



"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I will answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

December 2, 2011

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Feature Article – The Wolf's Whiskers – Part 2



Last week's Heads Up addressed the subject of churches using secular rock music in their "worship" of God. What was unthinkable only a few years ago now appears to be common practice in those churches which claim to be "theologically conservative" and "culturally relevant."

(Last week's article is on the Grace Baptist Church website under Heads Up, November 25. <http://www.gracebaptistmalanda.net.au/index.html>)

There is a good reason for calling these articles "The Wolf's Whiskers." The elders of the Ephesian church were warned about the wolves that threatened to enter in and destroy the flock.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Acts 20:28, 29

A good pastor knows that the wolf's whiskers come in the door before the wolf's fangs. A good pastor is a shepherd who watches continually, not just for the fangs, but for the whiskers of the wolf.

So what are the "WOLF'S WHISKERS?"

There is no doubt that the wolf has many whiskers. The focus of these articles is on one whisker alone, the secular music that is creeping into the churches.

A better term would be "carnal" music. Carnal music is the problem, whether it comes in a "southern gospel" package, or "CCM", or "Patch the Pirate", or "Classical", or "Barnyard/Smoky Mountain", or "Stamps Baxter", or "hip hop/rap" music, or "Hillsong" music or "secular/pop music". It may even be traditional hymns played or sung in a carnal style.

I fully realise that the term "carnal music" is not one that is used by the seasoned veterans of the Music Wars, but the issue of carnality needs to be addressed. We need to recognise that it is not only the genre, or musical style or the musician that is the problem. The problem is that much of the music used in "fundamental" Baptist churches is carnal, not spiritual.

Carnal Music versus Spiritual Music –

The differences between carnal music and spiritual music need to be emphasised and clarified.

When God described the evidences of the filling of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18–21, he said that the first evidence is our music. *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"* (Ephesians 5:18, 19)

Did you observe the nature of spiritual music?

- Spiritual music is the work of the Spirit of God
- Spiritual music is biblical
- Spiritual music is sung in three distinct styles (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs)
- Spiritual music is primarily vocal
- Spiritual music is melodic
- Spiritual music has a spiritual emphasis
- Spiritual music is an act of worship inside the believer
- Spiritual music is sung to God

Colossians 3:16 adds, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

This verse adds these qualities:

- Spiritual music is Christian
- Spiritual music is wise
- Spiritual music instructs and warns others through sound doctrine being sung
- Spiritual music is to be sung with grace

Spiritual music is consistent with the fruit of the Spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22–23, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."*

Even a casual consideration of the fruit of the Spirit should cause every Christian to consider the importance of attitude, temperament, and manner when we listen to music. What is the spirit of the musician, not only in this song, but in all his music? Is he truly manifesting consistently the fruit of the Spirit?

So if there is spiritual music, what is carnal music like?

Carnal music appeals to the old nature, it is music that is self centred, that stirs up the lusts of the flesh, and that is consistent with the works of the flesh as in Galatians 5:19–21, *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."*

- Carnal music is compatible with immorality
- Carnal music promotes idols
- Carnal music has an occultic influence
- Carnal music genders strife and conflict
- Carnal music fellowships with the lowest levels of society

No doubt, some will object to this description of carnal music. We MUST remember that the heart of man will make music, and that the music it makes will agree with its predominant condition, spiritual or carnal. I challenge the reader to ponder the words of Gal. 5:19–21 and apply them to the music of carnal musicians. In fact, be so brave as to replace (for a moment) the word "works" with "music." After all, one of the works of the flesh is its music, carnal music. I invite you to come with me on a journey into the pages of Scripture, and stand with me outside the palaces of the wicked, the homes of the carnal, the dens of iniquity and listen to the carnal music that throbs and pulsates out the windows and the doors.

Cain's murderous heart had its music. Nimrod's idolatry had its own musical style, and Jezebel had her court musicians. All these were carnal, and so was their music. Their music agreed with their hearts, just as their words agreed with their hearts.

The Lord Jesus Christ said, Matthew 12:33–35 *"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."*

Pastors, we are the Lord's appointed shepherds, charged with the responsibility of watchfulness over God's flock. We dare not slumber lest we fail to see the wolves coming to destroy our churches. Remember, the wolf's whiskers come in the door before the wolf's fangs!

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Acts 20:28, 29

Next week's Heads Up will address the questions of how secular, carnal music got into our churches. There is a path for the feet of the wolf so that his whiskers and fangs can come into our churches.

Pastor Buddy Smith

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Blessed Biographies –

Ichabod Spencer

A question for the discerning reader of Christian books, have you ever heard of Ichabod Spencer? Neither had I. But I wish I had.

You would think we would be familiar with the name of the man who followed Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, the man who was called "the Bunyan of Brooklyn", the one pastor in the last two hundred years who best exemplified "a shepherd's heart".

Born in 1797 in Rupert, Vermont, Ichabod Smith Spencer was converted to Christ just after his eighteenth birthday. His training prepared him to be a schoolteacher. In fact, such was the quality of his learning that he was invited to serve as President of the University of Alabama, and of Hamilton college in New York. He refused both and took up the mantle of pastor instead. Altogether he pastored twenty five years, serving just two churches.

