

# Northwest Argue *meants*

*Pastor's Communiqué*  
from President Don Argue  
Northwest College

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Years ago I was in a meeting with Doug Wead. As part of his message he presented two major problems that face most people, especially pastors. When Doug said the letters "FOP" and "FOF" I wondered if he had been into something that was affecting his thinking process. The light went on when he explained that "FOP" stood for "Fear of People" and "FOF" stood for "Fear of Failure."

Pastors, we deal with people. Lee Iacoca once stated, "If you can't get along with people, you are really bankrupt. They (people) are all you have to work with!"

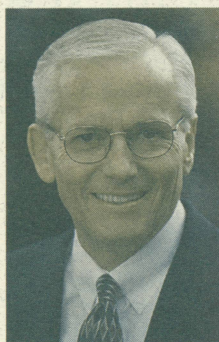
All of us have had disappointments with a board member or a trusted church member. As a result, some have developed a kind of phobia identified as "FOP" that can numb you and make you far less effective than you could be.

"FOF" may involve ego! "Soccer player, Kyle Rote, Jr. remarked, 'There is no doubt in my mind that there are many ways to be a winner, but there is really only one way to be a loser and that is to fail to work beyond the failure.'" <sup>1</sup> All of us have failed. I remember when I was cut from my sophomore high school baseball team. I couldn't hit a fastball! Talk about disappointment and hurt! At fifteen years of age I learned two lessons:

1. Life will bring failures, but how you handle failure will determine your action in the future.
2. Failures come when you are doing something. You must be secure enough to handle failure and rejection.

If failure is processed properly, it will give you strength and determination to succeed. I read biographies because they chronicle real life experiences. At the current time I am reading a lengthy volume on the life of Dwight David Eisenhower. WOW! He experienced failures! Each failure placed more steel into his determination.

"FOP" or "FOF" can paralyze you! With God's help and wisdom, move forward to new victories!



## THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS:

### Fear of Failure

## POINTS of Argue *meant*

Book: **Failing Forward**; Author, John Maxwell—Publisher, Thomas Nelson. Comment: Please read my column that introduces this issue of Argue *meants* because it relates to John Maxwell's book.

Book: **Living Like Jesus** (*Becoming Everything God Wants You to Be*); Authors, James O. Davis and Ken N. Horn—Publisher, Onward Books, Inc. [www.onwardbooks.com](http://www.onwardbooks.com) Comment: 30 excellent sermons by many of today's leading preachers. Good preaching material!

Videos – **Transformations I & II**  
The Sentinel Group 1.800.668.5657  
Comment: "Imagine a community where 92% of the population is born again; where city jails have closed for lack of crime; ... imagine a city where 60,000 Christians jam the largest stadiums for celebrations." This is the first time I have recommended a video. Pastor, you need these videos to challenge and inspire your faith. Share them with your board and key leaders and their ideas of what God can do in your community will dramatically increase.

### Managing Editor's Book Recommendation:

**Aqua Church**, Sweet, Leonard.  
Publisher: Vital Ministry, "Discover how the Bible, tradition, vision and teamwork, relate to today's ever-changing world. You discover churches across the country that are ministering successfully to the postmodern culture without compromising the Gospel of Jesus."



<sup>1</sup> John C. Maxwell, – *Failing Forward*

**Northwest**  
COLLEGE

## Overcoming the Fear of Failure

In the 1970s and 1980s, I photographed hundreds of sporting events – NHL hockey, Big Ten basketball and football, NFL football, PGA golf. I know what it takes to get a great sports picture.

So it would make sense to you when I say that one of my favorite magazines is *Sports Illustrated*. I make sure to get a copy every week. But I don't get it for the pictures any more. I actually read it for the articles.

Because, in almost every issue, there's at least one story of personal triumph. Of overcoming adversity. Of working together to succeed. Of winning against tremendous odds. These stories inspire me and encourage me.

A couple months ago, there was an article about Lance Berkman, an outfielder for the Houston Astros. He has become an offensive force in major league baseball, but there was a time when it didn't look like he would make it.

His college career didn't exactly start off with a bang.

During his freshman year, Berkman struck out in his first two at bats, had a couple hits, and then went 0 for 17.

"He was a little insecure, and he kept walking past me in the dugout, looking at me like I was about to pull him," said his college coach. "Finally, I went up to him and said, "Lance, if you're hitting .100, you're still in my lineup because you can flat-out hit."

