We're Back!
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The Importance of Holiness

By Mike Trimble

Holiness is a word that may bring specific images to mind: young women in denim skirts with little or no make-up, ladies with long floral dresses and topknot hairstyles, men in black suits, ties, and white shirts, or perhaps the hats and beards of the Amish or Mennonite communities. Holiness, however, is more than just outward appearances or styles of clothing. There is nothing wrong with having convictions about the way we present ourselves to the world as long as we are aware that holiness is about more than outward appearances.

“One danger relating to holiness in our worship is that we might try to bring God down to our level. Our worship must not downplay the holiness of God in an effort to bring Him closer.”

In Matthew 23:27-28, Jesus confronted the Pharisees—a religious sect that stressed outward appearances of holiness but neglected true holiness—Issuing a strong rebuke: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but wi-

thin you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (ESV). Holiness is more than just an outward appearance.

Scripture uses words like devout, sanctified, sacred, consecrated, and set apart, all stemming from the same Greek and Hebrew roots for holy. In Leviticus 11:44, The Lord says, “Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy,” indicating that to be holy is to be like God. One could define holiness, or being holy, as being godly or Christlike.

In the New Testament, Peter refers to Leviticus when he writes, “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15–16). Peter teaches that we are to be holy or Christlike in all of our conduct. More than an appearance, holiness is a way of life. Holiness is not perfection. Only Jesus is perfect and sinless. We are never perfect. We will always struggle with the flesh but we must strive to be more like Christ all the time.

One danger relating to holiness in our worship is that we might try to bring God down to our level. Our worship must not downplay the holiness of God in an effort to bring Him closer. Isaiah had a vision of God seated high upon His throne. His robe filled the temple. The seraphim, magnificent angelic creatures, broke out in worship, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isaiah 6:3). Like Isaiah, we may be overwhelmed by God’s holiness. Isaiah noted that he felt undone, or unworthy to be in the presence of God. One of the seraphim came down and touched his lips and cleansed him; likewise Jesus has touched our lives, cleansed us, and made us holy.
A second danger is that we might be unbalanced in our worship and stress the holiness of God without considering the call for us to be holy. Remember, The Lord calls us in both the Old and New Testament to “Be holy, for I am holy.” It is good for us to examine ourselves before entering into the presence of God. Balanced worship will praise God in all His holiness while allowing the Holy Spirit to empower us to live holy lives before Him.

How important is holiness? Extremely important! If it is our desire to see The Lord, we must pursue holiness. We must strive to be Christlike. Consider Hebrews 12:14, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Without holiness, the Scripture says, no one will see the Lord. Holiness, or the lack thereof, on our part will impact every area of our life. In order for our worship to be truly meaningful, we must pursue holiness. Our prayer life will suffer if we neglect the Lord’s command to be holy. Our testimony will be minimal without holiness. Our light shines in our good works. Not that our works make us right with God, but our holiness is evidence that we are in a right relationship with Christ. Without holiness our future in eternity is questionable.

A powerful lesson in holiness can be gleaned from one of God’s marvelous creations. The Stoat, or Short Tailed Weasel, is very interesting. During the winter, this little creature, sometimes referred to as an Ermine, has been hunted for it’s pure white winter coat. Royalty and priests have sought the white coat to be used in royal and sacred robes. European hunters discovered something about the Stoat. It does everything possible to keep it’s coat clean. The Stoat will avoid dirty or muddy fields and stay in grassy treed areas. Rather than chasing the Stoat, the hunters found they could simply smear mud or soot around the entrance to the Stoat’s home and have their dogs track the little creatures back to their home. The Stoat would make it’s way back home, but refuse to enter the nest to avoid getting its coat dirty. This little creature would rather die than contaminate its fur. Oh, that God’s children would value personal holiness as much as the Ermine values it’s purity. We are often guilty of allowing our lives to be contaminated by our environment, and yet Scripture teaches that “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world (James 1:27).

Revival

New Hope FWB Church in Lamont, CA invites you to join them for a revival featuring Christian Powell, pastor of Faith FWB Church in Greensboro, NC.