Up to this point there seems to be nothing unusual about Ichabod Spencer. He certainly does not fit in the mould of modern day celebrity preachers. He preached no new theology. He founded no new denomination. He sailed across no seas. Very simply, he introduced no innovations into the churches he pastored. Why was he unique?

Consider the following facts:

1. Ichabod Spencer kept 800 appointments with souls every year for 25 years. That's how many visits he made to the people in his congregation and in his community every year! How do we know?
2. He made detailed records of every visit, describing the persons he visited, his words and theirs, his methods of evangelism (He called it "conspiring with the Holy Spirit"), and their responses.
3. The written records of these conversations fill twelve large volumes (!).
4. So well known was Ichabod Spencer in his day that his fellow ministers and his congregation pleaded with him to publish these volumes. At first he was reluctant to do so, but finally he agreed.

Immediately the demand for the first volume of **A Pastor's Sketches** exceeded all expectations. By 1856 it had run through many editions. It had a larger sale than almost any other strictly religious book which has ever been issued in America. As copies of the first volume began to circulate throughout the nation letters poured in seeking his counsel.

(And we never heard of him?)

Before I tell you of the impact Ichabod Spencer has had on me, let me share with you an excerpt from Volume I of **A Pastor's Sketches**. He titles this sketch "The Brown Jug".

It is a description of a farmer who attended the church he pastored. The man was not yet a Christian. He made several visits before he found the farmer at home. When Bro. Spencer spoke with him about his soul he admitted a need of salvation, but seemed to be without conviction of sin. Ichabod Spencer urged him to consider his plight. He pressed him strongly. He quoted Scripture to him. He pointed out to him his advancing age and the need to lead his children to the Saviour. The old man was sufficiently moved by the pastor's entreaties to call the family in for prayer and even began bringing his family to church. But he made no further progress. For six months he seemed to be at a standstill.

The preacher describes the farmer's conversion, "More than six months after he began to give his prayerful attention to his salvation, as I was riding toward his house, I met him on the road. We had a long conversation, but I discerned no change in his religious feelings.

At length my eyes happened to rest on a brown jug, lying on its side under the seat of his wagon. I resolved to speak to him on the subject of strong drink, but it was an awkward business. I did not wish to insult him or injure his feelings, but I thought it my duty to make some inquiry. So I began,

'Mr. E____, where are you going this morning?'

'I am going to the store.'

'I see you have got a jug there, under your seat; what are you going to do with that?'

He cast his eye down upon it, a little confused for an instant, but he immediately replied, 'I am going to get some rum in it.'

'Are you accustomed to drink rum?'

'I do not drink much.'

'Mr. E____, when you are perplexed, annoyed, or in some trouble, do you never take a drink on that account?'

'I am very apt to. It seems to keep me up.'

'Well, now, just tell me; for a good many months back, since you have been troubled on the subject of religion, have you been accustomed to resort to rum 'to keep you up?'

'Yes, at times. I felt the need of it.'

'In my opinion that is the worst thing, my dear friend, that you could do!'

'Why, I only drink a little at home...'

'So I understand. But have you not often at home, when you felt downcast in mind on account of sin, taken a drink because you felt thus troubled?'

'I believe I have done it sometimes. I never thought much about it.'

As I explained the effect of intoxicating drink upon the mind, and upon the feelings and the consciences of men, he hung down his head, and appeared to be much lost in thought. After a while, as I kept talking, he cast a glance at his jug; then looked up, and then his eyes fell back upon his jug again. By and by he slowly reached down his hand, and took hold of it. With a very solemn countenance and without saying a word – he had not spoken for half an hour – he placed the brown jug upon his knee. He turned his head very deliberately around, one way and the other, as if he were looking for something. Just at the spot where we were, the road swept past a huge stone, standing about ten feet above the path. It was only about three feet from the wagon. His eye fixed upon it, and then he glanced back to the jug upon his knee. He looked at the jug, at the rock, and at me, but in a little time I noticed that his eye glanced backward and forward, from the brown jug to the rock, and from the rock to the brown jug. Finally he seized the poor jug by its side, wrapping his long fingers half round it, and slowly rising from his seat, he stretched his tall frame to its full length, and lifting the brown jug aloft, as high as his long arm could reach, he hurled it, with all his might, against the rock, dashing it into a thousand pieces.

Apart from quieting his horse, his only words were, "We will go home now."

'I never spoke to him about rum afterwards. Within a month that man became a child of God.'

So here is an old time preacher that takes the reader on visitation with him. What do we learn as we go with him from one appointment to another? We learn how to be totally committed to the Word of God. In fact, we learn the importance of having mind and heart bathed in Scripture. We learn how to be under shepherds who are dependent upon the Holy Spirit. We see the necessity of having the Wisdom that is from above, and being clothed in humility. We learn how to care deeply about the precious souls of men. We observe how to trust more in God to convert sinners than to trust the newest soulwinning sales technique. We learn that the modern methods used by preachers to draw a crowd and

get professions of faith are generally shallow and cheap. And we learn that the Old Serpent's criticisms, "Preaching doesn't work! Personal Work is finished!" are lies.

Go read Ichabod Spencer.

From the book *A Pastor's Sketches*, Published by Solid Ground Christian Books.

