



Biblical Foundations For Freedom

Releasing God's life-changing truth to this generation

[Pray BFF #129](#)

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Dear Prayer Team,

“Nothing shall be impossible to you.”

Growth always brings changes. As soon as you get used to one thing, then a new adjustment is required. We see it with our children's clothing. Kathryn is growing. She needs to get bigger clothes. Daniel's shoes are too small. New shoes are needed. God grows our faith and this impacts our personal character, beliefs and actions. We wonder if BFF is about to expand into uncharted waters, into a new stage along with all of its unfamiliar paths, impossible steps and risks.

A bit of history

About ten years ago, during a sabbatical, the Lord put a research study project on my mind: *Christian Training Institutions During Revivals*. The result was deeper insight into the training methods used for equipping men for full-time ministry. My discoveries: training programs were far too few and quite inadequate at preparing men for full-time ministry. More importantly, two questions were planted in my mind and heart:

- (1) What is the purpose of the training?
- (2) How is training accomplished?

With the ongoing development of BFF I have had very little time to think or dream about ways to provide formal training. These questions, however, have been simmering in the back of my mind for these many years as I developed many series of training materials. In the past several years, training pastors overseas, generating advanced training materials and counseling many NextSteppers (those interested in full-time or tent-making service) have begun to sharpen this vision. Is God bringing this old burden into view now? This is what I ask you to pray for.

A mission

Present forms of training, although helpful in certain ways, fail to accomplish the goals that are needed for men going into full-time service. Allow me to highlight certain distinctives of the training that the Lord, I believe, wants to see implemented.

1. **Shaping the personal life.** In a family there is interaction and small group discussion, so students would rub shoulders with mentors and professors. This runs opposite to the professional mindset in many training institutions today. We want to help shape personal character and the way people respond to each other in personal relationships. God is concerned with the life and character.
2. **Biblical goals.** The goal is not just to know more theology. That got the Pharisees in trouble! We want to know God more. When we know God more, then our theology (i.e. understanding God and His works in the world) develops properly. The trouble comes when we learn things without increasing our love for God. God wants a more intimate relationship with each of us.
3. **Focused studies.** The study method is conducted in such a way that we grow. We refuse to study a book or passage without being shaped by God's truth. We are first shaped by His Word, and

then we preach. We want to learn how to [depend upon the Spirit to teach](#) us, and not the self-dependent method that we all are all too familiar with in our secular world.

I could go on ([See ADT](#)), but as I see parts come together, I wonder if it is now time to start seriously seeking God to develop a model of this kind of training. We have only vague ideas what it might look like, but a step forward is necessary.

A mansion

For many years, Linda and I have discussed a dream: BFF would acquire a sizable mansion where our family and students could live together for short periods of time to focus on study and living skills. Does it really help a pastor or a missionary-to-be if he gains good church planting skills but his marriage is nothing but a series of arguments? What good is it if we produce a man with powerful ministry skills but who cannot control his eyes?

We are not suggesting that seminaries are not good. They have many valuable resources. But I believe God has something much better for His people because they obtain goals that He has in mind.

“But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.” (1 Samuel 2:35).

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Our parenting studies and practices have shown us many things about training. Most importantly, perhaps, is the revelation that the parents are responsible for producing the kind of children they get. In other words, parents have a greater impact on their children than they realize. By training differently, we end up with different kinds of children. This is true with the training of ministry too.

Perhaps one way to stimulate revival is to offer better training for ‘minister parents’ (i.e. pastors and church planters). This in turn impacts the lives of the believers.

I believe God wants to raise up a new kind of training for full-time ministers that will more closely connect them to the local church and mentors, not just here but around the world. This is a great vision far beyond anything we can do. With your prayers, though, we believe God can raise up these badly needed training ministries. All we need is a mustard seed of faith (Matthew 17:20). God will grow the vision in His time and in His way.

Praise

- We are thankful for grace to help Paul [speak on the radio](#). (Still has much to learn though!)
- Our own church’s NextStep meeting went well. Paul spoke on how to [handle a busy schedule and ministry](#).
- Thank the Lord for grace to speak three times on the weekend. The message on [Handling Disillusionment](#) was particularly used to help bring healing to individuals. Praise Him!
- We are glad to see our garden springing up. (More growth!)
- Yesterday, we celebrated Father’s Day. It is terrific to see my family grow more and more.
- Praise the Lord! Last Saturday Paul finally understood one key aspect about developing new kind of webpages!
- The Lord has been good. We started praying for plans for India and various individuals starting contacting me. That is very nice!

Pray

- It is possible that we will have two two-man teams going to India this fall. But obstacles for the team members and their families will challenge their faith. Pray for one wife who is not well and other challenges that might come up. Paul hopes STM plans are firmed up by mid-July.
- A mansion or appropriate housing in Pittsburgh, preferably near the church and university area, for the purpose of training God's servants. This can be a model.
- For God to help strengthen the many present training institutions around the world.
- Further wisdom and insight into new webpage development and software.
- Volunteers of all sorts.
- Triple the size of the Orissa church despite severe Hindu persecution in some places.

Rev. Paul J. Bucknell, President
Biblical Foundations for Freedom

www.foundationsforfreedom.net

Email: info@foundationsforfreedom.net
Phone: (412) 761-3508
3276 Bainton St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212 USA