

**NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK**

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Volunteer Needed!  
 Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!  
 6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Volunteer Needed!  
 Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!  
 Wed. Evening Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White  
 Cradle Roll 2: Volunteer Needed!

**AND THE PEOPLE CAME...**

*Week of February 3, 2019*

Sunday School ----- 16  
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 29  
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 22  
 Wed. Eve. Service, 02/06/19 ----- 8

**AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...**

*- Week of February 3, 2019 -*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,324.21  
**Total Received for Week of 02/03/19: \$ 1,324.21**

*- Week of January 27, 2019 -*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 517.20  
**Total Received for Week of 01/27/19: \$ 517.20**

*- Week of January 20, 2019 -*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 400.90  
**Total Received for Week of 01/20/19: \$ 400.90**

*- Week of January 13, 2019 -*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,700.27  
**Total Received for Week of 01/13/19: \$ 1,700.27**

*- Week of January 6, 2019 -*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,244.81  
**Total Received for Week of 01/06/19: \$ 1,244.81**

*- Week of December 30, 2018 -*

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 38.45  
**Total Received for Week of 12/30/18: \$ 38.45**

**Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00**

**WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED**

1. **Admit that you are a sinner.**
2. **Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.**
3. **Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.**
4. **You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).**
5. **By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.**



**Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!**

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

**Church Directory**

Todd W. White ----- Pastor  
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist  
 Lois Mae Floyd ----- Pianist/ Organist  
**Volunteer Needed!** ----- Greeter  
 Larry Byars ----- S.S. Teacher  
 Larry & Mary Byars, Susan Strain ----- Outreach  
 Bertha Segebarr ----- Custodian  
 Flowers ----- Shirley White

**REMINDER**



**An Honest Assessment of Youth Methods**  
**Are We Juvenilizing American Christianity?**

by Wayne Hardy, Pastor - Bible Baptist Church of Stillwater, Oklahoma

One of my passions in life comes as a result of believing that America needs independent Baptist churches. Really badly. Basically, America needs New Testament Christianity, and my own study of Scripture leads to me to believe that independent Baptist churches—warts and all—come closer to that than any other type of church. Therefore, I have a passion that we not simply regurgitate every argument or methodology that comes along, which leaves me with an aversion to being like everyone else. I don't think being different is in itself a virtue. I've watched

that lead to some strange methodology. But, the word "holy" means "other than" and is not an attribute we are free to avoid. As I see signs of many independent Baptist churches becoming less distinguishable from mainstream churches, red flags go up.

The typical mainstream church hardly seems like the answer to America's condition; so, independent Baptist churches becoming like them should be a concern, not a goal. Too many independent Baptist churches are allowing evangelicals to do their thinking for them. There are many ideas are being labeled as creativity that really aren't. What many young men are trying to convince others is creative innovation really isn't. Their innovation is nothing more than imitation. And what is being imitated comes from a philosophy that **is dumbing down American Christianity**, while leading independent Baptists to lose some of their distinctions. Creativity can be refreshing and helpful, but people must be honest if their creativity is really imitation. It would be wise to look carefully at what you are imitating in order to get a realistic picture of what it produces.

Nowhere is this more evident than in youth work. I don't know how young Timothy was, but Paul challenged him to not let his youth leave him open to criticism or to excuse spiritual immaturity (I Timothy 4:12). Yet, church youth ministry is where some seem not only to **tolerate** immaturity but also to employ methods that **reinforce keeping** that immaturity. Yes, we all know that millennials are renowned for resisting adulthood and putting off maturity as long as possible. And, yes, our mandate is to produce disciples, as opposed to converting the culture. But, if the culture promotes extending youthful immaturity even longer, shouldn't our goal of making disciples include an aversion to methods that seem to reinforce this phenomenon? Not because we are anti-culture, but because we are pro-Scripture.

The Gain/Loss Principle is not new to those who have studied the subject. Profit is not determined by gain alone. You have to first calculate the loss, then subtract it from the gain to see if there is any profit. Many wisely attempt to understand any potential loss before embarking on some new methodology, while others label this consideration "haggling over the little things." It is often stated like this: "While people are dying and going to Hell, we are majoring on the minors!" Is that an accurate description of someone wanting seriously to consider any true benefits before jumping in? Paul said there were things that, while they might be lawful, they may not be expedient or profitable (I Corinthians 6:12). That means it is every believer's responsibility to do more than just consider the scriptural "lawfulness" of a potential practice or methodology. We are obliged to consider how expedient or profitable it might be, as well.

When someone expresses concern about adopting some new or unproven methodology, the person often becomes an easy target of the undiscerning preacher who simply repeats the tired mantra of "stop majoring on the minors!" Those emotionally-charged, biblically-weak aphorisms make no more contribution to our effectiveness than the men out there making mountains out of molehills. While both are ditches, neither ditch should stop us from our responsibility of using the timeless Book in our hands to see the trends behind the trends (identifying which trait of human nature is at the root of each new cultural expression). Taking time to address these concerns has a way of making us wise enough to steer clear of creating a Frankenstein that gets out of control because we didn't

*(continued inside)*

**LISTEN TO -**



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consider expediency along with lawfulness.

