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FEATURE ARTICLE - THE VICISSITUDES OF VICTORY - By BUDDY SMITH



*As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. **Romans 8:36-37***

In many pastors' hearts there resides a simple heresy, a consumer driven error of great magnitude. It is the error that forces many good men out of the ministry, and leads many churches into the pursuit of big business methods and then, into open disobedience to God, and finally into theological and financial bankruptcy. This heresy is not overt, but covert. It does not wear its robes and crown when it comes. In a disguise of helpfulness it creeps in, first into the pastor's heart, then into his study, then into his sermons, then into the deacons' meeting, then into the church's advertising, and finally into the hearts and pocketbooks of the people in the pews.

A GREAT HERESY OF THE LAST DAYS -

What heresy is this that comes as an angel of light, but is actually the ambassador of Hell?

It is the heresy of Successism.

It is a heresy with axioms to be memorised and engrafted and implemented by every pastor who desires to be "successful." If you listen very closely you will

hear the axioms of Successism taught at all the Leadership conferences that are hosted by "successful" Independent Baptist Churches. So what are the axioms of Successism?

THE AXIOMS OF SUCCESSISM -

The Success of a Pastor and His Ministry...

1. Can be reliably measured by man and is not dependent on God's approval alone.
2. Is visible, spectacular, impressive, not hidden away in the heart to be seen only of God.
3. Is recognised and rewarded in its own generation, and does not wait for its reward in Heaven.
4. Is measured by the bottom line, whether in numbers, in finances, in size, in budgets, or in influence over others.
5. Is characterised by continual growth, only ever increasing from strength to strength.
6. There's no place for God working through decline, through weakness, through pruning, or through Him leading through the valley of the shadow of death.
7. Thrives on expediency, declaring that, "Whatever needs to be changed, whatever needs to be done to get results has to be right."
8. Believes that the ways and thoughts of men are of equal authority with the ways and thoughts of God.
9. Seeks out its basic guiding precepts from "successful" businessmen, not from faithful Christians.
10. Sees no need to seek counsel from godly men of a previous generation, but taps into the creativity and vitality of modern youth for guidance.
11. Is the result of strong leadership, not of humble servanthood.

Ever so subtly, ever so cunningly, ever so entertainingly the axioms of Successism are sowed in the hearts of pastors. He that hath ears to hear.....

So What About When The Numbers Drop Off?

What do pastors do when Successism fails them, when the attendance declines, or the offerings are down, or persecution arises and the bottom line bottoms out? Is there a Bible answer to explain the downturn? Yes, and it is called...

THE VICISSITUDES OF VICTORY -

The work of God has always had its ups and downs. That is the history of the Faith and the message of [Romans 8:18-39](#).

Vicissitudes have to do with change, interchange, alternation. They are a "passing from one state to another." When God would speak to the Christian church at Rome about the glorification of the believer He speaks to them about the vicissitudes of life. There will be sufferings in this present time, *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the*

Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

There are "the sufferings of this present time." There will be some who are "against us." Some do "lay thing(s) to the charge of God's elect." Enemies do "condemn" and would "separate us from the love of Christ." "Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword" are present in every generation. We are "killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, and many other creatures, would like to be able to separate us from the love of God.

But we are triumphant in Christ - *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."*

Success has never had to do with size or numbers. It's not about headlines or bottom lines. It has always been about simple obedience to God. That is success!

The only mention of "success" in the Bible appears in [Joshua 1:8-9](#) *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."*

Did God have a plan for Joshua? Did he accomplish God's plan? Did he review the plan when he got to the end of his life? Of course, the answer is yes to all three questions. Three times he tells Israel of God's faithfulness to do what He says, *"There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."* [Joshua 21:45; 23:14](#)

THE MAN WHO SIMPLY OBEYS GOD IS SUCCESSFUL, NO MATTER WHAT THE RESULTS -

That's how Noah and Abraham got their names included in Hebrews 11. (Isn't it a good thing that John Maxwell didn't write that chapter in the Bible?) Poor old Enoch wouldn't have gotten a look in, would he? In fact, I doubt very much if any of the men or women named in Hebrews 11 would ever have been invited to speak at a Leadership Conference in their day. Oh, we know now what their lives were worth, but they made very few headlines in the ancient world. You see, God never has measured success by how many people's noses you can count, or how many Mercedes are parked in front of the church. He measures success by how much we simply obey his Word.

- That's why the number of people in the ark with Noah was not the emphasis in Scripture. Rather, God inspired Moses to write, *"Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he."* **Genesis 6:22**. Noah simply obeyed and God wrote THAT down as the important fact of the chapter.
- That's why the size of the tiny remnant in the days of Jeremiah is not the focus of the books he wrote. The focus is on his obedience to God's word. That is the measure of success.
- That's why the Lord Jesus was not discouraged when the multitudes packed up and went home in **John 6:66** *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."* He knew they had not repented of their sins and that they had no heart to obey God.
- That's why the apostles in Acts never gave up when persecution arose and the numbers evaporated. They knew the fickleness of the crowds and perceived who had the goods and who didn't.

WHAT ABOUT THE VICISSITUDES OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH? -

I have yet to hear a sermon on the text in **Luke 12:32** *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

Who wants to talk about a "little flock"? That's not a suitable subject for Dr. Flutesnoot to use to set the preacher boys on fire if he hopes to inspire them to misinterpret the Great Commission to mean "Go out and build a megachurch!!!"

I am waiting to hear someone preach on the vicissitudes of the Jerusalem church. Oh, we like to hear about how it exploded in size from 120 in the upper room to 3120 on the day of Pentecost, and we love to read about the 5000 who believed in Acts 4:4, and we cheer when we read James' words to Paul in Acts 21:20, *"Thou seest how many thousands of Jews there are which believe..."*. But have you noticed how quiet it becomes when we read that *"...at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles"*

So the church of thousands, the very first "megachurch" saw its attendance drop from multitudes to a dozen or so, maybe twenty or thirty including the apostles' family members? Those are the vicissitudes of victory. Why do I say that? Because God says that *"they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."* And the church at Antioch was founded (see Acts 11:19-21), and the first missionaries to the Gentiles were sent out, and the gospel message that was first spread by the converts at Pentecost, who were the New Testament Diaspora, that message was strengthened and multiplied.

When Paul visited Jerusalem for the last time in Acts 21 the crowds were large, but their boast was that they were all "zealous of the law." That may have looked good, but when Paul was arrested, there was no all-night prayer meeting called as there had been for Peter in chapter 12. And no one came to his defence. Is it any wonder then that it was only a dozen years or so until the Roman Titus sacked Jerusalem and expelled all

the Jews? Say, have you ever wondered why God allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed? Was it because the church had lost its saltiness in their compromise with Judaism? Was it because the light of the gospel of the grace of God was finally eclipsed by the darkness of a works-for-salvation-gospel?

The apostles coped with the Vicissitudes of the ministry because they understood that successism is worldly and carnal and boastful. And it depends on the wisdom of men. Simple obedience is so much better than successism. *That's where we find victory in Christ!!!*

Bro. Bob Kirkland is a dear friend who pastors in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada ([Visit Church Website Here](#)).

We have corresponded for years. I finally had the opportunity to meet him last year and spoke at Fairhavens Baptist Church, where he pastors. It is a small church, but has an enormous outreach through his radio ministry, through the newsletter he sends out weekly, and through his audio sermons that go around the world. Bro. Kirkland pointed out to his readers a few years ago that over 90% of the work of God done in Canada is done through little churches (See the article on The Small Church below). Very little is actually done for Christ through the so called "megachurches." Oh, they have the attention of the media and they generate a lot of noise, but they are so often characterised by ego, error, and emotion, by excess and extortion so that in many cases Big is not Good, but Bad. Sadly, they are altogether too often BIG BAD BAPTISTS! It doesn't have to be that way, but "Successism Pollutes" and "Power Corrupts." When I see Rev. Ambitious awarded a doctorate, and then change his name to Dr. Arrived and then become the keynote speaker at Dr. Superific's conference every year, then I run for cover. Very soon the wheels fall off, and his juggernaut crashes and burns. I've seen too many admiring pastors hurt from falling debris. You'll recognise them by their singed eyebrows.

It has always been possible that God might choose to bless simple obedience and enlarge its results greatly, but it is a wise pastor who does not set his heart on size, instead of setting his heart on simple obedience to God, leaving the results to God. God knows how much chaff is mixed with the wheat.

