | 136 | 142 | 147 | 153 | 158 | 164 | 191 | 218 | | | |
| 63 | 107 | 113 | 118 | 124 | 130 | 135 | 141 | 146 | 152 | 158 | 163 | 169 | 197 | 225 | | | |
| 64 | 110 | 116 | 122 | 128 | 134 | 140 | 145 | 151 | 157 | 163 | 169 | 174 | 204 | 232 | | | |
| 65 | 114 | 120 | 126 | 132 | 138 | 144 | 150 | 156 | 162 | 168 | 174 | 180 | 210 | 240 | | | |
| 66 | 118 | 124 | 130 | 136 | 142 | 148 | 155 | 161 | 167 | 173 | 179 | 186 | 216 | 247 | | | |
| 67 | 121 | 127 | 134 | 140 | 146 | 153 | 159 | 166 | 172 | 178 | 185 | 191 | 223 | 255 | | | |
| 68 | 125 | 131 | 138 | 144 | 151 | 158 | 164 | 171 | 177 | 184 | 190 | 197 | 230 | 262 | | | |
| 69 | 128 | 135 | 142 | 149 | 155 | 162 | 169 | 176 | 182 | 189 | 196 | 203 | 236 | 270 | | | |
| 70 | 132 | 139 | 146 | 153 | 160 | 167 | 174 | 181 | 188 | 195 | 202 | 207 | 243 | 278 | | | |
| 71 | 136 | 143 | 150 | 157 | 165 | 172 | 179 | 186 | 193 | 200 | 208 | 215 | 250 | 286 | | | |
| 72 | 140 | 147 | 154 | 162 | 169 | 177 | 184 | 191 | 199 | 206 | 213 | 221 | 258 | 294 | | | |
| 73 | 144 | 151 | 159 | 166 | 174 | 182 | 189 | 197 | 204 | 212 | 219 | 227 | 265 | 302 | | | |
| 74 | 148 | 155 | 163 | 171 | 179 | 186 | 194 | 202 | 210 | 218 | 225 | 233 | 272 | 311 | | | |
| 75 | 152 | 160 | 168 | 176 | 184 | 192 | 200 | 208 | 216 | 224 | 232 | 240 | 279 | 319 | | | |
| 76 | 156 | 164 | 172 | 180 | 189 | 197 | 205 | 213 | 221 | 230 | 238 | 246 | 287 | 328 | | | |

See which weight category you fit in below based upon your BMI number

(Less than 18.5)
Underweight

(18.5 to 24.9)
Healthy weight

(25 to 29.9)
Overweight

(30 to 39.9)
Obese

(40 and above)
Extremely Obese

To Figure Exact BMI

- 1) Multiply your weight by 703
- 2) Divide by your height in inches.
- 3) Divide that answer by your height in inches again.

IMPORTANT: This chart not accurate for children nor for heavily-muscled adults such as body builders and certain athletes (muscle weighs more than fat). In addition, many experts recommend a BMI of 25 to 27 for the elderly to help protect from osteoporosis.

College & Career: *Springfield, Missouri church hosting conference July 25-26 for young adults to learn and fellowship*

Evangelist Dave Hardy and Pastor Jeff Merrick are headline speakers for the 2008 College Conference scheduled July 25-26 at Berean Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo. "Glory Bound," a singing group from Heartland Baptist Bible College, Oklahoma City, is also slated to minister throughout the event. The theme is "Created He Them," focusing on what the Bible teaches concerning gender.

Check-in for the conference, which includes a \$20 registration fee, begins at 5:30 p.m. Friday, with the first service at 7. That night's program will conclude with an activity including food and refreshments on the church's 25-acre wooded park area which features a pavilion. Glory Bound will provide an outdoor concert of sorts in addition to the other festivities.

The next day starts at 8 a.m. with the folks of Berean Baptist Church putting on a big breakfast for all attendees. The church will also serve lunch. The event is set to conclude at 3 p.m.