August 5-7, 2015
7:00pm

The Voice
The class of 2015 has the distinction of being the final students to earn their degrees at the 4881 E. University address. California Christian College will begin operations at a new location in July after 50 years of ministry at the current address. The main telephone number for the college and admissions will remain the same. They are (559) 251-4215 and (559) 455-5571 respectively. All mail arriving after June 30th should be addressed as following:

California Christian College  
5380 East Belmont Ave  
Fresno, CA 93727

Finishing touches are underway on the new offices for the college in the Fellowship Hall at Harmony Church as the projected move-in date for the end of June quickly approaches. Once they are fully operational, work will begin in an adjacent building preparing it to accommodate the library. Four large classrooms will also be available in the main church facility for the start of classes on August 24, 2015.

The property at 4881 E. University is listed with a commercial realtor and a purchase offer is currently being negotiated with another Fresno ministry. Please pray for the Board as they attempt to negotiate a fair sale price.

The Board’s current plan calls for the construction of new facilities on a vacant lot next to Harmony Church within the next three to five years. It is important, therefore, that CCC receive the best price possible from the sale.

The new location and fresh start is expected to provide better visibility, more modern facilities, renewed optimism regarding the present and future of the college, and considerably lower general operational costs. This in turn should allow more resources to be devoted to recruiting, long overdue faculty/staff raises and other things to strengthen the college.

Pray that God will draw many more students to CCC and that He will raise up many new supporters so that the college will become all He wants it to be. Another critical prayer concern is the retention of students because keeping them focused on their preparation for ministry and completing their degree work is vital to the success of both the students and the institution.

Private Christian colleges will always need the prayers and faithful support of its friends to take the place of tax dollars received by government supported institutions. Student income alone will never be enough to undergird the enormous cost of a quality accredited education.

Your continued prayers and generosity is needed every bit as much in the future as it has been in the past. And we will also need a significant increase in enrollment. In the words of the great missionary William Carey, let’s expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.
Just days ago, Sweetwater hosted the 5th Annual Father Son Campout, the unofficial kick off for a busy summer season at Sweetwater.

Next up is the Sweetwater Camp 2015, to be held July 12-17. Every church in the state is invited. Whether you have one child or 100, all are welcome. The theme this year is “Courage.” We have materials for all age groups focusing on the fact that we have a God that we can count on for our strength and ability. Children six years and older can attend without a parent. Contact Don Ellerd at (209) 480-0655 or fwbcamp@gmail.com.

Then, August 6-8, is the 6th Annual “Be One of 100.” Unbelievable, astonishing, absolutely mindboggling is the only way to explain what transpired last year for our Annual “Be One of 100.” Again over 100 men, women, and children from all corners of the state inundated Sweetwater with one goal in mind – to make a difference in our effort to build a camp for our youth and families. From the decks built (five), the forest cleaned and cleared, the cabin refurbished, and the 300 seat amphitheater almost completed, it was just an amazing year. So many of you went the proverbial second mile. Such joy! Why not set aside a few days and join us at Sweetwater. I assure you that it will be three days that you will never forget. Contact Ken Roam for more information at: (562) 404-1356.

Donations are accepted and greatly appreciated at:
The Barrier PO Box 1195 Mariposa, CA 95338-1195
Greetings, from the California State FWB Missions Board. Wow, time is flying by, and we are now half way through 2015! The big thing that we hear in today’s media is that California is in a very serious drought, and we must all do our part to conserve our water resources. This brings the old hymn to mind.

Showers of Blessing

By Don Harbert

Showers of blessing

There shall be showers of blessing:
This is the promise of love;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.
Refrain:

Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need:
Mercy-drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.

There shall be showers of blessing,
Precious reviving again;
Over the hills and the valleys,
Sound of abundance of rain.

There shall be showers of blessing;
Send them upon us, O Lord;
Grant to us now a refreshing,
Come, and now honor Thy Word.