Somehow, somewhere, sometime, somebody set Independent Baptists on the wrong track. It was at least as far back as J. Frank Norris, possibly as far back as Charles Finney. One of the villains of church history brought successism into our churches and colleges and changed the Great Commission into a pursuit for bigness and busyness, rather than for the preaching of the gospel worldwide. You just can't spell "Obedience" by preaching **"S-U-C-C-E-S-S"** !!!!!

We are faced, most of us, with the choice, will I be a pastor who strives to build a megachurch, so I can be seen to be a success? Or will I be the contented pastor of a "micro-church" with a mega-outreach of the gospel, and leave all the rewards and recognition till the Judgment Seat of Christ?

Then, and not till then will we know what the results really are.

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DEACON TRUE SEZ -

It's gettin' easier to understand how old Uncle Zeke can sit there in his rockin' chair on the porch at the old folks home all day long, day after day, year after year.

He used to spend his time whittlin' bow-legged cowboys and sway-back horses for us kids when Ma would drag us along to see him. I remember askin' him where he ever learnt to carve. He said it when he was just a little squirt, 'bout as big as a puddle duck. Accordin' to him, there was a "Spit-N-Whittle" club that sat in the shade on the courthouse steps, whittlin' and chewin' terbaccer, and he used to squat for hours watchin' the whittlin' and dodgin' the spittin'.

When he showed up one day with his own pocket knife and a piece of white pine, them old coots helped him make his first cuts, and he was off.

Some years ago he gave up whittlin', said his eyes was getting weak. About that time he went to rockin' back and forth in that rockin' chair and playin' hymns on a gum leaf. He has about twenty or thirty fav'rites. He's good at it. Good enough that visitors bring their old folks out on the front porch to listen to him play. Somebody tried to sneak a recorder in on him once, but he was too canny for that caper, and told 'em he can still see some stuff.

He has a storyteller's mind, and eyes, and voice, and I guess that's what started him off tellin' 'bout his childhood. He'll play a few hymns till there's half a dozen or so listeners, and then he'll say, "I first heard that song when I was livin' in Ozona (or wherever)...." And the next thing, he's describin' a bank robbery that happened there when he was a kid, or the big flood that just about washed the town away the next year. He tells them about Nob Hill and Silk Stockin' Road, and Pi Pierce, and the snake that wasn't a snake, and a thousand true tall tales of his childhood. Before you know it, he'll be preachin' the gospel to them old wrinkly sinners.

Well, maybe you wouldn't exactly call it preachin'. I dunno, is there such a thing as "yamin' the gospel" or "campfire tales for herdin' sinners in the Gate"? Anyhow, that's what he does most days.

Last week, I dropped in to see him, and he was tellin' one of my favourite stories. It was the one about him breakin' the Drug Store window in Ozona. It goes somethin' like this,

"My Ma and the owner of the Drug Store done me a world of good when I was a little kid. I was diggin' aroun' in the dirt behind the telephone office one day and found a you-beaut nail. It was a whopper, long and heavy. Thinkin' back now, it was prob'ly used on a telephone pole somehow. I weighed it up in my hand an' remember thinkin', 'I bet you could throw one of these a mile, maybe two...' So I hauled off and let 'er fly. Now 'bout the time I turned 'er loose, my little peanut brain kicked in, 'Wait a minute, there ain't a mile of clear air, only 'bout fifty feet, maybe only forty.' an' my heart jumped up in my throat so I'm sayin', 'Oh, no! Oh, no!' Sure enough, something went, 'CRASH,TINKLE,TINKLE!!!!'

My knees went to shakin' and I could hardly walk. I crept up to our back fence and had a look. And there it was, a nail-shaped hole in the window at the back of the Drug Store. Well, I just broke down and ran for the back door of our house, howlin' up a storm, 'They'll

kill me! They'll lock me up for a hundred years and throw away the key! The police will come get me and put me in jail and I'll never get out.'

Ma grabbed me and shook me, and said, 'Are you hurt? Did a snake bite you? Did somebody hit you?' I told her and cried and cried and told her and cried some more.

Well, she quietened me down after a while, and then she said sump'n awful important.

She said, 'You've gotta go see Mr. Smith at the Drug Store and tell him what you did. And you will have to pay for his window.'

I thought I was gonna die. Did Ma hate me, didn't she love me? How could she tell me I had to own up to breakin' his window? But she stuck to her guns, and after a while I took the longest walk of my life, up the sidewalk and around the corner, down to the Drug Store, in the door, and all the way to the back counter where Mr. Smith was workin'. About then I broke down completely. I sobbed and sniffled and cried and tried to tell him what I'd done.

Finally, I got it out that I'd broken his window. He left me standin' there and went to look. When he came back he said, 'You sure did. It's got a big hole right in the middle.' He then did something I'll never forget. He led me over to the soda fountain and lifted me onto a stool and sat down beside me, "Since you came in here to tell me what you did, I want you to sit right up here while I buy you a Coke." He sat there with me for a while and thought about it some more, and then he said, 'I'll tell you what, I've got a piece of wood that will fit right in there to fill up the hole so I can fix it myself. I don't use that window at all so I reckon you don't owe me anything.'

Well, I couldn't believe my ears! He forgave me! He treated me nice! He fixed what I broke! He paid out of his own pocket what I owed him!!

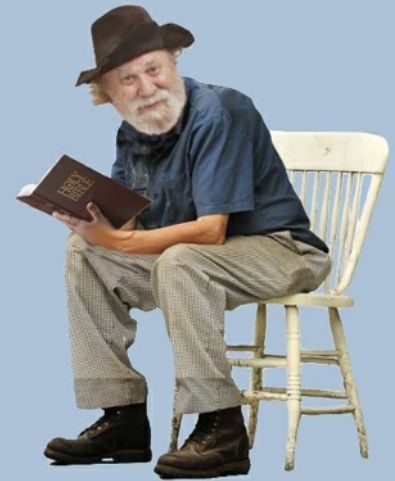
I want to tell you it was a different little boy that skipped down the sidewalk all the way home to tell my Ma what I had learned 'bout sin and guilt and havin' a broken heart and confessin' and receivin' forgiveness and mercy and grace.

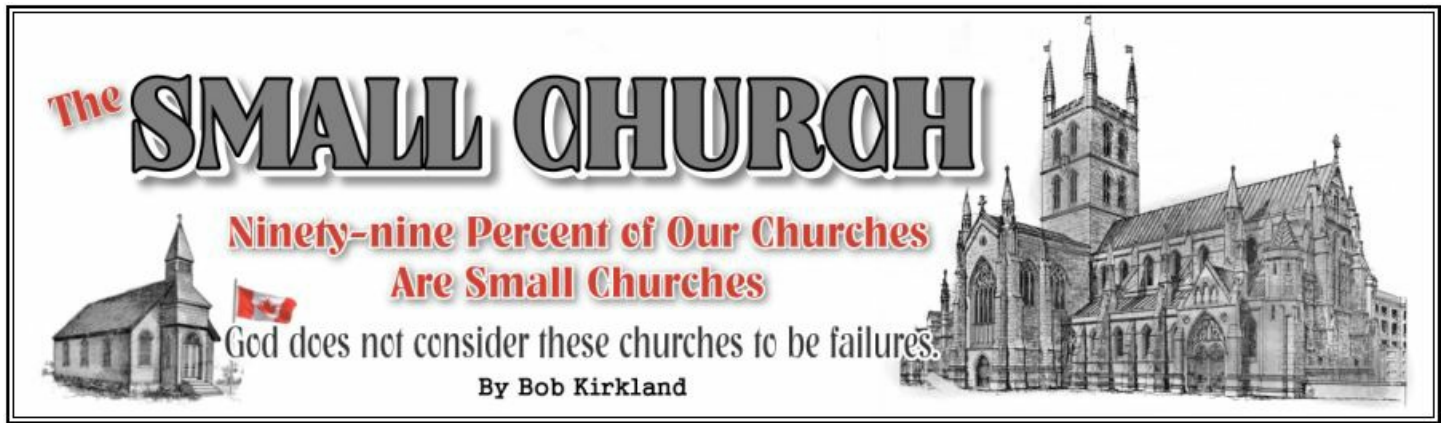
It took a long time for me to get hold of it, but all the pieces fell into place about ten years later when I found out that God forgives every sinner that comes to Him with a broken heart and asks. He doesn't have any problem forgivin' sinners for all the times they've broken things that belong to Him. His Son has already paid for the damage by dying on the cross, and is already busy repairin' it."