Pastor Buddy Smith

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Blinded Minds –

(For some months, Robert Schuller's troubled broadcasting empire has been in discussions with creditors regarding its debts. Now it appears that their property has been sold to a Roman Catholic church. How fitting it is that Schuller and Co. should finally sell their property to the pope when he originally sought the pope's approval for his building plans. – Ed)

Crystal Cathedral Chooses Catholic Diocese as Purchaser

Schuller to sell Crystal Cathedral to Rome

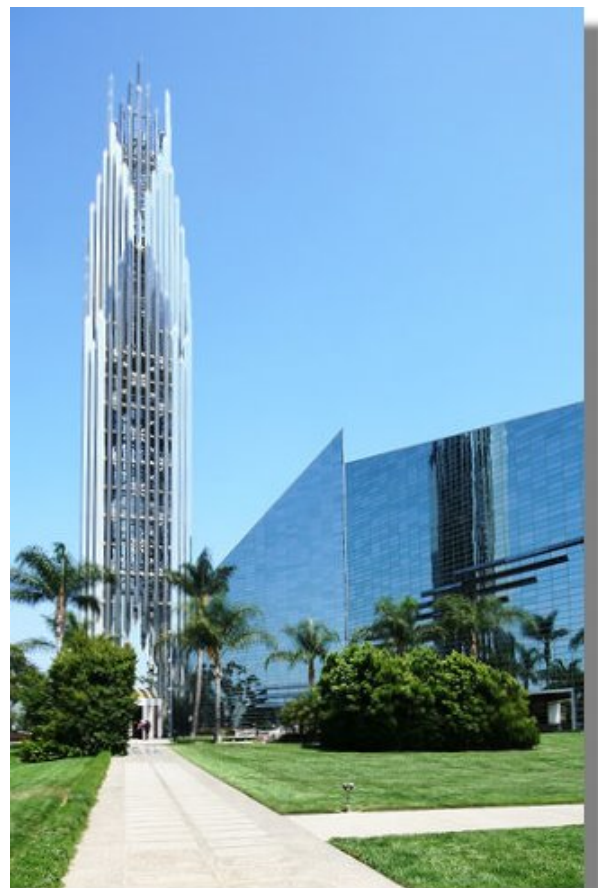
The Christian Post 18 November 2011

Crystal Cathedral Ministries endorsed the bid of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange County and the judge approved of the decision Thursday in the Santa Ana, California bankruptcy court, where the bankruptcy case of this prominent Garden Grove megachurch has been taking place which means that the property will not be sold to Chapman University, as previously expected.

Crystal Cathedral's founder, the Rev. Robert H. Schuller, expressed in a statement released Thursday that church administrators now support the diocese's \$57.5 million bid, impressing on observers that a final decision has been made on the 50-acre property; it will be sold to the Roman Catholic church, local media report.

Schuller, who manages the church together with family members, was forced to put the landmark glass-pane-covered property on the market in September, after the 10,000-member strong ministry was forced to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Oct. 2010.

Many church members reportedly felt disappointed by the Thursday announcement, since it would mean they will lose their landmark church in three years. "That's our church – the Crystal Cathedral. We bought and paid for it," church member, Bob Canfield, 73, told The Associated Press earlier on Thursday. "We feel like we've been raped of our ministry."



The news agency reported that some congregants have "emptied their pockets" trying to prevent the church from going under.

A series of financial scandals have also emerged as a result of the bankruptcy case, including an allegation that pastor Schuller and his family were receiving lucrative salaries as the church was struggling with a \$50 million debt.

<http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/2011/s11110113.htm>

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Bible Possession and the Vatican

(One of the saddest facts of church history is Rome's suppression of the Holy Scriptures. Mike Claydon recently sent the following statements by the Popes of the past. Most Christians today do not know that, when Gutenberg's press made the printing of books available to every nation, the only book that was NOT printed in Rome was the Bible. – Ed)

Innocent III; *"The mysteries of the faith are not to explained rashly to anyone"*

ITEM #1 POPE INNOCENT III

Pope Innocent III stated in 1199:

... to be reproved are those who translate into French the Gospels, the letters of Paul, the psalter, etc. They are moved by a certain love of Scripture in order to explain them clandestinely and to preach them to one another. The mysteries of the faith are not to explained rashly to anyone. Usually in fact, they cannot be understood by everyone but only by those who are qualified to understand them with informed intelligence. The depth of the divine Scriptures is such that not only the illiterate and uninitiated have difficulty understanding them, but also the educated and the gifted. (Denzinger-Schönmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum 770-771)

Source: Bridging the Gap – Lectio Divina, Religious Education, and the Have-not's by Father John Belmonte, S.J.

ITEM #2 COUNCIL OF TOULOUSE – 1229 A.D.

The Council of Toulouse, which met in November of 1229, about the time of the crusade against the Albigensians, set up a special ecclesiastical tribunal, or court, known as the Inquisition (Lat. inquisitio, an inquiry), to search out and try heretics. Twenty of the forty-five articles decreed by the Council dealt with heretics and heresy.

For those found to be in possession of translated scripture – It ruled in part:

Canon 1. We appoint, therefore, that the archbishops and bishops shall swear in one priest, and two or three laymen of good report, or more if they think fit, in every parish, both in and out of cities, who shall diligently, faithfully, and frequently



seek out the heretics in those parishes, by searching all houses and subterranean chambers which lie under suspicion. And looking out for appendages or outbuildings, in the roofs themselves, or any other kind of hiding places, all which we direct to be destroyed.

