

# Falls Fellowship



## “The Changing Landscape of Churches and the Future of Falls Baptist Church”

### Part 2

2. Failure to accept cultural shifts. The failure of churches to recognize cultural shifts can lead to becoming irrelevant in their communities. I don't mean to adapt to cultural shifts, but you must recognize them. I spoke at a church in Durham which had seen its community radically change as gauged by ethnicity and economics. The community had a growing population of Hispanics and African Americans. In addition, the community went from upper middle class to upper lower class in terms

of economics. They were unable or unwilling to recognize the change and today they are fighting to keep their doors opened. Contrast that with Sacred Heart Cathedral in Raleigh. They have adapted to reach the growing Hispanic population in our county. *The News and Observer* had an article several years ago about Sacred Heart Cathedral increasing the number of masses held weekly because of the influx of Hispanics and Hispanics are predominantly Catholic. That was one of the driving factors in building a new cathedral. Cultural shifts rep-

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## People Need the Lord

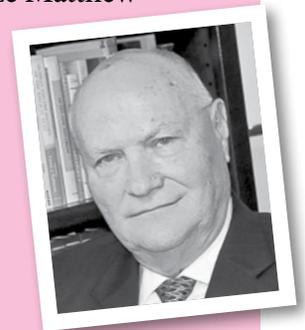
One year for Vacation Bible School my mother made me memorize Matthew 28:19-20:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

I had to stand in front of the “Junior Department,” as we called the children's department in those days, and recite the verses. I was scared, but I got it out. The Great Commission didn't defeat me!

These words of Jesus remind me of two things: (1) People need the Lord, and (2) it's our task to introduce them to him. These words have been the marching orders of

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## Falls Women's Fellowship: New Bible Study Begins

**W**e all need reminders of God's loving patience. I spent the better part of my life, nearly five full decades, floating in and out of church before accepting Jesus as my Lord and Savior. And despite spending decades swimming in Christian waters, so to speak, I knew very little about my God. I wasn't a Christian. I went to church. I know now those are two very different things.

If you asked me a year ago to tell you the story of God, I most likely would have said, "The Bible tells us the story of man's creation and fall from grace and our salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ."

That, folks, is called bluffing.

Sure, if pressed, I would've spoken about Adam and Eve with confidence. We all know that story, right? I would have told you Moses led the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt. We all know that story too. At which point we would have promptly arrived at the New Testament. La fin!

I knew about Joseph and his multi-colored coat, Noah and his ark, Abraham and Isaac, King David wrote the Psalms, and King Solomon was wise (1 Kings 3:16-28). I know the Jewish temple was destroyed. I knew little stories, cobbled together from childhood Sunday school and Sunday morning sermons, but I didn't understand how any of that worked to the glory of God. I didn't understand how any of that had any-

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## Event Calendar

- February 2 — Deacons Meeting 4 PM
- February 8 — Men's Fellowship Breakfast 9 AM
- February 8 — Valentines Dinner 6 PM  
please sign up!
- February 15 — Food Bank Volunteer 9 AM
- February 18 — Women's Bible Study 6 PM
- February 26 — Ash Wednesday Service 7 PM

## Food Bank volunteers needed

**S**everal times a year, the missions committee coordinates a trip to the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. The food bank is not that far from our community, located at 1924 Capital Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27604. This is where the old flea market mall used to be before you enter the downtown Raleigh area. Normally we try to get about 10 - 12 people for either a weeknight or Saturday morning session. You never know what they will need you to do when you show up. In the past, we have done things like sorting potatoes, separating meats into different categories, putting eggs in cartons, and putting together meal boxes for needy families. The tasks are things most anyone can do that the food bank just doesn't have enough manpower to complete. The only requirement is a couple of hours of your time to complete these tasks so they can get food to those who need it. Our next trip to the food bank is February 15th from 9 am-12 pm. For more information on the food bank, visit their website at: <https://foodbankcenc.org/> If you would like to join us, sign up in the vestibule or contact Alan Watkins.

## Mission Donations

**W**e will be collecting food for Tri-Area Ministry all during the month of February. Please leave food in bags in the vestibule.

In March we will be collecting for the Diaper Bank. Diapers of all sizes, wipes and ointment and baby and children wash. If you have any questions or need more information please contact Angie Harris.

## February Birthdays

- 13 Francine Leclercq
- 23 Joan Barham
- 24 Woody Leonard
- 25 Zoe Davis
- 27 Mike Leclercq
- 27 Pat Nowak



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## ***Landscape continued ...***

resent changes in a community's ethnicity and average income. Falls Baptist Church must grapple with this reality. If we are to reach newcomers in our community, we must open our doors and hearts to people who are not like us in every respect.