Yep, I understand how Uncle Zeke can sit there day after day. Some days he preaches the Sermon of the Nail, and some days it's.....

Well, maybe you oughta just drop in and hear for yourself.

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“HE WILL BLESS THEM THAT FEAR THE LORD, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT.” - PSALM 115:3

It has been my privilege to cross our country from coast to coast more times than I can remember. I have preached in every province in Canada. Very few of the churches I have ministered in have large congregations, most are very small, have been small for many years, and will be small until Jesus comes again.

They are pastored by faithful pastors who feed the sheep that God has entrusted them with. These churches are maintained by little groups of sincere Christians who have sacrificed to pay their pastor's salary and the expenses of the church from year to year.

According to a recent Barna Group report, small churches have the largest number of “born again believers.” That is the reason the same faithful people return for the evening service and the weekly prayer meetings.

GOD HAS SOME LARGER CHURCHES

The Psalmist said in [Psalm 42:4](#), *“I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God...”* First Corinthians 3:7 says God, *“giveth the increase.”*

Sometimes God increases the size of the church; however, the majority of God's congregations are small and always have been small and always will be small.

The question is asked in [Zechariah 4:10](#), *“For who hath despised the day of small things?”* Four verses earlier we read that it is, *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

In [Psalm 119:141](#) the psalmist said, *“I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.”* It is good to have a larger church if the increase is of God; however, an increase that is acquired and maintained by compromise is not a successful church. [Proverbs 15:16](#) says, *“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.”* [Proverbs 16:8](#) says, *“Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.”*

We have the false impression that a church that has a fleet of buses parked in the church parking lot is a successful church. I have spent hundreds of hours working on bus routes and have nothing but the highest respect for those who work on buses. Someday these faithful folks will receive their reward; however, if every Christian who attends a large church would pick up three people in their cars their church could send thousands of dollars spent on maintaining buses to some missionaries.

As I have travelled our country I have found that most of the small churches do not have money for buses; however, children are brought in by faithful church members in their cars. At FairHavens Baptist church in Sarnia, we have several people who roundup children in their cars every Sunday. Some make more than one trip. My wife and myself pick up people in our cars every week. Is FHBC an unsuccessful church because it has no bus ministry? Small churches are not in the position to hire staff to do all the work and therefore the work of the ministry is done by its members.

WHAT IS A GREAT CHURCH?

For many, great is synonymous with large or being uncommon. Concerning common people, Abraham Lincoln said, “God must have loved them; He made so many of them.” The same thing could be said of small churches.

The one church of the seven listed in the Book of Revelation that received no rebuke from the Saviour, was the church at Philadelphia. The Lord highly recommended them.

He said in [Revelation 3:8](#), *“thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”*

The church that received the sharpest rebuke was the church of the Laodiceans. [Revelation 3:17](#) says they were *“rich and increased.”* They had a crowd but where was

Christ? He said, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."* (Revelation 3:20).

The focus of much literature and "how to do it" conferences is about numerical growth. The main focus is if a small church wants to be better, it has to be bigger. Again, Proverbs 16:8 says, *"Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right."*

We have explicit instructions concerning how God wants things done in His local church. First Timothy 1:14,15 says, *"These things write I unto thee...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."*

Not one word in First and Second Timothy is mentioned about increasing the attendance. If Christians take their God-given responsibility to witness to lost souls and

people repent and trust Christ as their Saviour the church attendance will grow. The word attendance is found in First Timothy 4:13 where it commands the pastor to *"...give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."*

The responsibility of the pastor is to spiritually feed the people God has entrusted him with. Jesus said, *"Feed my lambs"* (John 21:15 - God's little sheep). *"Feed my sheep"* (John 21:16). *"Feed my sheep."* (John 21:17). Every Christian, should be attempting to reach people for Christ, including the pastor, however, the main purpose of the local church is to feed the sheep. If you are faithfully feeding God's lambs and God's sheep don't let anyone put you on a guilt trip about how many sheep you don't have.

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NEGLECTING VITAL TRUTHS IN ROMANS 12 -

I have written before about the first two verses of Romans 12. We often get stuck on these verses. They are so full of instruction and goodness that we sometimes forget to read on. But look at verse 3! *"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."*

Here is the beginning of another train of thought. We have been instructed in vs. 1-2 how we should be loving and serving God. Now we begin to see how we should love and serve our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. The first thing God tells us is to get over ourselves. Self-absorbed people find it hard to show love to others. Philippians 2:3 is a companion verse to Romans 12:3. It says, *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."* Lowliness of mind (Phil 2:3) and thinking soberly (Rom 12:3) are so closely related that when one sneezes the other blows his nose.

God gives us an earnest recommendation in Romans 12:3, *"...to every man among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly,"* Soberly...clearly, seriously. Most of us have a hard time thinking clearly about ourselves. We have a natural bias in our own favour; God says not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought but to think soberly. The only way for us to do this is to see ourselves as God sees us. His is the only true perspective. We need to be looking into the perfect law of liberty (James 1:23-25), and allowing God to show us what is revealed in us.

BIG CAT OR LITTLE CAT WITH BIG HAIR? -

When we think of ourselves more highly than we ought, we are a little like a Persian cat. It looks so big and fluffy, and you think, 'That is a large cat!' But if that cat gets caught out in a heavy shower, everyone sees it for what it really is. It is a small cat with large hair. That is us. We are each a small person, not necessarily with large hair, but maybe with a large ego, or a great deal of pride. God tells us to be careful how we present ourselves to others. We may look like a large cat to everyone around but if we

don't deal with our ego, God will send a figurative shower of rain, and then we will be just a small bedraggled cat that has large hair.

THE USE AND MISUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS -

God asks us to take this into consideration as we work with our brothers and sisters in the Lord. In verses 3-8, we are told of some of the spiritual gifts bestowed on believers at the time of salvation. We are all different people, and God gives us all different gifts. When God looks at those that believe, He sees a single body. He knows that we are all individuals but together He sees us as a unit. He wants us to work together; each fulfilling the tasks that we are given, and no one despising another because of what God has asked them to do.

Don't we all remember that silly uncle, who would grab your wrist, and start hitting your face with your own hand? All the time he was saying, "Don't hit yourself! Stop hitting yourself!!" When we despise others in the body of Christ, we are doing the same thing. We are injuring the body we belong to.

EDIFYING OTHERS BY GENUINE LOVE -

In verses 9-13, we go the next step. We have understood that we need to be humble, we understand we should not injure the body of Christ, the church. Now we go from that to... "How to **strengthen** the body of Christ." Each of the following verses gives an instruction for strengthening our union in the body of believers. It's practically a checklist, if you remove the italics!

- *Love be without dissimulation*
- *Abhor that which is evil*
- *Cleave to that which is good*
- *Kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*
- *In honour preferring one another*
- *Not slothful in business*
- *Fervent in spirit*
- *Serving the Lord*
- *Rejoicing in hope*
- *Patient in tribulation*
- *Continuing instant in prayer*
- *Distributing to the necessity of saints*
- *Given to hospitality*

This checklist is a doozy! I don't think filling it in once a day would be often enough. I know my checks would come and go; but this is what God asks of us in His cause to strengthen the body of Christ.

Just the first box would cause each of us some consternation! How hard it is to love all other believers sincerely! If we equate the love we should be showing

with the love the world uses, we would be hard pressed. But God's idea of love is much more work-y. So many of the above are labour intensive.

Think of being patient in tribulation...that is not a one off. That is an event that could be hours, days, months or years! It is nothing like sending a valentines card, which is the work of a moment. By looking at the list above we can see that God expects our behaviour to encourage and strengthen and bless other believers. What is it about abhorring evil and cleaving to good that shows my love for others? Most people these days would say, "Do what you like! You have liberty, go for it!" Not God. He knows that our sins impact others, and so do our strengths! We want a strong congregation? Let each esteem other better than themselves! Let us love sincerely! Let us abhor evil! Let us cleave to the good!