Before you write me off as trying to limit everyone’s freedom or crying wolf, I would ask you to read Thomas E. Bergler’s *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* first. He is far from an independent Baptist, being a professor of an evangelical liberal arts college and senior associate editor for *The Journal of Youth Ministry*. However, his research is thorough as he traces the most distinctive and dangerous characteristics of today’s churches back to youth work of the 1950s. As America came through the Great Depression, World War II, and then dealt with rising Communism’s strategic use of youth in their countries, public focus shifted to a protection of our youth at a level previously unexperienced. Out of this concern arose numerous organizations that believed a strong religious foundation was essential to youth’s protection and future. The Catholics formed the Catholic Youth Organization. The Methodists created the Methodist Youth Fellowship. The African-American churches used the Nashville Christian Leadership Conference to stir their youth to political activism. The evangelicals birthed Youth for Christ.

That passion to reach teenagers fostered organizations that were free from the boundaries of local church traditions, thus increasing freedom toward new methodologies. They applied popular secular music styles to religious lyrics, toned down the doctrine, increased the emotional appeal, created comfortability with a more casual setting, all while making the whole experience more entertainment-laced. Lest we think these tactics are simply the result of a natural evolution of the last 20 years, Bergler argues it’s actually more the result of an intentional strategy to reach a group because they were not where adults were cognitively. He explains that while some were cautioning about adopting elements of the “devil’s music,” *“the most innovative leaders in YFC believed it was easy enough to separate youth culture styles from their ideological content... Unfortunately their success came at some cost. By assuming that teen tastes in music and spirituality were essentially neutral, they allowed youth culture the power to reshape Christian faith. While some of these changes were beneficial, others would create a chronic immaturity among American Christians. The sixties revealed once and for all that adolescent Christianity would shape the future of the churches one way or the other.”*

Bergler also recounts how evangelicals using Youth for Christ and Young Life *“aggressively adapted their practices to teenage tastes,” including “long hair, rock music, and rebellion of the youth counterculture as a new conservative Protestant way to follow Jesus.”* The results? *“In the name of evangelizing teenagers, the leaders of parachurch youth ministries experimented freely with ways of being Christian that would create an even more immature evangelical church.”* No one accuses him of being a raving fundamentalist lunatic when his research reveals that small groups were a result of youth group’s attempts to avoid the idea of “indoctrination.”

*“Small groups do help people learn about their faith.”* Let’s call that the gain. *“But sometimes this way of learning*

*encourages people to think that their opinions are every bit as important as what the Bible or the church teaches. The discussion format may sometimes reinforce the idea that all theological beliefs are a matter of personal preference.”* I suppose that might be considered a loss. Has it been profitable, then? He links other methodologies to long-term impact, as well, such as adult youth leaders adapting to the appearance of the youth, the use of popular film clips, the casual environment, and many others.

Bergler’s argument is so well documented that you have to respect his suggestion for youth pastors to ask themselves, *“In what ways would the rest of the church be improved and in what ways would it be impoverished if it looked exactly like my youth ministry?”* Why doesn’t the author sound foolish when he thinks the next logical statement is, *“They need to learn that cultural forms are not neutral”*? Or this, *“When Youth for Christ leaders discussed the merits of aggressive use of adolescent music styles, they recognized that they were potentially changing how people experienced their faith. But in the end, they decided the powerful appeal to youth justified the potential costs.”* What about those costs? This evangelical’s whole premise is this: *“Juvenilization is the process by which the religious beliefs, practices, and developmental characteristics of adolescents become accepted as appropriate for Christians of all ages. It begins with the praiseworthy goal of adapting the faith to appeal to the young. But it sometime ends badly, with both youth and adults embracing immature versions of the faith.”*

Let’s be honest here. If an independent Baptist preacher stood up at one of our national meetings and proposed that some of these methodologies were responsible for these “immature versions of the faith” so prevalent today, he would be ripped for majoring on the minors, and young pastors everywhere would tweet him off as a legalist. Guess how the evangelicals responded? They awarded Bergler the **Christianity Today Book Award, Award of Merit** for being so insightful and thorough in his research.

I have no patience for “stuck-in-the-past” pastors who get up in the pulpit and foam at the mouth about everything they are personally against. They do independent Baptists no favors. But we need to wake up and recognize that there is a philosophy being promoted in every independent Baptist circle (more in some than others) that is using tired, worn-out catch-phrases to libel those who get in the way of their pragmatic success by suggesting we apply the Gain/Loss Principle before blindly moving forward.