There shall be showers of blessing:
Oh, that today they might fall,
Now as to God we’re confessing,
Now as on Jesus we call!

There shall be showers of blessing,
If we but trust and obey;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
If we let God have His way.

I believe God is showering us all with the blessings of His great grace, marvelous mercy, and lavish love!

God is moving here in our state mission work in fantastic ways! He is doing a great work in Greenfield. The Kilgore family is working hard for the Kingdom of God, building His work in Greenfield. They are out-growing their building and are in need of your continued support and prayers for this excellent work. If you are not presently supporting the Kilgore Family and the Greenfield church work, please prayerfully consider doing so today.

Furthermore, at this time, our Mission Board is working along with the Spanish Association to plant a church in Baldwin Park; and we have also reopened the North of the River FWB Church.

(continued on page 9)
Embracing Change

By Mike Kilcrease

How do we deal with the fact that our nation is no longer a Christian nation?

During my lifetime, I have seen a lot of change. Especially on the religious front. In particular, over the last 20 years, our basic, founding, Christian beliefs have been vilified. Our nation’s heritage as being Christian has been all but stripped away. No longer can Christians display nativity scenes without harassment. Gone are the days of prayer in school and the Ten Commandments in government buildings. Our very beliefs are ridiculed as fantasy or make-believe.

If we stand for a more biblical understanding of creation, we are called uneducated and told that evolution is the proper belief. If we say that biblical marriage is between one man and one woman, we are called bigots and haters. If we stand for sexual purity, we are called old-fashioned or prudes. Our world has changed before our very eyes. Personal indulgence is all the rage while personal responsibility seems to be avoided at all costs.

But how do we respond to a nation that has turned its back on God? I can honestly say that I have personally struggled with this question a lot lately. And one thing has become clear to me. We can NOT expect unbelievers to act and adhere to Christian standards. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (ESV)” We are trying to influence the symptoms of ungodly behavior rather than trying to introduce unbelievers to the true source of life. For instance, how can I expect to influence society’s acceptance of same sex marriage if most of society is non-Christian? Unbelievers desire to satisfy the flesh. Christians have almost nothing in common with unbelievers. We must work at winning people to The Lord and discipling those converts to a greater understanding of God and His Word. We must focus our energy on winning people, not policies. We must learn to let go of the past. Our advantage as a Christian nation is gone. We can no longer take for granted that a majority of our population is familiar with the Bible or have a basic understanding of Christ and Salvation.

“We must let go of our pride... and begin to humble ourselves before The Lord in prayer and service, loving those in our society who are broken by sin.”

We, as Christians, must change the way we reach the world because the world has changed. We don’t need to change our way of reaching the world because the Gospel message must change. Not because we must
change the God we serve to fit society’s desires. We must learn how to reach different people for The Lord in different ways. As the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” In some cases, we have become more concerned with our traditions than for the lost. In many cases, we have spent more energy fighting for what appeals to us in church rather than what might appeal to those who need Jesus. This isn’t a call to scrap what we have been doing, but a call to think about our focus as Christians.

We must let go of our pride (we as Christians aren’t really in power in this nation anymore!) and begin to humble ourselves before The Lord in prayer and service, loving those in our society who are broken by sin. We must stop battling people. We are to battle Satan and his cronies, not flesh and bone (Ephesians 6:12). We are to love our neighbors, whether straight or gay, drunk or sober, sexually immoral or chaste, the racist, murderer, Muslim, and liar, those who have hurt us deeply, those who threaten our beliefs, and those who are opposed to God, just as we once were.

If you attended the California State Free Will Baptist Association Annual Meeting this year, then you are aware there is a new Church Plant in the works for Irvine, CA. The Church Planters are Stephen and Lauren Kimbrell who are joining the National Home Missions church planting effort as national planters to Irvine. Stephen is a graduate of Southeastern Free Will Baptist College with a Bachelor’s Degree in Bible: Pastoral Theology and Practical Ministry. Stephen and Lauren have been serving in the Pleasant Acres FWB Church in New Bern, North Carolina for the past six years. The Kimbrells have three children, Lilly Kate, Ainsley, and Carter. In case you are unaware, Irvine is located in the heart of Orange County. It is located in the southern region of the county and is the sixth most populated county in the United States with three million people. It is also home to the University of California at Irvine. Please pray for this young family as they plant a new Free Will Baptist church in California and as Stephen Kimbrell and his team are endeavoring to raise the funds necessary for them to be relocated to California.