Canon 6. Directs that the house in which any heretic shall be found shall be destroyed.

Canon 14. We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; unless anyone from motive of devotion should wish to have the Psalter or the Breviary for divine offices or the hours of the blessed Virgin; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books.

Source: Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe, Edited with an introduction by Edward Peters, Scholar Press, London, copyright 1980 by Edward Peters, ISBN 0-85967-621-8, pp. 194-195, citing S. R. Maitland, Facts and Documents [illustrative of the history, doctrine and rites, of the ancient Albigenses & Waldenses], London, Rivington, 1832, pp. 192-194.

ITEM #3 THE COUNCIL OF TARRAGONA – 1234 A.D.

"No one may possess the books of the Old and New Testaments in the Romance language"

The Council of Tarragona of 1234, in its second canon, ruled that:

"No one may possess the books of the Old and New Testaments in the Romance language, and if anyone possesses them he must turn them over to the local bishop within eight days after promulgation of this decree, so that they may be burned lest, be he a cleric or a layman, he be suspected until he is cleared of all suspicion." D. Lortsch, *Historie de la Bible en France*, 1910, p.14.

POPE CLEMENT XI ON READING SCRIPTURE

Clement XI – condemned as ERROR; *"The reading of Sacred Scripture is for all"*

From UNIGENITUS, The Dogmatic Constitution issued by Pope Clement XI on Sept. 8, 1713:

The following statements are condemned as being error:

79. It is useful and necessary at all times, in all places, and for every kind of person, to study and to know the spirit, the piety, and the mysteries of Sacred Scripture.

80. The reading of Sacred Scripture is for all.

81. The sacred obscurity of the Word of God is no reason for the laity to dispense themselves from reading it.

82. The Lord's Day ought to be sanctified by Christians with readings of pious works and above all of the Holy Scriptures. It is harmful for a Christian to wish to withdraw from this reading.

83. It is an illusion to persuade oneself that knowledge of the mysteries of religion should not be communicated to women by the reading of Sacred Scriptures. Not from the simplicity of women, but from the proud knowledge of men has arisen the abuse of the Scriptures and have heresies been born.

84. To snatch away from the hands of Christians the New Testament, or to hold it closed against them by taking away from them the means of understanding it, is to close for them the mouth of Christ.

85. To forbid Christians to read Sacred Scripture, especially the Gospels, is to forbid the use of light to the sons of light, and to cause them to suffer a kind of excommunication.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH THE ONLY TRUE GUIDE TO SCRIPTURE

Pope Leo XIII; *"it must be recognised that the sacred writings are wrapt in a certain religious obscurity, and that no one can enter into their interior without a guide"*

14. ... Wherefore it must be recognised that the sacred writings are wrapt in a certain religious obscurity, and that no one can enter into their interior without a guide; God so disposing, as the Holy Fathers commonly teach, in order that men may investigate them with greater ardour and earnestness, and that what is attained with difficulty may sink more deeply into the mind and heart; and, most of all, that they may understand that God has delivered the Holy Scriptures to the Church, and that in reading and making use of His Word, they must follow the Church as their guide and their teacher.

The Council of the Vatican, which, in renewing the decree of Trent declares its "mind" to be this—that "in things of faith and morals, belonging to the building up of Christian doctrine, that is to be considered the true sense of Holy Scripture which has been held and is held by our Holy Mother the Church, whose place it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; and therefore that it is permitted to no one to interpret Holy Scripture against such sense or also against the unanimous agreement of the Fathers." "Hence it follows that all interpretation is foolish and false which either makes the sacred writers disagree one with another, or is opposed to the doctrine of the Church".

15. ... But it is most unbecoming to pass by, in ignorance or contempt, the excellent work which Catholics have left in abundance, and to have recourse to the works of non-Catholics—and to seek in them, to the detriment of sound doctrine and often to the peril of faith, the explanation of passages on which Catholics long ago have successfully employed their talent and their labour. For although the studies of non-Catholics, used with prudence, may sometimes be of use to the Catholic student, he should, nevertheless, bear well in mind—as the Fathers also teach in numerous passages — that the sense of Holy Scripture can nowhere be found incorrupt out side of the [Roman] Church, and cannot be expected to be found in writers who, being without the true faith, only gnaw the bark of the Sacred Scripture, and never attain its pith.

Source: PROVIDENTISSIMUS DEUS (On the Study of Holy Scripture), Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII promulgated on 18 November 1893.

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1 John 2:26-27

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Cartoons To Make One Wise –



(The recent visit of China's premier to the USA prompted many cartoonists to illustrate the tremendous indebtedness of the USA to China. – Ed)



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Thanksgiving

by Dr. Terry L. Coomer

"Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise." 1 Chronicles 16:33–35

Thanksgiving, what a tremendous heritage given to us by our forefathers. The Pilgrims came to America, for religious freedom. They had left England and came to Holland for religious freedom, but found that they still were not going to be able to worship freely and they believed that the people of Holland defiled the Lord's day, Sunday, by seeking entertainment on Sunday rather than setting it aside as a day for worship, reflection, and thankfulness.

The trip to America was a harsh trip. The Atlantic crossing in the fall of 1620 had been an extremely difficult journey for the Pilgrims.