Bergler has a lesson for independent Baptists. *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* teaches us that the wisest thinkers might be the ones who’ve learned that all that glitters is not gold. Is it possible to reach youth (the gain) without creating immature faith (the loss)? America needs a group somewhere willing to wrestle with that balance, and I believe that group should be independent Baptists. Our viability does not depend upon our innovation. It depends upon our ability to

honestly consider how to produce much gain without having to regret our contribution to the losses, like those Bergler documents.

I find it almost humorous that my desire to study the expediency (not the lawfulness) of video screens draws cries of “majoring on the minors” from close independent Baptist brothers, while men like Neil Postman (Amusing Ourselves To Death), Nicholas Carr (The Shallows), and David Sax (The Revenge of Analog) become my allies because they are more diligent about considering the loss side of the equation. We live in interesting times, don’t we? ÷

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## NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

**CONGRESSWOMAN SWORN IN ON THOMAS JEFFERSON’S QURAN IS DEEPLY CONFUSED ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY** - Rashiba Tlaib, newly elected Democratic congresswoman from Michigan, was sworn into Congress last week on a Quran owned by Thomas Jefferson. She said, *“It’s important to me because a lot of Americans have this kind of feeling that Islam is somehow foreign to American history. Muslims were there at the beginning. ... Some of our founding fathers knew more about Islam than some members of Congress now ... My faith has centered me. The prophet Mohammed was always talking about freedom and justice”* (“Detroit congresswoman to use Jefferson’s Koran,” Detroit Free Press, Dec. 19, 2019).

Tlaib is right that some of the founding fathers knew more about Islam than some members of Congress today, but not in the way that she assumes. As soon as America gained independence from Britain, Muslim pirates had begun seizing American merchant ships and enslaving the crews for ransom. In 1786, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were sent to London to negotiate with Tripoli’s ambassador, Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja. When asked why the Muslims attacked nations that “had done them no injury,” Adja replied, *“It was written in their Koran, that all nations which had not acknowledged the Prophet were sinners, whom it was the right and duty of the faithful to plunder and enslave; and that every mussulman who was slain in this warfare was sure to go to paradise. He said, also, that the man who was the first to board a vessel had one slave over and above his share, and that when they sprang to the deck of an enemy’s ship, every sailor held a dagger in each hand and a third in his mouth; which usually struck such terror into the foe that they cried out for quarter at once”* (Thomas Jefferson Papers, Series 1 1651-1827, Library of Congress). The Barbary pirates cited the Koran as their authority for attacking, brutalizing, and enslaving anyone who is not submitted to Allah.

In 1795, America paid \$1 million for the release of 115 sailors, an amount that was one-sixth of the U.S. budget. The pirates demanded an annual payment of the same amount. When Jefferson was elected America’s second president in 1801, he and his fellow citizens were of no mind to accept bullying and blackmail. The U.S. Navy was built to protect America against

Muslim pirates. One of the most memorable acts of the Barbary War was in 1805 when a force of eight U.S. Marines and 400 Greek and Arab mercenaries, led by U.S. Navy Lieutenant William Eaton, force-marched across 600 miles of desert from Alexandria, Egypt, to capture the city of Derne (or Derna) on the shores of Tripoli. This is memorialized in the U.S. Marine Hymn. By 1816, the Barbary states were forced to cease attacking American and British ships, and this was accomplished by force of arms.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST PRESIDENT SAYS WE CAN’T “PUT GOD IN A BOX”** - In a video interview with The Gospel Coalition [*a DANGEROUS organization - avoid them!*], J.D. Greear, President of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), said that God can still speak audibly to believers today and is not limited to speaking through Scripture (“Southern Baptist President,” BreakingChristianNews.com, Jan. 4, 2019).

Greear said *“he would never place God in a box about what He could do today.”* This has been the Pentecostal position from its inception. “Don’t put God in a box” has always meant that God can do all sorts of things that we don’t see in Scripture, such as knock people down, glue them to the floor, cause them to speak gibberish, laugh hysterically, shake, jerk, roar like lions, bray like donkeys, and stagger like drunks. “Don’t put God in a box” has always been the theme song of those who refuse to be bound by Scripture.

Former Pentecostal Hughie Seaborn comments as follows: *“The SBC will be thoroughly Pentecostal before too long.* God can do whatever He pleases, but He won’t contradict His Word, and His Word tells us in Hebrews 1:1-2 that, ‘God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets [who received dreams, visions and audible voices], Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son [through that which is perfect, the written Word of God].’ Dreams, visions and audible voices are subjective and fraught with dangerous deception.

“How can we know for sure who is speaking to us, even if what is received agrees with the Bible? The devil speaks a lot of truth, but it always has an agenda. **The written Word of God is the only safety we have in these perilous last days.**

“J.D. Greear is a dangerous man. When they say they ‘would never place God in a box about what He could do today,’ they are actually saying that they don’t want God to ‘put them in a box.’ That’s the real issue that I’ve found with them. It’s not, ‘Don’t tell me what God can and can’t do,’ but rather, ‘Don’t tell me what I can and can’t do.’ They don’t like the restrictions that Scripture places on them.”