So, although our great state of California is currently experiencing a water drought, God is faithfully showering His people, and His work, with His bountiful blessings.
Our Need To Be Wanted

By Rick Scroggins

One of the most basic emotional needs we have is to be wanted. Whatever your age, gender, race, or income, we all need to be wanted. The small child, the teenager, the young adult, and the senior citizen all have a basic need to be wanted.

We also have a basic need to be loved. Children need the love of their parents, parents need the love of their children, husbands need wives, and wives need husbands. We need love. We need to be wanted and accepted.

A few years ago I was driving down a busy street and a car pulled alongside of me. The car was a small four-door sedan with a young man driving. The car had wiper blades with those neon green colored fins attached. There were colored lights in the back window. A huge antenna arched from the back bumper to the front. The owner seemingly had found every gaudy accessory available and put it on his car. (I hope I’m not describing your car.) And on the license plate bracket were the words, “I’m single.”

I thought, “No wonder, how are you going to attract someone driving a car like that?” Doesn’t saying, “I’m single” mean “I’m available?” Doesn’t it say, “I’m looking for someone?”

But isn’t that what we try to do in life? Try so hard to be wanted. We put so much effort into trying to be accepted. We go to great lengths to be noticed. Usually the ones we are trying to get to notice us never do.

Yet, there is someone who wants us. Someone who loves us with all of our faults, failures, and all the gaudy accessories. Someone who loves us just the way we are.

John was so overwhelmed by this he wrote, “See how very much our heavenly father loves us.” (1 John 3:1) John’s words emphatically say, “There is someone who wants us. We are needed and loved!”

God’s way of telling us we are wanted was on the cross. There is nothing pretty about the cross. It has no natural attraction in itself.

In Jesus’ day, the cross was a symbol of death. The cross today is a symbol of life. When you realize it’s only because he loves you, that he died on the cross, then you understand how he can feel that need to be wanted in your heart. Ephesians 1:6 says, “We are accepted in the beloved.” We are accepted by God, because of what Jesus did on the cross.
The Women’s Retreat is coming soon: September 24-26, 2015 at ECCO in Oakhurst, CA. We would love for you to join us. So many exciting things are happening this year and we don’t want you to miss out. Join us as we connect with God, family, church and others around us.

It has been my dream to attend a retreat with Beth Moore as the speaker; Kari Jobe as the worship leader; Paula Dean as the chef; and Martha Stewart as the head of crafts (just kidding...I don’t do crafts). Well, we may not be able to make this dream come true this year, but I can guarantee it will be an Explosive Year!

Our theme for the retreat is “C-4: Highly Explosive,” drawn from Colossians 4:2-6. Women can be ‘explosive’... that can be a good thing or a bad thing. We believe women of all ages can make a difference in our churches, in our families and in the lives of others while we keep God in the very center of our lives. Let us learn to be the women we were meant to be.

We have a lot of things planned this year, so you can be as busy... or relax as much as you want. Give it a try this year. All women need a time to relax, away from the hustle and bustle of their daily lives. Join us as we look back through the years and as we plan for the future to become “Highly Explosive” for Christ.

We are very excited about one new activity this year! Have you ever watched American Idol, The X Factor, America’s Got Talent, or maybe The Gong Show? Well, this is your lucky break! This is your opportunity to share your special talent with the rest of us as we have our first ever “X”plosive Factor contest. Maybe you can juggle, sing or play a song, perform a skit, hula hoop, lion taming, cow tipping or please, someone do a shadow puppet presentation.