For two months, 102 people were wedged into what was called the “tween decks” of the Mayflower—the ship’s cargo space with only about five-and-a-half feet of headroom. No one was allowed above deck because of the terrible storms. This was no pleasure trip. The Pilgrims comforted themselves on their journey by singing from the Book of Psalms. This “noise” irritated one of the ship’s paid crew members. He told the Pilgrims he was looking forward to throwing their corpses overboard after they succumbed to the routine illnesses common on such voyages. As it turned out, this crew member himself was the only person to



Pilgrim Fathers Boarding The Mayflower

die on the voyage and be thrown overboard. God providentially protected His own people. A little-known fact about the Mayflower is that this ship normally carried a cargo of wine; and the wine spillage from previous voyages had soaked the beams, acting as a disinfectant to prevent the spread of disease.

During one terrible storm, the main beam of the mast cracked. Death was certain if this beam could not be repaired. At that moment, the whole Pilgrim adventure could very easily have ended on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Providentially, the Pilgrims had with them a large iron printing press screw. That screw repaired the beam, saving the ship and all on board.

After sixty-six days at sea, land was sighted off Cape Cod, Massachusetts, not the place these Pilgrims wanted to be. They intended to establish their new colony in the northern parts of Virginia (which then extended to the Hudson River in modern-day New York), but two factors interrupted their plans. The winds had blown them off course, yes; but they later learned that other Englishmen who wanted to settle in the same part of Virginia had actually bribed the ship’s crew to land them farther north.

Despite this chicanery, God was in charge and the Pilgrims landed exactly where God wanted them to be. Had they actually made landfall near the Hudson River, they most certainly would have been immediately attacked by hostile Indians. Instead, they arrived at the one spot along the coast where hostile Indians had been providentially removed from the land.

Many years before the Mayflower journey, local Indians had captured a Frenchman on a fishing expedition to that region. Just as they were about to kill him, the Frenchman warned them God would be angry, would destroy them all, and would replace them with another nation. The Indians boastfully replied that his God could never kill them. Yet, a year or two before the Pilgrims arrived in this very same region, nearly all the native inhabitants had been wiped out by a plague.

Despite this miraculous provision of safety from hostile Indians, the Pilgrims barely survived their first winter on the Cape. Only four families remained intact; but God was still faithful. In the spring of 1621, He sent Squanto, an English-speaking Indian who offered to teach the Pilgrims how to survive in this strange new land.

Squanto was one of only a few local Indians who escaped the plague. He had been captured as a young man and taken to England as a slave. During that time he mastered the English

language. When he was freed, he returned to his native territory on the Cape shortly before the Pilgrims arrived. Probably the most important thing Squanto taught the Pilgrims was how to plant the native winter staple crop--corn.

The Pilgrims thanked God for this wonderful helper. They also repaid Squanto by sharing with him the most valuable treasure they had brought with them from England--the Gospel. Squanto died a year or two after coming to the aid of the Pilgrims, but before his death he asked them to pray with him that he might go to be with their God in Heaven.

The first winter in New England after they arrived was extremely harsh. Many died in the brutal winter. As history records, William Bradford, Myles Standish, John Alden, Priscilla Mullins and the rest of the folks who founded Plymouth in 1620 and survived their first brutal winter had much to be thankful for in the fall of 1621.

Only 55 of the more than 100 original settlers had survived to see their first winter thaw. Their labors had paid off and they had a good first harvest. William Bradford proclaimed a day of prayer and thanksgiving and extended an invitation to the local Indians, Wampanoags, who had helped with the cultivation of the colonists first crops. Around 90 of the Indians participated and brought along 5 deer to help out with the meal.

The Pilgrims were people who believed in God and stood for what they believed. The time that was set aside was to thank God for the blessings He had given to them. So, 390 years ago our forefathers because of their religious faith began a tradition that has left us with a great heritage and an example concerning thankfulness. We have much to be thankful for in our country and the Pilgrims understood the teaching of the Bible on thankfulness, and surely quoted I Thessalonians 5:18 on the special time they had set aside. Each year at this time I encourage our family to make sure we give thanks for the blessings we have received.

In studying the history of the Pilgrims, I found out something else interesting. In 1623 there was no harvest because of drought so they turned that day into one of prayer, fasting, and also thanksgiving. They had been many days without water and God answered their prayers that while they were praying and fasting for rain, rain came.

So, what we celebrate the fourth Thursday of November each year that began on the cold shores of the Atlantic Ocean several hundred years ago and has become a lasting heritage for us concerning the matter of thankfulness.

How has it changed since that first time in 1621? In June 1676, the governing council of Charleston, Mass proclaimed June 29 as a day of giving thanks for the success of the community. In October 1777, all 13 colonies celebrate Thanksgiving. In October 1779, George Washington writes the Thanksgiving Proclamation. It was lost, but recovered and installed in the Library of Congress' archives in 1921. In October 1863, Abraham Lincoln proclaims the annual holiday as the last Thursday in November. In 1863 America was pitted against itself in a battle of states' rights, preservation of the union, and the issue of slavery. Families were torn between relatives on one side of the fight and others on the opposite side. We had defeated the mighty English empire nearly a century before, yet bureaucracy and politics were forcing an inner struggle that threatened to tear our nation apart. It was during that time that our fearless President Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of his struggle to keep peace in our land, took time to draw the focus on the American people to a single act--the act of thankfulness. He pointed out the fact we were an independent nation, free from tyrannical rule. The fact God had blessed America's fields with crops and food. The fact that God Almighty had been good to America.