And that encouragement freed him. Berkman had 17 hits in his next 21 at bats. By his junior year he was batting .431, and he left school to become a first-round draft choice by the Astros.

His fear of failure was paralyzing him. It almost robbed him of what has become a successful major league career.

It might be doing the same thing to us, and I think it deserves a closer look.

I'm not sure that fear of failure is as simple as it first seems. It's a little like the fear of death. Does the fear of dying keep us from living? And does the fear of failing keep us from trying?

I'm not at all sure that failure is what we're really afraid of.

Maybe we're just afraid of **change**. We've always done things a certain way, and it would be disruptive and inconvenient and unsettling to do them another way. We know we need to change, but we hesitate, even though the change might actually make things better.

Maybe we're just afraid of **conflict**. Any time we make a decision, or take a positive action, we fear someone is going to disagree with us. Often, our desire to avoid conflict leads us to avoid any kind of decision-making or action at all.

"Change means movement. Movement means friction," says activist Saul Alinsky. "Only in the frictionless vacuum of a nonexistent abstract world can movement or change occur without that abrasive friction of conflict."

Maybe we're afraid of **consequences**... consequences that don't necessarily include failure. Our actions may result in a new environment for us, and that will force us to deal with new obstacles and challenges.

*"We know we need to change, but we hesitate, even though the change might actually make things better."*

Or maybe we're just afraid of the **unknown**. Of what might happen. Here's a great quote from Alfred Hitchcock, the famous TV and movie director: "There is no terror in a bang, only in the anticipation of it."

We want to know how things are going to turn out down the road. We want to be reassured that our efforts are going to be rewarded, that our attempts will be successful.

And that just ain't the way life works.

Not even the Christian life.

Sometimes we are so afraid of failing, we don't act until we are guaranteed of success. There are very few "sure shots" in life. And most of the time, if something looks like a sure winner it's because the payoff is very small. I like what George Bernard Shaw says: "Nothing is worth doing unless the consequences may be serious."

## How does fear of failure infiltrate our spiritual life?

Let me say this carefully: Is our search for something we call "God's Perfect Will" really an excuse not to act until He guarantees us that we will succeed?

Is it possible to be right in the center of "God's Perfect Will" and experience pain, difficulty, and even failure?

Look at your children. Some of the most important lessons they learn come from failure. They learn to try again. They learn to try another way. They learn to keep trying.

Does our Heavenly Father look at us the same way? Maybe the lessons He's trying to teach us involve courage and persistence, not instant gratification and perpetual success.

If we have any further questions about "God's Perfect Will," we need only to look at Christ at Gethsemane. The path God sets before us is not always smooth and easy.

Are you ready for some more sports imagery? In golf there's this saying: "Never up, never in." If you don't hit the ball up in the air, even from a very difficult lie, you have no chance of ever getting it in the cup. You have to take a swing. You may shank it, slice it, or hit it in the trees, but you have to take a swing.

This may not be as familiar to you, but let's talk about poker. I have a friend who used to play in a friendly neighborhood game every Friday night. Very small stakes –

just a quarter to ante. But he learned some valuable lessons from the game.

"You have to toss in the ante every hand to play the game. But if you never bet, you can never win. You will just keep losing, a little bit every hand, until you are out of money."

One of the richest men in the world put himself through college by playing poker.

He said he learned more from the game than from any of his classes. And this was the lesson he learned.

It's the parable of the talents. If you bury your "talent" because you fear losing it, you will have it taken away. The only way to keep it is to put it into play.

The only way to avoid failure is to not try, and that is the greatest failure of all.

*"Maybe the lessons He's trying to teach us involves courage and persistence, not instant gratification and perpetual success."*

## Confronting Fear Head On

As Christians, we are asked to bet our lives. "I tell you the truth," says Christ in John 12:24-25. "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

We don't like to talk about it, but maybe this is a bet we're going to lose.

The Apostle Paul stares that prospect straight in the eye when he writes to the Corinthians (this is from The Living Bible): "For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ must still be dead. And if He is still dead, then all our preaching is useless and your trust in God is empty, worthless, hopeless... If being a Christian is of value to us only now in this life, we are the most miserable of creatures."

This is not what we believe. We agree with what Jim Elliot said: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." It's not a foolish bet to offer a temporary life for an eternal one.

So if we're willing to take this giant risk with eternal consequences, shouldn't we be a little more courageous in the smaller challenges that confront us every day?

Because here's the good news, in the words of Mother Teresa: "God doesn't require us to succeed; he only requires that you try."