You see how it all falls into place? Look at • *Not slothful in business*. How is that anything to do with love? Many of the others are obviously encouraging but this one? Maybe God doesn't want us to be ashamed of the testimony of our brother or our sister. Maybe when we are slothful in our work, His name is besmirched, and that has a flow on effect to the church. We have all met people who won't go to church because so-and-so says they're a Christian. Don't give anyone a reason to feel ashamed to admit that, 'Yes, I do go to the same church as so-and-so.'

ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF GENUINE LOVE -

[Romans 12:14-21](#) go on with more precise instruction. God knew that we would need extra tuition on some of these, and gives us some pointers on how to fulfill them.

"Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Even though we understand the words God has given us here, I know we willfully misunderstand them whenever we feel like it. Just like the Hebrew children decided they could pick and choose what commands suited them, and which ones they would follow and which ones they would

renovate, so do we. We justify our bad attitudes and ungracious behaviour. We say that the other person hasn't gotten things right with us, but God hasn't given us the ability to change another person's mind, or to make a good decision for them. All we have to work with is our own minds and our own hearts. When we flat out refuse to follow God's way, we do ourselves irreparable harm. Our families are affected, our church is affected. God needs His children to be on more than speaking terms, He needs us to be on praying terms and on loving terms. He needs us to fix our mistakes, ask forgiveness when it's needed. He needs us to be sincere and not fake in our friendships. He wants us to hand over to Him our acts of vengeance, because He knows when to dole them out, and how much to give. He also lets it be known it's from Him... and nobody else! He needs humble people who look on each other and say, "They are so much better than I am!"

THE DEBT I OWE MY NEIGHBOUR -

Before we close, I want to look quickly at Romans 13:8-10. It says, *"Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

Verse 8 says that we are to owe no man anything, and yet, it goes on to say, we are in debt to every man. We owe each other love. It is a debt that must be paid, for in the paying of it, we fulfill the law. All the law is tucked neatly into Christ's saying, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* The conclusion must be that we don't actually love each other very much at all, because working ill to our neighbours happens on a regular basis! It is a saddening thought that the love that made the early churches strong and vital, is so sadly lacking in our churches that they are miserable and explosive places! Christ is the same: but we as believers have been thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and we haven't been working on love...only on self-gratification.

Let us begin again to grasp hold of these basic truths, let us inspect our lives with the checklist that God has set down for us.

Let us love one another.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." – 1 John 4:11

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NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- **THE CLUTCHES OF SIN.** Perhaps we sometimes think that if every sin had the obvious trappings that alcoholism (or drug abuse or one of the more socially unacceptable sins) has, we would probably fight each sin in our own lives all the more doggedly. I doubt it. Sin is inherently attractive to us sons of Adam, even when it looks nasty. Only God's Spirit in a man puts up the fight against that man's sin.
- Islam has nothing to do with Islam! - quoted from almost all modern politicians
- Meditating on the Word of God involves chewing on truth, divinely revealed truth. The problem is that, when we chew on truth, it chews on us, and maybe that explains why so few Christians meditate on Scripture. The biter doesn't like getting bit. - Bert Ferraro
- I remember hearing a taped message of Dr Hyman Appleman's when I was 21. It broke my heart and I promised God I would serve Him no matter what or at what cost. The subject was the Fire of God. He told the story of a Texas Farmer who came to the big city to visit his wife in hospital. On the Sunday she said, "You go to Church and tell me what it's like."

When he returned he went through the program as it was laid out in the church bulletin:

Introit. 'What's that, she said?' Well that's the organ playing.

Prayer - 'OK'

Welcome - 'OK'

Bible reading - 'OK'

She understood all of these but when he came to the Choir item he said, the next item was an Anthem.

She said, "What's the difference between a hymn and an anthem?"

He said, "Well, Martha, if I sang to you, 'The cows are in the corn' - 'Well, that's a hymn.'"

But if I said to you, 'Martha, Martha, Martha, the corn, the corn, the corn, the black cows, the red cows, the white cows, the cows, the cows, the cows, in the corn, the corn, the corn, in the corn, the cows are in the corn' - Now, that's an anthem!"

Then Hyman Appelmann said, "If I have a choir that doesn't sing a message that sets my soul on fire I'll have them sit down and have the congregation sing a hymn! I did when I was a pastor and I'll do it again!"

Contributed by John Ecob

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(Bro. Costella always writes useful and edifying articles, but he really hit the nail on the head when he says, "Clearly, unity and fellowship are predicated upon sound doctrine." The local Anglican rector once said to me that "Doctrine divides, love unites!" I replied, "That's an interesting doctrine!" All true Christian fellowship is built on Christian doctrine, Bible doctrine, Holy Scripture. Whatever closeness is found by born again people with people who are not born again does not deserve to be called "fellowship." Call it "compromise" or "surrender", but don't call it "fellowship." - Ed)

What, exactly, should be the basis of unity and fellowship with God and other believers for all who call themselves Christians? The apostle John writes, *"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us"* (1 Jn. 1:3). Clearly, unity and fellowship are predicated upon sound doctrine.

The apostles could only enjoy true, biblical fellowship with others in the body of Christ if the members of Christ's body received and believed their God-given words. The very word fellowship (Gr. koinonia), in the biblical sense, means "joint partnership" or the "genuine sharing of something in common between two or more individuals."

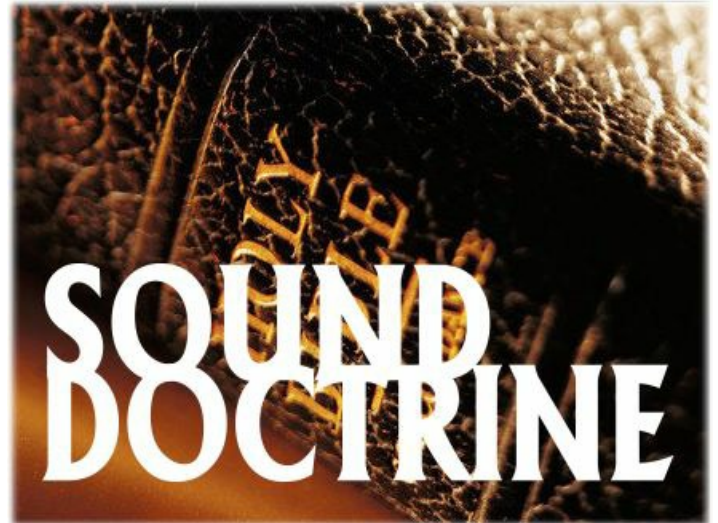
The emulsifier that binds believers together in fellowship or ministry endeavor is not only faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ (salvation) but also subsequent acceptance of sound doctrine and obedience to the very Word of God as well. The apostle Paul declared time and again that he received his words, his doctrine, from God Himself, and therefore, it should be accepted and believed by all who profess to be believers in Christ.

The acceptance or rejection of God's Word (doctrine) served as the measuring stick for unity or separation. Notice, for example, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."* and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2, *"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus."*

The believers at Thessalonica received the words of Paul for what they truly were—the very words of God. These words contain the doctrine necessary to know how to "walk and to please God."

Believers were to separate from those who failed to obey the doctrine of God as enunciated by the apostle Paul. Of course, this separation did not entail personal isolation from others but refusal to identify with the errant in ecclesiastical fellowship and ministry endeavor.

2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14 *"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw*



yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us...And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

Today, many within the professing church fail to realize that sound doctrine—the teaching of God Himself as recorded by the authors of the New Testament—is the only foundation for true, biblical unity. Many pastors and church leaders are rallying for unity at the expense of sound doctrine—a practice totally foreign to the Word of God and, in reality, a practice actually forbidden by the Scriptures.

Leading evangelicals and charismatics are forging unity with "all who say they love Jesus" or with "all who call Jesus, 'Lord'"—regardless of their denominational beliefs or affiliations. The cry is heard far and wide—"forget your doctrinal differences. Find common ground and work together for unity in order to be a unified witness to the world." But God's Word reveals that unity among believers is based only upon sound doctrine.

The apostle John says he and the other apostles declared (this is verbal or written content) what they had seen and heard from God Himself *"that ye also may have fellowship with us (the apostles)"*. In other words, fellowship and unity are predicated upon the belief in, acceptance of and obedience to the Word of God as declared by the writers of Scripture.

Feelings, emotions or experience did not serve as the unifying factor for fellowship. Biblical fellowship, as evidenced throughout John's first epistle and the rest of Scripture, is the sharing of common truth and correct doctrine as found in the Word of God. True fellowship must begin with agreement on the doctrine of the apostles.

