

Holding forth the word of life. Phil. 2:16

SPRING/SUMMER 2004 REPORT

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WHENEVER I READ John the Baptist's statement, "He must increase and I must decrease" (John 3:30), my usual thought is, "That's right, Lord. Help me to make this the pattern of my life."

How is that done? Do I just will it to happen? Can I, in my own strength, flee sinful habits or abase myself in humility?

No. It is a spiritual act when He increases and I decrease. It is a life-long process as more and more He takes center stage in my life. This process is led or facilitated by the Holy Spirit.

What habits can I adopt to draw me closer to Christ? What actions can I take on a daily basis to make Him the central focus of my life? Let me suggest three.

1. Daily study of God's Word. When we engage in this practice, the Holy Spirit helps us to see how great God is and

how dependant we are on Him for all of life's needs. Read Psalm 119 and note how He increases and we decrease.

2. Daily prayer. While it is true we should pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18), we need to daily enter the "prayer closet." He invites us to enter the throne room boldly to worship the Lord and find grace and mercy in our time of need. (Heb. 4:16) When we do this, He increases and we decrease.

3. Service. We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is equally important, love our neighbor as our self. (Matt. 22:34-40) Service is one way where, led by the Holy Spirit, we accomplish both commands. And when we give our lives in service to the Lord, He increases and we decrease. Why? Because we realize how

totally ineffective we are without Him!

All who name the name of Christ are somewhere along the path where He is becoming our Master and we His servants in spirit and deed. In Romans 12:1-3, the Apostle Paul urges us to present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice. When we do this, we're actually performing a spiritual act of worship. He increases and we decrease.

Missionary William Carey once said, "When I am gone, don't talk about William Carey, talk about William Carey's Savior. I desire that Christ alone might be magnified."

As He increases and we decrease, we honor the Lord and bring true success and joy to our lives.



Tom Lothamer
Executive Director



This year's Leadership Summit theme is *Bridging the Gap*. Our aim is to help pregnancy care centers bridge the gap between abortion-minded women and the truth about abortion. Another urgent gap exists between lost people and eternal life.

How can we build better bridges? That is the question Scott Klusendorf, of Stand to Reason (www.str.org), will give attention to as the featured speaker at the July 29 and 30 Summit in Grand Rapids. He will help us explore today's post-modern mind in relation to abortion and lay the groundwork for a persuasive, biblical response.

This Summit will also be open to pastors, youth leaders and others who seek to be grounded in pro-life apologetics. For information on how you can attend – or how you can sponsor your pastor or youth leader to attend – call us or visit our web site and click on *Events*. This is a conference you won't want to miss!

Our April Summit in Pennsylvania drew 72 people from 26 pro-life ministries. This conference featured separate tracks for directors, board members and volunteers. In February, BFL staff members traveled to Peru to participate in a similar conference for PCC staff and volunteers.



At the pro-life conference in Peru, Tom led a session on the biblical basis for the sanctity of human life. His presentation was translated into Spanish by missionary Evelyn Stone, BFL's international training consultant.

Curriculum Project

Baptists for Life is working with Regular Baptist Press to develop a 13-week Sunday school curriculum for fourth through sixth graders that teaches the sanctity of human life and sexual purity. Members of the working committee met on May 12 and 13 to draft an outline and formulate lesson objectives. Lesson plans will be built upon a biblical worldview framework.



Curriculum committee members are (clockwise from lower left): Tom Lothamer, Dave Bailey, Dr. Jeff Mattner, Tonya Delnay, Michele Shoun, Valerie Huber, Pastor Jeff Halsted, Mel Walker, and Dr. David Gower. Not pictured: Julie Maakima and Raul Reyes.

This project has met with much enthusiasm. Churches, parents and Christian schools eagerly await its publication because they understand the need for this curriculum. Please pray with us as we recruit writers and begin writing.

Bernie Berg Home



A home similar to this is being constructed in South Africa for AIDS-affected orphans with funds raised by Baptists for Life.

BFL rejoices to report that the funding goal for the Bernie Berg Memorial Home project was met on schedule – by the end of 2003. Donations matching the \$30,000 challenge grant were received and forwarded to Evangelical Baptist Missions. Construction of the group home in Hammanskraal, South Africa – which will house 16 AIDS-affected orphans and their houseparents – is underway. The home's dedication is slated for mid-October 2004. Representatives from BFL plan to attend.

Banquet Recap

On March 18, Baptists for Life celebrated our 20th anniversary as an organization during our annual banquet. The evening mixed nostalgia with gratitude as we looked back on what God did in and through the

small group who met to form a pro-life ministry in 1984. The crowd of about 650 was also challenged to look forward to what is yet to be accomplished and treated to several songs by Steve Green, who capped off the evening with a message revealing his heart for pro-life ministry. The evening raised over \$45,000 in sponsorships, offerings and pledges.

Golf Classic

On August 16, four-somes of golfers will meet at Cedar Chase Golf Club for a day on the links to help fund Partners in Ministry, BFL's service to pregnancy care centers. If you and your team would like to play 18 holes in friendly competition for prizes and a good cause, please contact Lisa Haan.



Arden Field takes a practice swing during a recent BFL golf outing.

Financial Picture

In 2003, BFL's income (\$325,000) was up \$19,000 and expenses (\$328,000) were down \$10,000. The percentage of funds spent on program was 54.6, 28.1 for administration, and 17.3 for fundraising. We praise the Lord for helping us move in the right direction with our stewardship and finances.

Our income so far in 2004 continues to outpace that of 2003 and we are staying within our budgeted projections for this year. Please join us in prayer over financial pressures that remain.

Here's one way to make your purchases count for pro-life ministry. Integrity Fundraising donates 10 percent of your purchase price to Baptists for Life. They list thousands of competitively priced goods on their web site. It's easy to sign up! Just type in this URL on your browser: http://www.mybuckbooster.com/store_front.asp?comID=14.

Informed Voting

According to the Pew Research Center, nearly half of the nation's 59 million self-declared evangelicals who were qualified to vote in 2000 did not even register. And only 15 million of those registered bothered to go to the polls.

Voting is a not only a right, it's an obligation. Please don't sit on the sidelines this election year. Good candidates need your support and every voter makes a difference. Remember Florida?

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