3. Continuing to use outmoded language in the church. We often use archaic language in church. I saw a sign announcing a church's budget promotion, "Not equal gifts but equal sacrifices." It was posted on the wall above the choir for everyone to see. Now church people of my generation understand that. It means we should all give sacrificially though not the same amount; some people can give more than others. Sacrifice means different things to different people. Other overworked words are "commitment" and "care." You've heard it, "If our church was only committed enough then..." or "If we really cared we would fill the sanctuary every Sunday." "Commitment" and "care" need to be replaced by "love." A church may be correct in its doctrine and drive people away because they don't exhibit love. People don't care what you think until they know you care about them. Let's talk about "community." That's what belonging to church should represent—belonging to a community of fellow strugglers who are growing in Christ and showing it by loving one another. People are in search of community. They are lonely and desperate for meaningful relationships at a deep, caring level. "Why do you go to that church?" I asked a lady. She said, "Because they care for me." People are looking for a place where they can be in community with other people and feel like those people actually care for them. Starbucks became successful because they build stores which make you feel like you have been invited to someone's living room. Customers thrive on that sense of community and they keep returning. I know about it because I go to Starbucks.

4. The danger of poor planning. An old saying is, "If you don't plan you may end up somewhere you don't want to be." I believe in trusting Christ for the future, but I also believe he gives us intellect and common sense to plot an effective future for Falls. We need to ask the question, "Where should Falls be in its min-

istry in five years?" and then put in place the plans and systems to get us there. If not, then in five years we will be five years further behind in becoming the church Christ calls us to be.

5. Churches must be on mission. Churches who thrive take seriously the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ. They know what it means to take the gospel to their neighborhoods and to the rest of the world. Churches who focus on missions rather than using their resources to shore up failing programs popular in a former day thrive. These churches know church is not about them; it's about the rest of the world. I had a friend who visited a church on the beach which locked the doors at 11:05 on Sunday mornings. For them, church was about the people in the sanctuary behind locked doors on Sunday morning and no one else. Many churches behave that way though not literally locking their doors a few minutes after 11:00 on Sunday mornings.

Fredrick Buechner calls us to be the church which Jesus envisioned: Our happiness is all mixed up with each other's happiness and our peace with each other's peace. Where there are dark places, be the light especially there. Be the salt of the earth. Bring out the true flavor of others. That is what Jesus tells the disciples to be. This is what Jesus tells his Church, tells us, to be and do. Love each other. Heal the sick, he says... Cleanse lepers... That is what loving each other means. If the Church is doing things like that, then it is being what Jesus told it to be. If it is not doing things like that — no matter how many other good and useful things it may be doing instead — then it is not being what Jesus told it to be.

— Tom Jenkins

## **Deacons**

<b>Linwood Barham, Chairman</b>	<b>919-418-1162</b>
<b>Hubert Jenks, Vice Chairman</b>	<b>919-270-8765</b>
<b>Alan Watkins, Secretary</b>	<b>919-793-5548</b>
<b>Kevin Barham</b>	<b>919-618-4214</b>
<b>Brandon Long</b>	<b>252-903-4662</b>
<b>Mike Harris</b>	<b>919-746-5697</b>

## *Bible study continued ...*

thing to do with me.

After spending decades trying to “find God,” I had failed to learn anything about Him.

Since joining Falls Baptist Church, I have come a long way toward remedying my lack of understanding. Whether through regular Adult Sunday School classes, weekly Sunday sermons, our recent January Sunday evening Bible study, or our Men’s and Women’s Fellowship groups — all are exceptional opportunities to learn the word of God while growing in faith with other Christian believers.

And that’s where God’s loving patience comes in: grace. Something unwarranted, undeserved, but given lovingly and freely by our Father. Because for all the time I spent trying to find my God, He was right there with me all along, but I didn’t know it, and he never held that lack of knowledge against me.

Our Father has the power and authority to change the world with his breath, and yet He chose to allow me to seek Him. It is both a mercy and a grace that He is with us every day, allowing us to seek, to stumble, to come to Him in ways which are often bumbling, slow, and messy. He never gave up on me. He never tired of my search. I didn’t know any of this, though, until I began studying His word at Falls Baptist Church.

Falls Women’s Fellowship will resume meeting on Tuesdays in February, beginning February 18th, at 6 PM. We’d love for you to join us. More information will

be available in the next couple of weeks about materials.

Whether you’ve been attending services for a while, are still seeking Him, or are a new believer, we invite you to walk with us and to learn with us about God’s loving patience, His promises, and His Son.

We hope to see you there!

— Victoria Neal

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## *Need continued ...*

Christians ever since Christ spoke them as he stood on the mountain in his resurrection body and ascended to the throne of God.

I would like to think of Falls membership as “Great Commission Christians” and Falls BC a “Great Commission Church.” That simply means taking Jesus’ words seriously and living by them. I suspect there is at least one person you know who is not a Christian. He may be a member of your family, a co-worker, a neighbor or just a passing acquaintance. I want you to start praying for that person and asking the Lord to give you an opportunity to share the Gospel with him. You don’t have to write a formal speech to witness to him; perhaps you can open the door to talk with him about Christ by telling him about what Christ has recently done for you in your life. When that has happened, tell me about it. I want to catalog stories like that for through them we will become a Great Commission Church. It would be great to use the baptistery at least once a month!

— Tom Jenkins



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