What a blessing it is to possess true, biblical fellowship with others! - <http://www.feasite.org/node/1908>

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(I love looking at the hands of the elderly. The stories they tell would fill libraries. Recently I read the above-mentioned book and was struck by the author's description of her mother's hands. It made me want to look closely at my sweetheart Susan's hands. What wonderful, loving tools God has given her (and me!!!) to use in service to others!!! - Ed.)

What wonderful hands Mother had.

They told the story of her nature, the story of her whole life. Mother (was) one of those do-it-yourself persons. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, she couldn't or wouldn't turn her hand to. What a homemaker!

Her hands were very large hands, beautifully formed, with full, wide nails; the sort of hands that never went red, never went brown. They were protected by an underlying layer of flesh that held a soft creaminess, smooth to the touch, but were as firm as a water-washed stone is firm. And yet her hands, the thumb and every finger, the backs and the palms, were criss-crossed with deep, countless little creases and furrows; every little crease and line being a little bit of the ground-plan of our struggling farm.

One of her hands had a black spot deeply embedded in the flesh of one finger where a piece of burnt wood once ran into her hand. The wood came out all right, but the spot of charcoal stayed where the skin closed over it. On one thumb was a white scar that stood up like a knitted ridge; this was the mark made during an encounter with a fierce, nesting goose, old White-eye or Greyback.

Mother's hands held quite a number of such tell-tale signs. They told tales of honest toil; they were giving hands, soothing hands, serving hands that held contact with the earth and its wondrous changes, and yet with its majestic immobility.

Mother's hands were generous, non-complaining hands, simple, dignified, deeply religious hands, and within the outline of those fingers, the terrained palms held a



nobility of purpose, of character, a story of the Bible, a story as old as the earth itself.

To touch Mother's hands had the same effect on me as going to church. I felt strangely joyous and uplifted, infused with a great strength.

Her wide, plain golden wedding ring - her only ring - was, too, in keeping with the indefinable strength and permanency of Mother's hands - the hands that had, unaided, brought me into the world. The hands that had bathed and dressed me for the first time. These same hands that cheerfully tended us unceasingly, untiringly - morning, noon, and night - and nursed the whole twelve of us through every childhood illness and complaint, were ever ready to help a neighbour in times of trouble.

It made no difference, cooking, cleaning washing, ironing, scrubbing, mending, sewing - in our earlier years all by hand, and later by machine - heeling and half-soling our boots, making jams, pickles and sauces, salting meat, making bread, and making butter were all just a part of a day's work to Mother. She took them in her singing stride.

What wonderful hands Mother had!

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For the **LOVE** of the **FAMILY**

Godly advice for today's families • Helping people change their lives Biblically

DR. TERRY L. COOMER
Founder & Director



SO WHAT'S WITH KATY PERRY? - THE WOMAN RIDES THE BEAST?



I am one of those sports Luddites that doesn't know the difference between a golf ball, a football and a soccer ball, and don't care that I don't know. Watching the superbowl is, to me, an enormous waste of time. TV itself is, to quote an unnamed entertainer, "very educational. Every time someone turns the TV on, I go in the other room and read a book."

So what about the Superbowl halftime program last Sunday? Was it intended to have an occultic/Illuminati/Revelation 17 (possibly subliminal?) meaning to the "in your face" program?

Whether she realised all that she took part in or not, Katy Perry promoted the underlying belief system and values of America, even of the whole world. The entire program was not about sports. It was about the real religion of Americans. Welcome to the telecast of the coming World Religion of the Antichrist!

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I am not attracted to Hollywood sleaze, nor to the Sewer of Pop Music. Ever since Nimrod's tower was conceived, and construction began, the music of pagans has been an exploration of debauchery. It is a sad commentary on the morality and maturity of Christians that, for the most part, they cannot tell the difference between godly music and the fertility cult music of Nimrod.

So how should we read the visual and auditory content of the Superbowl halftime program? The words of God are that the mystery of iniquity doth already work. - Ed.

EX-'CHRISTIAN' KATY PERRY PROMOTES DARK MAGIC AND LGBT AGENDA AT 2015 SUPER BOWL HALFTIME SHOW
NTEB News Desk - 01 February 2015

A great wave of spiritual darkness is settling in over America. In recent years the Super Bowl, almost always the highest-rated and most-watched television broadcast on the planet,

has given over its famed Halftime Show to trumpet the cause of the New World Order and the Illuminati.

And the Illuminati knows that it is "their hour", and they are defiantly out in the open.

Two years ago, you had Beyonce flashing the Illuminati Triangle Sign during Super Bowl XLVII, the year before that you had Madonna as a New Age goddess gyrating on a satanic throne, and last year had Bruno Mars shouted "Illuminati Now!" during his performance.

This year, we had ex-[so-called] Christian Katy Perry providing the "entertainment" for us. Perry, whom you may recall, famously renounced her Christian upbringing and has this to say about what her "faith" is like today:

"I don't believe in a heaven or a hell, or an old man sitting on a throne. I believe in a higher power bigger than me because that keeps me accountable," she told Marie Claire magazine recently.

"Accountability is rare to find, especially with people like myself, because nobody wants to tell you something you don't want to hear. I'm not Buddhist, I'm not Hindu, I'm not Christian, but I still feel like I have a deep connection with God. I pray all the time - for self-control, for humility," she told Marie Claire.

"There's a lot of gratitude in it. Just saying 'thank you' sometimes is better than asking for things." So, let's see how 'former' Christian Katy Perry did compared to previous years:

Katy Perry opened riding a golden monster with glowing-red satanic eyes singing the lyrics to her hit "Dark Horse". She performed her LGBT fan favourite "I Kissed A Girl", leading as many young women as will follow her into experimentation with the LGBT perverted lifestyle.

Perry closed with another pro-LGBT song called "Firework" where she floated over the audience riding a shooting star with the LGBT rainbow as its tail.

The New World Order and Illumination agenda is being hammered into our children at a feverish rate, using catchy lyrics and a non-stop droning drumbeat with overwhelming power chords. Parents, protect your children if you love them. All of this junk, every bit of it, is poisoning their minds and turning them away from God.

Katy Perry is the perfect poster girl for the New World Order because she apparently used to be a Christian, and now mocks the God she says she once served.

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Gold From Ophir

Context? Or A Con With A Text?

By Jerry Wilhite



If there is any passage used and abused by the charismatics in Africa, it is Joel 2:28-29, *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."*

False teachers use this text to justify visions, dreams, prophetic utterances, and women preachers, but if they would read the context they would see that this text is not being fulfilled in our day.

The number one rule of interpreting our Bibles is to look at the context. The passage is teaching that only after Israel truly accepts the LORD nationally (2:27, *And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.*) and at a time when literal signs and wonders are happening in the heavens (2:30, *And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.*) at the end of the Great Tribulation will this be fulfilled completely.

Yes, Peter quoted the entire passage in his Pentecost message (Ac 2:16-21), but he was leading up to his main

point that *"whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Ac 2:21). He was not saying the entire passage was being fulfilled. People have always had to call on the name of the Lord to have a personal relationship with Him be it in the Old or New Testament days.

Just because a verse is in the Bible, does not mean that it was written *"to"* us, even though it definitely was written *"for"* us.

The devil was good at taking a verse out of context (Ps 91:11-12, *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*) and quoting it to Christ at his temptation (Mt 4:6, *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*)

We should expect this sort of thing while serving the Lord on the devil's playground, but let us not be guilty of the same twisting of texts! Let's check the "context" and not be, like some, a "con with a text."

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TECHNOLATRY - TWO SERMONS WE ALL OUGHT TO HEAR!!!! – By Buddy Smith

I recently listened several times to two sermons by Pastor Dave Mallinak on the subject of Technolatri (the worship of technology as a god), and was impressed with his grasp of the subject, as well as the importance of the content of the messages. When I looked online, I found them in [VIDEO FORMAT](#) and also in [AUDIO FORMAT](#).

I contacted Bro. Mallinak and asked for permission to post a link on our church website to these messages in hopes that others, pastors especially, would avail themselves of the vital truths they contain.

Increasingly, I perceive that we live in possibly the most idolatrous society in the history of the world.