Hardy, based in Stillwater, Okla., and Merrick, who serves as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Knobnoster, Mo., will combine for five message sessions. In addition, a "Break-Out Session" with the host church's pastor, Jeff

Ables, and his wife, Robin, is included.

Kris Gamble, who directs the College and Career ministry at Berean, reported that a dozen churches from Illinois, Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma participated in last year's conference, combining to bring about 200 attendees.

Gamble revealed that the College and Career spectrum generally includes singles aged 18 to 28, a group which typical independent Baptist churches tend to struggle in obtaining and retaining.

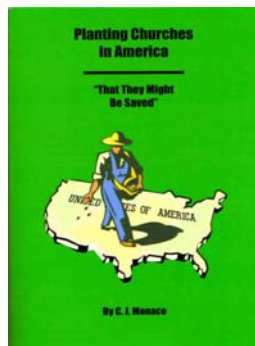
"Many churches we contact say that they don't have any College and Career people," Gamble said. "This conference provides the opportunity for them to meet and fellowship with others in their age group. It's a very encouraging thing."

The Krystal Aire Motel near the church is offering discount rates to attendees. Several other motels with reasonable rates are also available within close proximity to the church.

Those seeking further information can contact Gamble at (417) 861-6160 or college@thebereanbaptistchurch.org. On-line registration for the conference is available at www.thebereanbaptistchurch.org.

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Ladies' Devotion

By *Ronnie Monaco*

"Especially For Pastors' Wives"

The Sunday my husband surrendered to preach was like most any Sunday. During invitation the music was playing and heads were bowed as our pastor, Gary Coble, urged people to respond to God's Word. Little did I realize the turmoil going on in the heart of the man standing next to me. Suddenly he grabbed my hand and we practically ran down the aisle. I guess he wanted to make sure he got down to the front before he talked himself out of it. We got to the pastor and Cary told him, "I think the Lord is calling me to preach."

Cary and I had discussed his feelings that he was being called to full-time ministry and I thought that was fine – he would make a great Christian school teacher or something like that – but now the commitment was made. He was surrendering to the ministry to be a preacher.

Because of my selfish nature, one of my first thoughts was, "What about me? That makes me a preacher's wife. I'm just a simple girl who struggles to be a good Christian. I can't be a preacher's wife."

I was really troubled about this but had not shared my fears with anyone but God. One day soon after I received a card in the mail from my dad. It was one of those note cards that was blank inside except for what he had written, "Dear Ronnie Girl, thank you for just being you! Love, Daddy."

God used that simple message to speak to my heart. He knew who Cary was married to before He called him to preach. He knew my strengths and weaknesses even better than I did; therefore, He would make me the preacher's wife that Cary needed in his ministry if I'd let Him. My prayer now was that the Lord would use my strengths and help me with my weaknesses. I didn't want to do anything that would hurt the ministry of the man that God had called to be His minister.

Being a pastor's wife shouldn't be much different from being a good Christian wife of a man in any other field. We are to be our husband's helpmeet. For some reason, people (including ourselves) think pastor's wives should be all things to all people, filling every role in the church if need be. Of course, that's not possible. God says in Ephesians Chapter 4 that He has given each of us gifts that will enable us to do the job He has for us. We are all different and our husbands each have needs that may differ from what another pastor may need from his wife.



Ronnie Monaco

Not only are we all different in our strengths but also in our weaknesses. What may be hard for one person might be a breeze for someone else. That's why we need to stay close to God by prayer and Bible study.

The Christian walk is a spiritual battle and even more so when you are on the front lines. Our own weaknesses can cause us to have doubt and fears and Satan will use them to destroy our ministry if we let him. It might be jealousy of the attention your husband gives to others or that others give to him. (There's that selfish thing again.) It might be fear of financial difficulties or a myriad of other things that make you want to leave the ministry.

One of the hardest things though has to be the fickleness of people. No one likes to feel rejected. You lead a person to Christ, disciple them and watch them grow in the Lord. Then, they decide that the church down the street can better meet their needs.