Let's go back to where we started, to the game of baseball. The game's no fun if you only sit on the bench. But if you do get the chance to bat, don't just go up to the plate and stand there with the bat on your shoulder until you're called out on strikes.

This will not be your only chance. It won't even be your second chance. We often hear that "God is the God of Second Chances." I don't think that does Him justice. If He tells us to forgive someone 490 times (7 times 70), don't you think He'll give you at least that many at bats?

Maybe you're in a slump. You're 0-for-17 with your Sunday sermons. Your efforts to lead your board have been foul balls. It seems like everything you swing at is a pop-up or a ground-out or a strike-out.

Or maybe you're in a new game, facing a new pitcher, and you don't know what to try.

Either way, you have to get the bat off your shoulder. You have to hear God's assurance: "I know you can flat-out preach." Or pastor. Or counsel. Or serve. Or lead. Then repeat the words of Paul to the Philippians ("I can do all things through Christ...") and take some swings. Take some big swings.

If you strike out, you're not a failure.

You're only a failure if you don't try.

**Merlin Quiggle, Executive Director for Communications**, has spent much of his career creating communications to help recruiting and fund-raising efforts for Christian Higher Education. You can reach him at 425.889.5731 or [merlin.quiggle@ncag.edu](mailto:merlin.quiggle@ncag.edu)



## Women's Cross Country Team Ranked #1 in the NAIA

Recently the NAIA National Women's Cross Country polls were released with **Northwest ranked first in the nation**. The NC Women got their first chance to prove the ranking fit, and they did just that. The Northwest College Women's Cross Country team won the Open section of the University of Washington Sundodger Invitational. The win came in a race filled with talented and nationally ranked teams and with the best performances in college history.

**Coach Taylor Commented**, "The women's team grows more every time we race. We are running fast and as a pack. At the NAIA level, our pack is deadly, and yet, as good as we are right now, we have tons of room to get much better. We are still a relatively young team and the women learn more about all the things they are capable of each and every day of this season."

"Our top five women are performing extremely well, but I want to single out **Crystal Evans** and **Tiffany Stilwater** for this meet. It is beyond words how proud I am of the women and how special this team is."

The Northwest College Athletics website can be accessed at: <http://www.nwcollege.edu/athletics/index.html>

## Vision 2002 Northwest - Ministry in the Postmodern World February 7 - 8, 2002

We are pleased to present **Leonard Sweet** as our guest speaker. Sweet will be the feature speaker in all four plenary sessions. Dr. Sweet is a historian of American culture, futurist, preacher and author of several best-selling books including, '**The Aqua Church**' and '**Post-Modern Pilgrims**.'

"**Visionary** pastors identified the need for a school to train church leaders for the **Great Northwest** way back in 1934. Northwest College was mothered by the church and was raised to serve the Church as we do today. I'm thrilled to invite you to **Vision Northwest 2002**...just one more opportunity to serve the Northwest pastors and church leaders," says Don Argue, President of Northwest College.

There will also be a wide variety of break sessions and speakers that will appeal to pastors and leaders from the Builders to the Busters. Many who are local men and women who are doing, "**Out of the Box**" ministry.

So come prepared to have your territory enlarged, your vision increased, and your heart challenged. This will truly be a must attend event with hundreds of Evangelical church leaders from throughout the region.

For more information or to register on line and find links go to [www.nwcollege.edu/vision](http://www.nwcollege.edu/vision) or contact Robert Vatter, Director for Church Relations, at 425.889.7820 or [rob.vatter@ncag.edu](mailto:rob.vatter@ncag.edu)

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selah

"Failure is not an option"

*Gene Krantz  
Apollo 13 Mission*

"They never fail who die in a great cause:

The block may soak their gore;  
Their heads may sodden in the sun...  
But still their spirit walks abroad."  
*Lord Byron*

"I cannot give you the formula for success, but I can give you the formula for failure~which is: Try to please everybody."  
*Herbert B. Swope (1882-1958), U.S. journalist. Speech, 20 Dec. 1950.*

"He who has never failed somewhere, that man can not be great."  
*Herman Melville  
Moby Dick*

**Rob Vatter, Director for Church Relations**, is available to respond to questions and needs related to the local church. He is available to represent Northwest College to churches, missions conventions, and conferences. You can reach him at 425.889.5205 or [rob.vatter@ncag.edu](mailto:rob.vatter@ncag.edu)



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Failure**

**FOCUS:**  
THIS ISSUE'S

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