What is saddest about this conclusion is that Christians are as guilty of idolatry as the Jews of the Old Testament were, AND that we are so ignorant of where idolatry will take us. The destination of idolatry is always slavery. It is inevitable.

So you think you are not a worshipper of technology? And it is no idol to you? Or that you are not being enslaved? Are you brave enough to test your worship of technology by watching/listening to these sermons?

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(Since the great majority of acts of terror appear to be performed by Muslims (see [http://wikiislam.net/wiki/Muslim_Statistics - Terrorism](http://wikiislam.net/wiki/Muslim_Statistics_-_Terrorism)) and it is increasingly apparent that the governments and media in western nations actively pursue a conciliatory approach to Islam. I have decided to include a column in Heads Up in which I will post news items and links to webpages that treat Islam more objectively. Please feel free to write me at smiletex@bigpond.net.au if you wish to comment and forward any relevant articles you come across. If you are a radical Muslim and wish to perform an act of terrorism on me or my family, please take into account the following verses in the Christian Scriptures: Psalms 34:7, Psalms 37:1-40, II Kings 19:35, and I John 4:4 - Ed)



HERE ARE THREE FACTS ABOUT ISLAM I DIDN'T KNOW –

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=851855678159033&set=vb.100000038277260&type=2&theater>



PM TONY ABBOTT BAITES JIHADIS WITH HATED DAESH TAG - Ellen Whinnett/Herald Sun/January 11, 2015

Prime Minister Tony Abbott wants to stop referring to ISIL, ISIS and IS. - Prime Minister Tony Abbott has moved



to rebrand terror group Islamic State by calling the evil jihadis a name they hate — Daesh.

The PM urged others to join him and stop calling the murderous hordes ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or IS (Islamic State). His decision, to be mirrored by government MPs and officials, was made after talks two weeks ago with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. "Daesh hates being referred to by this term, and what they don't like has an instinctive appeal to me," Mr Abbott told the Herald Sun. "I absolutely refuse to refer to it by the title that it claims for itself (Islamic State), because I think this is a perversion of religion and a travesty of governance. I've never used that term and I would strongly counsel people against ever using the presumptuous title that they have given themselves."

Daesh is from an acronym formed from the Arabic spelling of the terror group's name - al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi Iraq wa al-Sham.

International media has been reporting terror leaders' threats to "cut out the tongues" of those referring to them as Daesh, or DAIISH, as it is also known. There are several theories on why the name is so despised, which include reports it was first used by supporters of Syrian President - Bashar al-Assad whom IS is seeking to overthrow.

There are also reports it closely mirrors the Arabic words "daes" which means "to trample down or crush" and "dahes" which reportedly means something similar to "one who sows discord".

The move to rebrand IS comes as western nations, including Australia, work to strip away any legitimacy the terror group is trying to build. "The reason why ISIL — or Daesh, as I'll continue to refer to it — is an issue for Australians is because its –apparent success in Syria and Iraq has galvanised the people prone to extremism right

around the world, and it has become the inspiration for the potential terrorists,” Mr Abbott said.

“Given that the fight begins in Iraq and Syria, we probably should refer to this organisation by the term that is most used by its opponents in those countries — that is, Daesh.”

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/pm-tony-abbott-baits-jihadis-with-hated-daesh-tag/story-fni0fiyv-1227181490381>

MOSQUES SOAR IN WAR AGAINST AMERICA

By Carol Brown, American Thinker/Jan. 9, 2015

As the Islamic invasion advances, mosques are proliferating across the United States at breakneck speed. And there appears to be no end in sight.

Since 9/11, the number of mosques in America has grown by 75%. The timing of this is no coincidence. Mosques are a symbol of Islamic supremacism. Islam attacks. Then it plants a triumphal mosque on the battlefield. And another. And another. And another.

The proliferation of mosques is also a sign of our incomprehensible response (or lack thereof) to the threat of Islam.

War has been waged against the United States and what have we done? We have welcomed the enemy with open arms. Dhimmitude has paved the way for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of new mosques since the day nearly 3,000 Americans were murdered in the name of Islam.

If we don't put an end to this madness, we will ensure the continued assault against us – an assault that, ultimately, will spare no one. (Do you hear that, dhimmis? That includes you.)

Mosques pose a dual risk to Americans. First there is the nature of what is preached inside the walls of the mosque. Second is the nature of the walls themselves.

As to the first point, recent studies show that 80% of mosques preach jihad (through sermons and/or materials) and that more than 95% of Muslims attend such mosques.

But the horror doesn't end there as one considers the issue of funding. While many Muslims claim they raise the money for mosques within the local community, there is reason to doubt this assertion in many cases. Common

sense alone would cause one to question how, for example, tiny communities of Muslims could raise millions of dollars to build gigantic mosques. Common sense aside, there is evidence that shows that 80% of mosques in this country receive funds from Saudi Arabia.

So here we are with at least 1,700 mosques that promote jihad, the vast majority of Muslims attending such mosques, and millions upon millions of dollars flowing in from Saudi Arabia building this dangerous empire. Put it all together and one realizes that mosques serve as jihadist recruitment and training centers.

Welcome to the intersection of religion and politics. In the case of Islam, welcome to hell. Because at its core, Islam is a totalitarian ideology that demands submission. In fact, the word Islam literally means submission: as in convert, pay the jizya tax and live as a second-class citizen, or die.

Anyone who wants to argue otherwise (1) has not read the Koran, (2) does not understand the implications of Chapter 2, Verse 106: Abrogation, whereby more recent violent verses supersede earlier more peaceful verses, (3) is uneducated about world history as it pertains to the rise and fall of Islam, (4) is not paying attention to the Islamic savagery unfolding before our eyes in the Middle East and elsewhere, (5) is in deep denial, and/or (6) is lying.

To fully appreciate the danger of mosques, one should also heed the words of Turkish poet Ziya Gokalp (quoted by Turkey's PM Erdogan in a 1997 speech):

“The minarets are our bayonets, the domes our helmets, the mosques our barracks and the faithful our army.”

To read more go to:

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2015/01/mosques_on_the_front_lines_in_the_war_against_america.html

SAUDI ARABIA'S NEW KING HELPED FUND RADICAL TERRORIST GROUPS

Monarch tied to anti-Semitic Muslim clerics, funding of jihad - AP By: Adam Kredo - January 26, 2015

King Salman, Saudi Arabia's newly crowned monarch, has a controversial history of helping to fund radical terror groups and has maintained ties with several anti-Semitic Muslim clerics known for advocating radical positions, according to reports and regional experts. Salman, previously the country's defense minister and deputy



prime minister, was crowned king last week after his half-brother King Abdullah died at the age of 90.

While Abdullah served as a close U.S. ally and was considered a reformer by many, Saudi Arabia has long been criticized by human rights activists for its treatment of women and its enforcement of a strict interpretation of Islamic law.

President Barack Obama is scheduled to travel to the Saudi capital of Riyadh on Tuesday to pay respects to Abdullah and meet with Salman, who also has been seen as a moderate friend of the United States.

However, throughout his public career in government, Salman has embraced radical Muslim clerics and has been tied to the funding of radical groups in Afghanistan, as well as an organization found to be plotting attacks against America, according to various reports and information provided by David Weinberg, a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

In 2001, an international raid of the Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia, which Salman founded in 1993, unearthed evidence of terrorist plots against America, according to separate exposés written by Dore Gold, an Israeli diplomat, and Robert Baer, a former CIA officer.

Salman is further accused by Baer of having “personally approved all important appointments and spending” at the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), a controversial Saudi charity that was hit with sanctions following the attacks of September 11, 2001, for purportedly providing material support to al Qaeda.

Salman also has been reported to be responsible for sending millions of dollars to the radical mujahedeen that waged jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s, according to Bruce Riedel, a former CIA officer who is now director of the Brookings Intelligence Project.

“In the early years of the war—before the U.S. and the Kingdom ramped up their secret financial support for the anti-Soviet insurgency—this private Saudi funding was critical to the war effort,” according to Riedel. “At its peak, Salman was providing \$25 million a month to the mujahedeen. He was also active in raising money for the Bosnian Muslims in the war with Serbia.”

