

## Understanding Metaphors

by Tyler Greene

In my last article I left off with the topic of literal interpretation. Since this is an important subject with many nuances, I want to address it in more depth.

Last time I mentioned that the Bible is intended to be read literally, that is, it is to be read with the proper understanding of the literary devices that the biblical authors used. Most of the time this is in its plain, "literal" meaning.

There are of course exceptions to this rule. For example, it is important for us to recognize when the Bible uses analogy. The first of two primary analogies, metaphor, is used when a literal object is replaced with a non-literal object to give the effect of similarity between them.

The Bible also makes use of simile, another analogical tool, which compares two items by using the key words 'like' or 'as.' Because of these key words, similes are easier to recognize, however, some metaphors are also obvious: God is called a mother hen, Peter is called a rock, and Paul is called a planter.

Even though these examples are clear, often we misunderstand what Scripture has to say due to an improper interpretation of metaphor. For example, what did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body" when instituting the Lord's Supper? Did he mean that communion bread is his literal body, or did he mean that the bread represented his body in a metaphorical way?

These words have been debated in the church for centuries. R. C. Sproul recalls, "One of the very few issues over which Luther and Calvin were never able to reach agreement was the very matter of the meaning of these words of Jesus."

At one point in negotiations between representatives of Calvin and Luther, Luther kept repeating, 'Hoc est corpus meum; hoc est corpus meum....' (This is my body....) Surely, given both Luther and Calvin's view of the authority of the Bible, if they could have agreed as to what the Bible was actually saying, they both would have submitted to it." Luther interpreted this passage literally while Calvin interpreted it metaphorically.

Interpreting metaphor is not always an easy process. The trouble comes not in trying to find out what the metaphor means (though this too can be difficult), but what actually is metaphor. This is as true for us today as it has always been. It should also be said that a correct understanding of metaphor in no way weakens a literal view of Scripture.

We should not be afraid to say that something is figurative if it indeed is (this does not make someone liberal). Understanding this literary device can be a powerful tool for interpreting Scripture correctly, so when we approach Scripture let us be mindful of it and use it effectively. And metaphors be with you.



### Sacra

In my next article I will continue with more methods of biblical interpretation.

If you would like a response in the next issue, please send me an E-mail (approx. 100 words) to [greenebt@montreat.edu](mailto:greenebt@montreat.edu)

Theologia

## Owen Youth Center

Continued from page 1

Associate Dr. Jerry Bobilya, concerning a possible agreement with the college are in progress.

Montreat Junior and Young Life leader Drew Stewart linked up with the youth center proj-

ect through Outdoor Education professor Dottie Shuman, who joined the venture early on.

Shuman relates, "This is a great opportunity for students to interact with junior high and high school kids. I see Montreat students doing things like tutoring, hanging out with them and being role models, planning events, and organizing events that teens would love. Maybe a Montreat student or recent grad could be director of the facility someday!"

Dr. Rainey wants the centers to be financially self-sustaining with a consistent income possibly coming from membership fees, coin-slotted games, café revenue, and continuing donations.

Presently, the future of this venture depends solely on donations and grants. Thus far, the Owen district has mustered \$60,000, the Janirve Foundation pitched in \$150,000, and North Carolina Congressman Charles Taylor contributed as well.

The Black Mountain area is home to approximately 2,000 middle and high school students. Gifts from parents of students, as well as further fundraising endeavors, must raise an additional \$65,000 in order for the Owen group to reach its goal of \$125,000.

For more information or to get involved, contact Kevin Greenspan at 298-7001 or Gene Rainey at 252-9200 or visit [www.ournexgeneration.org](http://www.ournexgeneration.org) for more info.

## Adults Thrive Back in School

by Dwayne Herbert

I had a unique experience going back to school for graduate studies. I attend Montreat College's SPAS program in Charlotte. My first class started with a devotion to God. A devotion to God? Is that not illegal? No, not here at this wonderful Christian College called Montreat.

At this college, the professors are free to talk about God and are encouraged to have a short prayer before class. In my first couple of classes I felt a little awkward because of this open show of love for God, which was forbidden in my previous university, high school, junior high school, and elementary school.

I have recently, since joining the program, given my life to God. It is a pleasure to be in a loving, caring, and productive environment such as Montreat's.

On the academic side of my experience, it has been tough. I not only had to get my brain back in shape from my absence from school since fall of 1999, I had to find time to read and complete my assignments. I work 40+ hours a week, tutor, and attend church on Thursdays. I am traveling every weekend to South Carolina to visit my two children, and I attend class every Tuesday from 6:00- 10:00 PM,

with a mandatory weekly study group.

I mention this for those people who believe that their life is too busy for school at the present time. Young people, don't wait until you are 50+ years old to continue your education. Older people, don't think that because you are 50+ years old that you cannot continue your education. What I am trying to say is: the time is now, in the present.

One thing I have learned in my short career as a graduate student is to make decisions using what is called cost benefit analysis. Everyone uses this analysis unconsciously in their decision making, but we usually only think of accounting benefit and cost.

How much will it cost me to attend? How much can I expect to make when I finish? I now learn to look at other less definable cost, such as what else I can be doing with the time that I am using for school? Or, how much more happiness I will gain from getting my Master's degree? Higher learning is not all about money; there are other factors of life that education touches.

I encourage you to go back to school to improve upon your physical and mental state.

## Dear Counselor,

We have been back from spring break less than a week and already I am beginning to feel the stress returning that I thought I vacationed away. If I am feeling this way already, how will I ever make it through the rest of the semester with end of the year projects, exams, the spring formal, and graduation still ahead?

-Major Stressed

Dear MS,

Stress is definitely a condition that we need to control as opposed to letting it control us. Extended periods of stress can lead to numerous emotional and physical health issues including anxiety, digestive problems, headaches, and the list goes on and on.

Our bodies go into stress mode as a response to either internal or external pressures. It is important to determine for ourselves if the pressures are real or self-imposed. This determination helps us make decisions on how best to deal with the stress.

Bodies that are generally in good shape are more prepared for stress and deal with it better. Following the steps for a healthy lifestyle will help: good nutrition, enough rest, proper exercise, and positive attitude.

You can also prepare for times of added stress by increasing meditation time, laughing with friends, and organizing your time well. Stress management is an important skill to develop for survival in this crazy world in which we live. Remember to relax.

God's plan for us works when we choose for that to happen. Thanks for asking for the help that you need and please come by The Counseling Center where we can discuss this issue in more detail.

-Cassie

For more information on this and other mental health issues, contact one of the counselors at The Counseling Center, lower level of Bell Library, ext. 3538 or e-mail message to [cpavone@montreat.edu](mailto:cpavone@montreat.edu) or [ccopenhaver@montreat.edu](mailto:ccopenhaver@montreat.edu).