Debe Taylor, who spoke to us at our 2014 Spring Conference, will be our speaker this year. We are blessed that she will be able to minister to us at this retreat as well. We have taken the opportunity to raise the stage a bit so you will have no problems seeing her, since, as she freely admits, she’s a bit vertically challenged.

We hope that you will consider joining us at ECCO in Oakhurst this September. The rates* for 2015 are listed below.

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For additional information, please contact:
Crystal Hodges: (559) 313-1107
Denise Nicholes: (559) 312-5309
Email: womensretreat@mycafwb.org
C4_women@yahoo.com
The PEOPLE PROFILE aims to introduce our readers to someone you may or may not know through simple “This or That” questions as well as deep, thought provoking questions. Philip Cramer is the Pastor at New Hope FWB Church in Lamont, CA. Philip and his wife, Dana, have been married for 22 years. Philip has been at New Hope for 15 years, beginning his ministry there on Pearl Harbor Day in 1999.

**Coke or Pepsi?** Pepsi

**Ocean or Mountains?** Uh, ocean. There are no bears at the beach!

**Socks or House Shoes?** Socks. I’m wearing socks right now, so got to be socks.

**Mac or PC?** Well, I have a PC, but I preach from an iPad.

**Meats or Veggies?** Veggies. I like meat, but definitely veggies.

**Music or Talk Radio?** Talk Radio.

**Facebook, Twitter, Email or Text?** Text. Definitely text.

What is your favorite movie of all time? Oh, that’s a tough one. There are so many movies, so many different genres. I would have to say, if this movie is on I have to sit down and watch it. The Outlaw Josey Wales.

What are your three favorite books of all time? Or what are you reading right now? That’s actually easy to answer. Favorite books of all time would be *Grace Awakening* by Charles Swindoll and *Left Behind* by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

What am I reading right now? *Preaching that Pleases God* by Tom Farrell. I’m in Chapter 5 right now. The book is outstanding. It deals with the man then the message. Right now it is dealing with hermeneutics, and what are you prompting your people to do? It has been very eye opening regarding the art and science of preaching The Word as well as challenging how I study The Word.

What do you wish people knew about you that they probably don’t? It’s pretty hard for me to answer that. I’m pretty open. What you see is what you get. I would probably say that I’m generally shy, an introvert. Because of my shyness, I don’t speak unless spoken to. Some people may see it as pride, but I was raised by my parents to not speak unless spoken to.

What’s one message you wish all people could hear? I guess it would be that everyone would truly understand the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is the power of salvation for the lost as well as something we need to consider when dealing with fellow believers.

What would you consider to be your biggest failure? My biggest failure would be from early on in
ministry. Not being myself. I was trying to please too many people and I realized that I was not pleasing God in my ministry.

**How long did it take you to overcome that?**
It took about seven years.

**Did you just realize the failure or did someone point it out?**
I just realized it. Trying to please everybody, I realized that I just couldn’t do it. The Lord pointed it out. I realized that the only person I have to please is God. If I do that, then I’ll be ok.

**Is there anything in general you would like to share?**
The Stan Toler Leadership Conference (at CCC in October 2014) really inspired me to take the message and implement it at our church. Our congregation is now more involved in ministering to the community. I was trying to do everything myself and not equipping the people of our church. A light went off and it was like God telling me that people needed to be more involved in the spiritual warfare. They need to be coming to church to get the ammunition. I have established that I need to work at equipping the congregation for the work they need to do in the world.

Are you aware of why I like Superman so much?

**No.**

It was how I learned to read. When I was little, my dad would buy Superman comics for me and taught me how to read.
Ordained and licensed ministers are invited to attend a Pastor’s Retreat November 5-7 in Pismo Beach.

The cost is $120 per person, double occupancy, or $220 per person, single occupancy.

Contact Mike Kilcrease (mike@mycafwb.org) to register

Join us for the 6th Annual Man Alive Men’s Conference at Harmony FWB Church in Fresno on Saturday, September 12.

This year we will be focusing on “Identity,” who were are as men of God, as husbands and fathers.

$10 per person, lunch included

Bookmark our website! mycafwb.org