Salman also has embraced radical Saudi clerics known for their hateful rhetoric against Israel and Jews. Salman has worked closely with Saleh al-Moghamisy, who tweeted in August 2014 that “Allah only gathered Jews in the land of Palestine to destroy them.” Al-Moghamisy also stated in a 2014 television interview that “the hatred of Jews toward Muslims is an eternal hatred.” He also claimed in 2012 that Osama bin Laden had died with more “sanctity and honor” than any infidel, or non-Muslim. Despite this rhetoric, Salman has maintained close ties to al-Moghamisy. Salman chairs the board of an organization run by al-Moghamisy and has sponsored the cleric’s public events, including a 2013 festival. Salman and al-Moghamisy were pictured many times together at that event, according to regional reports.

Al-Moghamisy also has been an adviser to two of Salman’s sons, one of whom posed for a selfie with the cleric in July.

Salman also has reached out to other hardline preachers, including Safar Hawali, a one-time mentor of Osama bin Laden who has called for non-Muslims to be expelled from Saudi Arabia.

In 2005, Salman called Hawali to inquire about his health and in 2010 praised him upon the release of a book.

While crown prince, Salman also made a point of phoning Aidh Abdullah al-Qarni, a Saudi author currently on the U.S. Terrorist Screening Center’s No Fly List who has praised Hamas and called Israelis “the brothers of apes and pigs.”

Additionally, Salman, in his role as crown prince, has recently visited Saudi Arabia’s grand mufti, the nation’s highest religious authority, who has asserted that 10 is an appropriate age of marriage for girls and called for the destruction of all churches in the Arabian Peninsula.

Weinberg, who has been tracking Salman closely, said that the new monarch is taking up his predecessor’s mantle of moderate reform. “Just like King Abdullah tried to present himself as a reformer, some are trying to suggest that the new king, Salman, is a moderate who will continue his half-brother’s so-called progressive policies,” Weinberg said. “But just look at where Saudi Arabia is

after Abdullah: people are being decapitated and flogged by the state in the streets."

"Women are systematically oppressed by their own government, and the regime continues to propagate incitement and intolerance," he continued. "Salman's background funding mujahedeen abroad and embracing hateful clerics suggests that he is at best a political opportunist who will tolerate continued religious extremism, even if he does not hold such views himself."

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/saudi-arabias-new-king-helped-fund-radical-terror-groups/>

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES -

DOES THIS ARTICLE GIVE AN INSIGHT INTO THE GLOBAL WARMING FRAUD? -

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/10-things-weather-forecasters-wont-tell-you-2014-02-14>

REMEMBERING ANDRAE CROUCH, DEAD AT 72 -
(Say, did I read that right? Andrae Crouch wrote music for Michael Jackson and Madonna? Are you kidding me? I thought he was a Christian musician. - Ed)

Robert Darden/ JANUARY 8, 2015

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2015/january-web-only/remembering-andrae-crouch-dead-at-72.html> - Follow up article from Christianity Today.

CHRISTIAN SWINGERS: FAITHLESS, FECKLESS, FORNICATORS! -

(Surely not! Not since the days of David Brandt Berg [also called Moses David] and the "Children of God" cult he led have we observed open promiscuity used as an evangelistic tool. Dr. Don Boys reported on this immoral religious movement a few months ago, and it appears that they really DO practice immorality as a drawcard for sinners. - Ed.)

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/new-christian-swingers-dating-site-offers-faithful-couples-chance-to-hookup-10284/>

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THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE -

Seen posted on a fridge at work -

**"To Whomever is stealing food from the fridge -
Let's play a game -**

I have placed a few meals in the fridge for you. They are loaded with laxatives. I am not telling you which ones they are. If you eat your own food, you will be fine. If you eat what is not yours, well, you know what they say,

'Choices have consequences'

Have a nice day!"



- I'm not saying anybody should take it on themselves to exterminate all the really dumb people they run into. I'm just saying if we removed all the warning labels off everything and just sort of let the problem work itself out, that might help.
- I changed my car horn to a little electronic gizmo that sounds just like a machine gun. Most drivers move out of the way much faster now. (Except that one with the red and blue lights on top.)
- You know that tingly little feeling you get inside when you really like someone? That's common sense leaving your body.
- I decided to stop calling the bathroom the "John". I renamed it the "Jim". I feel so much better saying I went to the Jim this morning.
- Dear paranoid people who check behind shower curtains for those people who are a part of a conspiracy. If you find one, what's your plan?



Testimony from a new convert in Africa - "Thanks for the light. I was deaf, but now I see." - from Jerry Wilhite

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He's one of Australia's most powerful men, setting our official interest rate, and chances are (if you're an Aussie) you're carrying his autograph in your pocket.

Reserve Bank Governor Glenn Stevens flies his twin-engine Beechcraft Baron for Angel Flight, bringing seriously ill people from the country to the city for treatment.

This time, he's off to Orange for lung cancer sufferer Don Wheeler. "Taking time out of your own day to do things like this is just unbelievable, you just don't realise what people are about until you're in a bit of a crisis yourself," Wheeler said.

Glenn is just one of about 2000 pilots who give their planes and time for flights like these and there are also hundreds of ground staff that make these transfers happen, an army of dedicated people working together for those in desperate need.

From up there, the hard headed economist gets a wider perspective too. "Just being up there floating along, there's nothing like it," Stevens said. "If you have good

health, a job to go to, a roof over your head, and someone to love, what more do you need?"

Glenn has flown dozens of Angel Flights across New South Wales. Many of Glenn's passengers have no idea who's at the controls.

"In some ways the anonymity of flying around in a cap and sunglasses, I rather like that," he said. Others, he knows well.

"There's a very lovely family from Quirindi. Their business is producing honey, so there's always a free jar of honey whenever I fly them that I use on my cereal every morning."

For more information about Angel Flight, visit site at: www.angelflight.org.au

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/nsw/a/25996129/big-bank-bosss-secret-hobby/>

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Lifting Up The STANDARD

"WHEN THE ENEMY SHALL COME IN LIKE A FLOOD, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM" (ISAIAH 59:19).

An Outreach Ministry of FairHavens Baptist Church
www.fairhavensbaptist.net

CHALLENGING AND ENCOURAGING GOD'S REMNANT TO REMAIN FAITHFUL

Sharpened Arrows

AS ARROWS ARE IN THE HAND OF A MIGHTY MAN,
SO ARE CHILDREN OF THE YOUTH.
Psalms 127:4

A publication of Golden West Independent Baptist Church Australia which aims to encourage and edify preachers children, youth & young adults to stand for Christ in the battle for the truth.

WAY OF LIFE LITERATURE

O Timothy

"Keep that which is committed to thy trust..."

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF WARNING AND EDIFICATION



WHY DO SO MANY BORN AGAIN CHRISTIANS ADMIRE THE BEATLES?

One of the most puzzling phenomena I've come across in recent times is the love so many Christians have for the Beatles. Ray Comfort's movie, *Genius*, is an example. His book, *The Beatles, God, and the Bible* is another.

I wonder why Ray Comfort admires the Beatles? He is not on his own. I hear others say similar things.

Surely it is not a love for their:

1. Rampant Immorality
2. Use and Promotion of every kind of Drugs
3. Support of Revolution Against Any and All Authority
4. Practice of Pagan Religion
5. Involvement in the Occult
6. Total Self-Centredness
7. Near Insanity On Many Occasions
8. Open Blasphemy Against God and Christ
9. Temporary Flirtation with Christianity

So I wonder why Ray Comfort, and thousands of professing Christians, even many who serve in fundamental churches, express admiration for the Beatles?

Have they not engrafted into their hearts **Ephesians 5:3-17** *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. **And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.** For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."*

I hear born again Christians say, "Oh, the Beatles' music was not too bad. They wrote some good songs."

Is it possible these soft minded, undiscerning Christians never read **Matthew 12:32-36** *"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.** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."*

Is it possible for the Beatles to have practiced and promoted Rampant Immorality, the Use and Promotion of every kind of Drugs, the Support of Revolution Against Any and All Authority, the Practice of Pagan Religion, Involvement in the Occult, Total Self-Centeredness, to experience Near Insanity On Many Occasions, and to speak Open Blasphemy Against God and Christ, and then at best, John Lennon had a Temporary Flirtation with Christianity and in the middle of all their "unfruitful works of darkness", and in the midst of all their ungodliness, to write and sing music that Christians can approve of and encourage their children to listen to and defend?

