



# FMHF Annual Retreat

## *Serving God Through the Stages of our Lives*

Dr. Bill Morehouse – September 20, 2019

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## Tonight's topics

- A. Where are we?
- B. Stages of Life
- C. My testimony
- D. Family and Career
- E. Graduating into Retirement

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# A

## Where are we?

We've been called together as born again believers from evangelical backgrounds to grow in our care for our LORD, each other, and the afflicted.

Many of us are Free Methodists based in a reformation movement who are committed to personal sanctification, holiness, and the witness of godly living.

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Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore.

*Psalms 93:5*

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

*Isaiah 64:6*

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the LORD.

*Hebrews 12:12-14*

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# B

## Stages of Life

YOUTH IS A GIFT  
• AGE IS AN ART •

### Four Stages of Life

**1**

**First**

The period of childhood and young adulthood dedicated to nurture in family, learning and maturing into adulthood

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**2**

**Second**

Creating a family, building a career, and accumulating wealth. Often attached to earthly rewards like money, power, prestige

25

**3**

**Third**

Progressively transitioning responsibilities and becoming more and more devoted to mentorship, wise service, and spirituality

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**4**

**Last**

Ideally becoming dedicated to sharing the fruits of enlightenment and preparing for the life to come

100

*Some careers like ministry and primary care may merge 3-4 closer into 2*

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### The River of Life



*With grateful credit to Dr. Daniel Fountain*

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### Life Tasks in Each Stage

**1**

**First**

How to receive nurture and love others, how to appreciate studying and learning, and finding out who you are on way to adulthood

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**2**

**Second**

Overcoming childhood handicaps, taking responsibility for your life and others, being productive in a career

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**3**

**Third**

Getting a broader perspective and preparing for the future by helping others pick up where you will be leaving off

50

**4**

**Last**

Applying your life experience to benefit others with spiritual and practical insights, wisdom, and support

100

*Note roles of older and younger described in Titus 1 and 2*

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# C

## My testimony

Called a "conversion narrative" by Puritans "to draw a distinction between easy self-righteousness and the new birth of saving grace." The following descriptions are from Puritan pastors Thomas Hooker (1586-1647) and Thomas Allen (1608-1673).

## Hooker's Six Essentials

### 1. Contrition

Man should look into the **Law of God\*** and make an examination of his life and state according to the Law.

### 2. Humiliation

**Conviction** of conscience by which seeker realizes that he is under sin.

### 3. Vocation

**Despair of salvation**, in respect to strength of self and other creatures.

### 4. Implantation

True humiliation of heart, grief and fear because of sin.  
**Confession.**

### 5. Exaltation

First entrance into the state of **saving grace.**

### 6. Possession

**Awareness** of presence of faith.

\* *"Law" of God = Biblical teaching*

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## Allen's Synopsis

Note similarity to Revivals of faith over the centuries as well as 12-Step and Celebrate Recovery

- Agitations of the soul lead to the sinner's deep sense of concern and humiliation at his condition.
- The stricken sinner attempts to redress the wrongs he has done through "legal obedience" by turning to good works as a remedy, but this effort fails and he is brought to deeper despair.
- The sinner experiences worsening despair and misery. He sees all his efforts as vain and inconsequential before a perfect God.
- At the most abject moment of despair, the soul *bottoms out*, begins to understand God's grace, and is elevated to an appreciation of it.
- Gratitude causes the sinner to live a new life of obedience and thanksgiving, although human nature and pride may cause him to backslide and to rely on his own will and works once again.
- Because of this temptation, individuals must continually monitor their spiritual state and repeat the process of conversion if necessary.

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## Revival Cycles

Revivals of faith, from Old Testament times to the present, historically come in cycles.

- A. First disunity and social and moral decay set in leading to a growing sense of emptiness, hunger and yearning for better times.
- B. This is followed by a renewed sensitivity to spiritual matters and rediscovery of the power of the Word of God, leading into a rising time of inspired revitalization of human ideals and values.
- C. The result is a groundswell of conviction and repentance that produces a host of positive, godly moral and social endeavors, after which the community drifts into an ebbing time, becomes less cohesive, and settles back into more conventional social patterns.
- D. Finally disunity and social and moral decay set in again and reach a point where the cycle starts over, each time building on advances that have been made in the past.

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# D

## Family and Career

Training, early practice, reexamination after conversion, sense of calling, marriage, family and church life, dedicated career serving the disadvantaged in Jesus' Name

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The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

*Psalm 92:12-15*

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# E

## Graduating into Retirement

Preparation, mentorship, progressively passing the baton, leaving a legacy, investing in extended family, focusing on building in His broader Kingdom

### Graduating into Retirement

- Five F's:  
Faith, Family, Finances, Fitness, and Fruitfulness
- Preparation and mentorship
- Progressively passing the baton
- Investing in extended family
- Focusing on building in His Kingdom
- Leaving a legacy

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