You might have people in the church for years that you've ministered closely with. You've been through so much together but then they get upset with your husband, or even you, and leave, but usually not before trying to stir up trouble.

Some people don't leave but you know they're unhappy and critical. You start to get paranoid and wonder if there's anyone you can trust, which isn't fair to the ones who stand by their preacher.

Feeling like nobody cares can cause one to leave the ministry if they don't stay close Christ. After all, He knows how it feels. Only a few stood at the foot of the cross as He suffered and died for us.

Being the wife of a pastor comes with unique challenges but nothing God can't handle. I don't know why He thought I could do it but I'm glad He did. The things that we have been through in the ministry have brought me closer to the Lord and made me a stronger Christian. And an added benefit is that it has caused a sweeter relationship between my husband and me as we minister together.

We are all different and our husbands each have needs that may differ from what another pastor may need from his wife

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Diet ● From page 5

ful changes are altering menus and cooking methods. Eating fried foods saturated with grease needs to become a rare occurrence rather than a nearly daily event. Meats high in fat need to be replaced on the menu with healthily-prepared poultry, fish and more lean cuts of beef. We need to realize that sweets lie to us, they're not really our friends, and start spending more time getting to know the oft-scorned vegetable crowd.

Then, there's the fast-food and other eating out. McDonalds has salads now so you can still go treat the kids or grandkids to a "Happy Meal" while you crunch "rabbit food." Myself and my wife take advantage of those \$5 foot-longs at Subway, each eating a half. Not only is that healthy, but it's a real cheap date.

Hamburgers, pizzas and fried chicken are off-limits except once or twice monthly "sanity breaks." Great care must be taken not to fall back into old ways. If we're to engage in a "sanity break" the discipline must be in place not to allow that hamburger or pizza to cause us to fall back to the old, destructive ways.

Step Five: Get more exercise

Those of us working long hours in relatively non-physical careers may have to be creative in this area. A period of calisthenics each day including sit ups and push ups doesn't involve much time. We may be in such terrible condition that we can only start with one of each per day, yet that's better than none at all. As we stick with it we'll slowly improve.

Walking daily for at least 20 minutes is somewhat helpful. Engaging in weekly door-to-door evangelistic visitation is a good way to become more healthy both

physically and spiritually. Biking is a personal favorite of mine because it doesn't hurt my feet like jogging does. Playing tennis with my wife is fun exercise and another cheap date. Hiking is a good companionship activity as well.

Another avenue to more exercise is leaving the riding lawn mower parked and using the push machine to cut the grass, or at least a large portion of it. Push mowing a quarter acre of lawn or more each week provides an excellent work out. The same principle can be followed in the winter by using a shovel instead of a tractor or snow blower to do at least part of the clearing job. Our wealth and technology have positives, but the negatives include helping to make us fat and lazy.

One can lose vast amounts of weight through "starvation dieting" with little exercise. However, doing it that way causes muscle loss and can lead to serious health problems. Combining a healthy diet with daily exercise is recommended by medical professionals in the field.

Conclusion: Enjoy being the new you!

The positives of being at a healthy weight far outweigh the negatives associated with self-denial. In fact, those positives are far too numerous to be listed here. Just as with repenting of most things, the hardest part of losing weight involves the first couple of weeks. However, in a relatively short period of time, the intense cravings of the mind and body for unhealthy foods and gluttonous eating begin dissipating.

I believe God wants to use the Repentance Diet to help all kinds of people to more become what he intends for them to be both physically and spiritually. If you're not built like a body

builder or NFL linebacker and your BMI number is high, especially in the "Obese" or "Extremely Obese" categories, please prayerfully consider putting the Repentance Diet into practice. Remember beloved saint, your body is God's property. Isn't it time to start taking better care of His house?

(EDITOR'S NOTE: If you have further questions, need an understanding ear, or other assistance concerning the subject matter feel free to call or e-mail me. – Cary Monaco)



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