The following is part of the proclamation he made, establishing a day to stop and give thanks to God for the blessings He had given America:

"Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; Whereas, both the houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me 'to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness!'"Now therefore, I do recommend next, to be devoted by the people of the states to the service of that great and glorious being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be, that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country."

President Lincoln and the Congress knew that even in the midst of severe conflict, Americans had much for which to be thankful. No matter how bad the debate, disagreements, and fighting became; Americans had been blessed by God and needed to stop and thank Him. The same is true in our lives today. No matter how difficult a trial we face, how great a loss we experience, or how tough a circumstance; God has been good to us. If nothing else, He has given His only Son to die on the Cross so we might spend eternity with Him. That is enough to fill a year with days of thanksgiving!

In 1939, Franklin Roosevelt moves it back a week to extend the Christmas shopping season. Congress ruled that after 1941, the fourth Thursday in November will be Thanksgiving day, a legal federal holiday.

Traditionally, this is the time of year that we take time to remember our blessings and give thanks for them. We take one day out of November to remember the countless ways God has blessed our lives. But there isn't enough time in just one day to thank God for everything. I want to challenge you to make a list right now of things for which you are thankful. It could be a new job, daily provisions, a loving spouse, eternal security, or many other ways.

Don't become so consumed with the holiday that you forget the reason for it's institution. Let the month of November be a month of praise and thanksgiving to God for all He's done. Remember the verse, and allow a spirit of thankfulness to overflow you this month: "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever."

Well, folks that is it. I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and take time like our forefathers did and intended to give thanks to the One who has given us so many blessings. I also hope that you were able to take it and use it to teach your family the heritage and the importance of thankfulness in our lives, Philippians 4:4-7, Ephesians 5:20, Romans 8:28, and Hebrew 13:15.

www.fortheloveofthefamily.com, www.hopebaptistlittlerock.com

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Deacon True Sez –

"We had some possums take up residence in the attic at church, and tried everything to get rid of them, without success. Finally, our old pastor suggested we vote 'em into membership, and that would fix the problem. We did it and sure enough, they haven't been seen since."

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Links In The Media Chain –

- Do you like roller coasters? – <http://wimp.com/alpinecoaster/>
- Interested in what is happening in the present financial meltdown? – <http://xkcd.com/980/huge/#x=-5728&y=-3712&z=3>
- Animated map of the growth of religions – <http://www.mapsofwar.com/images/Religion.swf>
- The most amazing waterproofing treatment – <http://wimp.com/superhydrophobiccoating/>
- 14,000 Wind Turbines Abandoned – <http://blogs.dailymail.com/donsurber/archives/46519>

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So What About the Twelfth Imam? –

To truly understand how just how dangerous Iran's regime really is, American leaders need to better understand Shia eschatology.

The Twelfth Imam was a real, flesh-and-blood person who, like the eleven Shia leaders who went before him, was an Arab male, a direct descendent of the founder of Islam, and was thought to have been divinely chosen to be the spiritual guide and ultimate human authority of the Muslim people. His actual name was Muhammad Ibn Hasan Ibn Ali, and it is generally believed by Shias that he was born in Samarra, Iraq, in AD 868.



At a very young age, however, Ali vanished from society. Some say he was four years old, while others say five and some say six. Some believe he fell into a well in Samarra but his body was never recovered. Others believe the Mahdi's mother placed him in the well to

prevent evil rulers from capturing him and killing him, and that little Ali subsequently became supernaturally invisible. This is where the term “Hidden Imam” is derived, as Shias believe that Ali is not dead but has simply been hidden from the sight of mankind – Shias refer to this as “occultation” – until the End of Days, when Allah will reveal him once again.

Shias believe the Mahdi will return in the last days to establish righteousness, justice, and peace. When he comes, they say, the Mahdi will bring Jesus with him. Jesus will be a Muslim and will serve as his deputy, not as King of kings and Lord of lords as the Bible teaches, and he will force non-Muslims to choose between following the Mahdi or death.

By most accounts, Shia scholars believe the Mahdi will first appear in Mecca and conquer the Middle East, then establish the headquarters of his global Islamic government—or caliphate—in Iraq. But there is not universal agreement. Some believe he will emerge from the well at the Jamkaran Mosque in Iran and then travel to Mecca and Iraq. Some say that he will conquer Jerusalem before establishing his caliphate in Iraq. Others believe Jerusalem must be conquered as a prerequisite to his return.

None of this is actually written in the Kuran, and Sunnis reject this eschatology.

But one thing that is fairly well agreed upon among devout “Twelvers” is that the Mahdi will end apostasy and purify corruption within Islam. He is expected to conquer the Arabian Peninsula, Jordan, Syria, “Palestine,” Egypt and North Africa, and eventually the entire world. During this time, he and Jesus will kill between 60 and 80 percent of the world’s population, specifically those who refuse to convert to Islam.

Read more: http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2011/11/07/why-irans-top-leaders-believe-that-end-days-has-come/?cmpid=NL_BestofOpinion_20111118#ixzz1eSq5oNfl

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Poems That Raise a Chuckle –

The Computer Swallowed Grandpa

*The computer swallowed grandpa,
Yes, honestly it's true!
He pressed 'control and 'enter'
And disappeared from view.*

*It devoured him completely,
The thought just makes me squirm.
He must have caught a virus
Or been eaten by a worm.*

*I've searched through the recycle bin
And files of every kind;
I've even used the Internet,
But nothing did I find.*

*In desperation, I asked Dr. Google
My searches to refine.
The reply from him was negative,
Not a thing was found 'online.'*

*So, if inside your 'Inbox,'
My Grandpa you should see,
Please 'Copy, Scan' and 'Paste' him
And send him back to me.*

(This is a tribute to all the Grandmas and Grandpas who fearlessly learned to use the Computer..... They are the greatest (problem we have)!!!

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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes –

- "When you're taking flak, you must be over the target." – *Jim Robinson*
- *John Chrysostom*, (born about 345 A.D.) denounced the theater as an exhibition of lewd women, and as a school of profanity, seduction, and intrigues and threatened the rich with hell for entertaining guests with dancing girls.
- Few have lived to equal John the Baptist. His blows fell with a thud and a sharp edge that shook the oaks of Bashan. But his axe was heavier than the weak muscles of "this generation." It had been forged in the wilderness and its edge was guaranteed not to turn. The modern counterpart is seen as an improvement on the rough and heavy one that John used. It is lighter and more highly polished...much easier to swing...but what sort of trees can it fell? When John wielded his axe in Matthew 3, he made the chips fly. That rough-looking man...who ate no dainties...produced trembling in the hearts of the people and a confessing of their sins. This is the need of the times: men of God, skilled in the use of the axe of the Word...not just playing in the woods.... We need men who...hold not men's persons in admiration...who travel the world as strangers and pilgrims...who willingly suffer the loss of all things for the Master. There is a widespread outcry nowadays against hard strokes. But...the blows of a man of God are worth their weight in gold. – *Franklin Ferguson*
- Islam is a religion in which Allah requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sent His son to die for you. – *Attorney-General John Ashcroft*

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Embarrassing Admissions from Evolutionists –

SEXUAL REPRODUCTION AND EVOLUTION – The following is quoted from *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood* by Dr. Walt Brown (pages 19, 78). "If sexual reproduction in plants, animals, and humans is a result of evolutionary sequences, an unbelievable series of chance events must have occurred at each stage:

1. The amazingly complex, radically different, yet complementary reproductive systems of the male and female must have completely and independently evolved at each stage at about the same time and place. Just a slight incompleteness in only one of the two would make both reproductive systems useless, and the organism would become extinct.
2. The physical, chemical, intellectual, and emotional systems of the male and female would also need to be compatible.
3. The millions of complex products of a male reproductive system (pollen or sperm) must have an affinity for and a mechanical, chemical, and electrical compatibility with the eggs of the female reproductive system.
4. The many intricate processes occurring at the molecular level inside the fertilized egg would have to work with fantastic precision--processes that scientists can describe only in a general sense.
5. The environment of this fertilized egg, from conception through adulthood and until it also reproduced with another sexually capable adult (who also 'accidentally' evolved), would have to be tightly controlled.

6. This remarkable string of 'accidents' must have been repeated for millions of species.

In humans and in all mammals, a mother's immune system, contrary to its normal function, must learn not to attack her unborn baby--half of whom is a 'foreign body' from the father. Evolutionists admit that they don't know how sexual reproduction evolved.

Michael Rose writes, "The evolution of sex is one of the major unsolved problems of biology. Even those with enough hubris to publish on the topic often freely admit that they have little idea of how sex originated or is maintained. It is enough to give heart to creationists" (*"Slap and Tickle in the Primeval Soup"* New Scientist, Vol. 112, Oct. 30, 1986, p. 55).

From Friday Church News Notes, October 14, 2011, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

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You Just Can't Tell Some Folks -

I heard a story about a man who claimed he was dead. His family and friends tried to convince him that he was not dead, but he remained convinced he was. Finally a psychologist was called in to help. He questioned the deluded "dead" man until the two of them found a characteristic of dead people they both agreed upon. They agreed that dead people don't bleed. As soon as they had established this point, the psychologist produced a needle and pricked the patient. As a spot of blood began to grow on the man's arm the psychologist asked, "Now what do you think about being dead?" The man answered, "Well, what do you know---dead people do bleed."

Contributed by Cam Drews

(Doesn't this remind you of the atheists, evolutionists, and just plain old sinners that refuse to consider the very strongest of evidences that Jesus is the only Saviour? No amount of proof or personal testimony will persuade them to open their eyes. - Ed)

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Therapy For The Funny Bone -

GRANDPARENTS ANSWERING MACHINE

Good morning . . . At present we are not at home but, please leave your message after you hear the beep.

Beeeeeeppp!

- If you are one of our children, dial 1 and then select the option from 1 to 5 in order of "arrival" so we know who it is.
- If you need us to stay with the children, press 2
- If you want to borrow the car, press 3
- If you want us to wash your clothes and ironing, press 4
- If you want the grandchildren to sleep here tonight, press 5
- If you want us to pick up the kids at school, press 6

- If you want us to prepare a meal for Sunday or to have it delivered to your home, press 7
- If you want to come to eat here, press 8
- If you need money,press 9
- If you are going to invite us to dinner, start talking we are listening !!!!!!!!!!!"

The Christmas play was a riot this year. The older kids in Sunday School got all the good parts, you know, like Joseph and Mary, the innkeeper, the shepherds and the wise men. We didn't know what to do with the four little kindy kids who wanted a part in the play, so we made four little posters for them. Each one had a letter on it, "S", "T", "A", and "R". the plan was for them to march out on the stage when the wise men were looking for baby Jesus, so everyone would know that they saw the star. Somehow, they got mixed up and came out in reverse order, and they brought the house down. It was the best Christmas play we ever had!

One of my pastor friends put new hot air hand dryers in the rest rooms at his church and after two weeks took them out. I asked him why and he confessed that they worked fine but when he went in there one day he saw that someone had put a sign on each dryer that read, "To hear our pastor's latest sermon, just push this button."

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Eddy-Torial -

OPEN REBUKE

The Emerging Church controversy has caught the attention of the mainstream media again and in a big way with the latest book from Rob Bell, entitled, "Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived" - a "universalist" view from a popular

"Christian" author and pastor that has already drawn numerous objections from many evangelical leaders including several sharp commentaries from the president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, R. Albert Mohler Jr. - the latest of which appeared in the Baptist Press, titled, "Rob Bell and the (re)emergence of liberal theology."

As one of many who have spoken out against the Emerging Church's errant teachings and practices, I find it encouraging to finally hear a chorus of open rebukes coming from a growing number of well known Christian leaders who aren't afraid to name the names of heretics and false teachers at work among believers - at least a few of them - something that is quite common throughout the New Testament, but, up until recently, has been all but absent from the 21st century Church as if they were either nonexistent or unworthy of mention.

Frankly, false teachers have had a heyday over the last generation or so amassing huge numbers of unregenerate, unrepentant, biblically ignorant and morally apathetic followers that were persuaded through pleasurable feelings, emotions, experiences and appetites that few, if any, are actually going to Hell. Dr. Mohler accurately summed up the Emerging Church

movement in his column as being “a mildly updated form of Protestant liberalism.” I would only add that the eastern styled mysticism taught and practiced by many Emergents carries the movement well beyond mere liberal Christianity and into the occult.

Much of these and other false teachings and practices have been aided and advanced by the widely-held assumption that public rebukes among Christians are to be a last resort only, citing Matthew 18:15 as the scriptural source, which, in the King James version, reads: *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”*

Thanks to a very small number of inconsistent Bible translations, which now incidentally includes the newest New International Version 2011, a directive intended to restrain and contain church-unity-disrupting personal offenses between two individuals was edited in such a way as to suggest that all initial chastisement and challenges between believers should be kept private, which is not at all what the Bible teaches.

Is there a better way to advance evil, error and confusion in the Church than to shame and silence the discerners of heresy, blasphemy and scriptural confusion? Not only does this undermine the proclamation and proliferation of God’s Word, it is also a great way to unequally yoke believers to unbelievers and steer them all astray with the insinuation that feelings are more important than truth.

You see, Matthew 18:15 in the New American Standard Bible reads: *“(M)If your brother sins[b], go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”*

Omitting the words “against you,” or “against thee,” which appears in the vast majority of popular Bible versions including the 1984 NIV, gives heretics a handy hideout to not only do their dirty work but have their inaccuracies, inconsistencies and indiscretions arbitrarily dismissed through obfuscation, negotiation and consensus.

False teaching needs to be addressed as it happens, in front of those who hear it, that the error and confusion not be left to spread unchallenged. Nor should it be left up to some pastor’s public relations team or a bureaucratic boardroom of good old boys to decide if an open confession and correction would be good for the numbers.

Not only did Jesus rebuke the scribes and Pharisees publicly for their self-serving words and deeds, He gave Peter the harshest rebuke of all in front of the other disciples in Mark 8:33, telling him: *“Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.”*

The Apostle Paul also took Peter to task in front of everyone later in Galatians 2:11,14 for separating himself from those who weren’t circumcised. If anything needed to be dealt with in private, wouldn’t it be this? Paul goes on to tell Timothy: *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”* – 1st Timothy 5:20

In fact, the entire chapter of Matthew 18 is largely about personal offences between individuals beginning with verse six where Jesus says: *“...whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea”* and continues on with Peter asking Jesus; *“...how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”*

Jesus goes on to answer Peter with the story of an unpaid debt between a king and one of his servants and another unresolved debt between that same servant and a fellow servant. And right in the middle of the chapter, between Jesus’ warning against offending a child and Peter’s question about forgiving a brother and the story of personal indebtedness, is verse 15, where Jesus says: *“...if thy brother shall trespass against thee...”* not, “If your brother sins...”

as the NAS claims. In other words, “against thee” is consistent with the ongoing conversation between Jesus and His disciples and context of the chapter.

So, when an errant pastor, preacher, teacher, author or Emerging Church leader publicly distorts, disputes, dismisses or disavows core doctrines of the Bible, he ought to be rebuked and corrected in the same manner he presented them...publicly, because those he mislead and confused with his flawed theology are watching, learning and passing along to others what they’ve been taught. And, if they’ve been taught lies, and the backroom boys and PR team never get around to correcting them for the edification and benefit of all, then those lies live on, the truth remains hidden and repentance never comes.

“Open rebuke is better than secret love.” - Proverbs 27:5

By Paul Proctor

March 23, 2011

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