Ray Comfort calls John Lennon a "Genius." A musical "genius." He openly praises his music and tells how he loved it as a youth. Maybe that is the reason he admires them so much. Maybe that explains why there is a covert, subliminal, undercover, low grade "beatlemania" in fundamental churches. Maybe that explains why it is so easy for CCM to creep into our churches. If John Lennon was a musical "genius" then he was an **evil musical genius, like Lucifer when he fell!**

Is it possible our people are so undiscerning that they haven't yet made the connection between the Beatles' Morality, their Message, their Music, and their Movement?

I wonder why?

It would profit every Christian, whether you defend the Beatles or not, to read the following article, every word of it: http://wayoflife.org/index_files/beatles.html

If any man hath ears to hear.....

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EVANGELICALISM, INC.

And The Silencing Of Critics

Courtesy of Apostasy Alert

Yet, emerging leaders like **(Rick) Warren, Bill Hybels** and others not only welcomed the attention, **they embraced it**. Thus was born the non-biblical “church growth” model for doing ‘church’. A key component of the model is **consensus building**. In other words, everyone from leadership to laity gets onboard with the leader’s “vision” of how things should be.

(It is certainly one of the most interesting and perplexing phenomena of 21st century fundamentalism that many pastors of Independent Baptist churches admire Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, John Maxwell, etc. When Rick Warren spoke at the recent Hillsong conference in Sydney (alongside Mark Driscoll!!!!) American and Australia IB pastors attended, and thus far, they have uttered no word of reproof or censure. Paul Chappell, pastor of Lancaster Baptist Church, is possibly the most influential preacher in IB circles worldwide. I see he is one of the keynote speakers at the Leadership Conference at Good Shepherd Baptist Church in Brisbane in 2015. Though he recently spoke out against pastors attending Hillsong conferences, he still welcomes their CCM music into his church, and has in the past sent his youth leaders to conferences/seminars at Rick Warren's Saddleback Community Church to learn how to build their youth ministry. As a pastor who opposes any and every involvement with Warren, Driscoll, Hybels, Chappell, and the churches that follow them, I am experiencing the very things described in the following article, exclusion, and mockery, sometimes even vilification. - Ed)

"A DISTURBING TREND THAT HAS MUSHROOMED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS IS THE NASTY RESPONSE TO “CRITICS” OF SUCH LEADERS” ~ **WorldNetDaily 24 January 2015**

The American evangelical community, **at the leadership level**, is a fascinating piece of work. It’s also **extremely disturbing**, on many levels. More than 30 years ago, when business management guru **Peter Drucker** (inexplicably?) decided to befriend and mentor up-and-coming pastors - a **transformational shift was beginning to take place in the church**. One can rightly wonder, mightily, why guys like Drucker would be interested at all in that segment of society. Why put your arm around a young seminary graduate like *Rick Warren* and mentor him to “**grow the church**”?

What did that mean, anyway? For some of us who research such things, **it didn’t mean anything good**.

It should seem obvious that when secular (or better, secular humanist) sources buddy up to church leaders, **something is amiss**. Scripture warns about liking the applause of the world, and all that.

Over time, *those dissenters* who call into question the methods are **quietly but rudely** shown the door.

Today, the church-growth model is a **juggernaut**, and in effect, Warren & Co. **very much control the narrative** within Evangelicalism.

Don’t believe me? Consider the ubiquitous nature of curriculum, books, conferences and the like from such leaders. **They have a stranglehold on Christian media**, ranging from *chain bookstores* to **denominational infrastructure**. A disturbing trend that has mushroomed in the last few years is **the nasty response to “critics” of such leaders**. From social media to conference hallways, it’s whispered, written and shouted that “**discernment ministries**” and various other ‘*fundies*’ (who aren’t fun!) **only want to criticize for the sake of criticism**.

Perhaps they are jealous of others’ **success**. Maybe they have **deep emotional issues** that **manifest themselves in attacks on shining knights like Warren**?

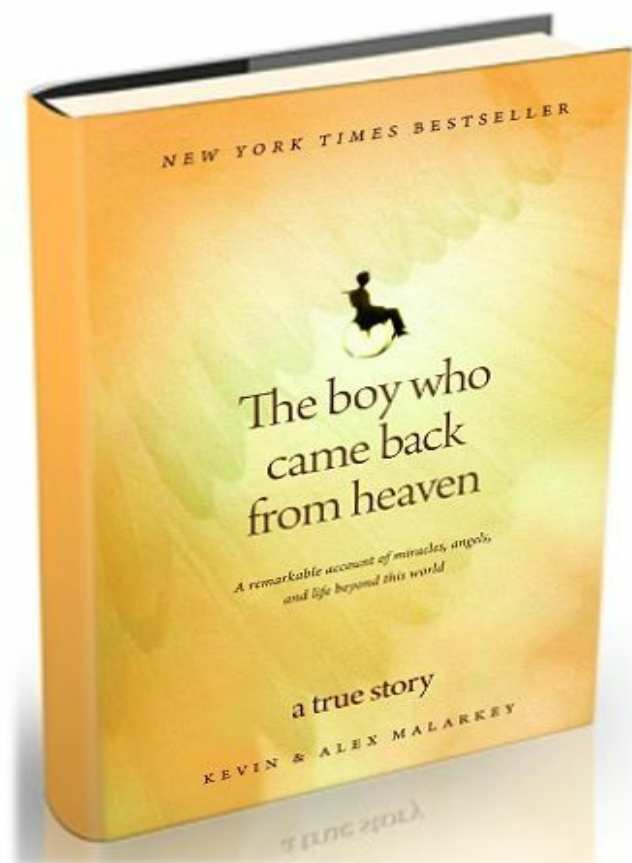
MOSTLY, THE ‘BIG LEADERS’ SMARTLY IGNORE CRITICS

Through it all, **the effort is made to deceive the masses/laity**, many of whom **don’t have time to discern** whether the message from the pulpit/plexiglass table thingy is **biblically sound**. [Yet, a studied reading of the Bible would surely protect from such deceptions?] Often, these messages are **anything but biblical**, but rely on plenty of **pop psychology** and **management techniques** designed to build and maintain *Dear Leader’s* brand.

Those who call into question such methods (and in reality, there are only a handful, since discernment ministries operate on less than a shoestring, while the objects of their reports command gigantic and virtually unlimited budgets) are **vilified, mocked, ignored** labelled as ‘**foolish**’ and **defamed** at every opportunity.

Mostly, the ‘*Big Leaders*’ **smartly ignore critics**, but sometimes they just can’t help themselves and one can speculate that when they do answer, it’s because they are **feeling some heat from constituents in the pews**.

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There are an increasing number of "Heaven Tourism" books, sermons, testimonies, and movies on the market. The most recent, **Heaven Is For Real**, became a best seller a few years ago. The author, Todd Burpo, is the father of Colton, who claimed to have gone to Heaven while having surgery. The book made into a movie in 2014.

It was interesting the other day to read several news headlines regarding another boy, **Alex Malarkey**, who also claimed to have died and gone to Heaven. The news site Drudge Report contained several links to stories saying that **Alex Malarkey** has renounced his claims that he died and went to Heaven. His book was titled **"The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven"**

Alex's letter:

"An Open Letter to Lifeway and Other Sellers, Buyers, and Marketers of Heaven Tourism, by the Boy Who Did Not Come Back From Heaven."

Please forgive the brevity, but because of my limitations I have to keep this short.

I did not die. I did not go to Heaven. I said I went to heaven because I thought it would get me attention. When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible. People have profited from lies, and continue to.

They should read the Bible, which is enough. The Bible is the only source of truth. Anything written by man cannot be infallible.

It is only through repentance of your sins and a belief in Jesus as the Son of God, who died for your sins (even though he committed none of his own) so that you can be forgiven may you learn of Heaven outside of what is written in the Bible...not by reading a work of man. I want the whole world to know that the Bible is sufficient. Those who market these materials must be called to repent and hold the Bible as enough.

In Christ,

Alex Malarkey."

From what the following newspaper columns state, his mother supports his son's retraction of his claims and the publisher, Tyndale House, has withdrawn the book from its catalogs, as well as Christian bookstores taking it off their shelves. One newspaper story indicates that the father has received most of the monies generated from book sales.

One newspaper says, "Alex's parents are now divorced; he and his siblings live with his mother, Beth Malarkey, who has previously spoken out against the book featuring her son. She has also said that profits from the book haven't been going to Alex."

If you can spare the time, it will be worthwhile to go and read the following news stories:

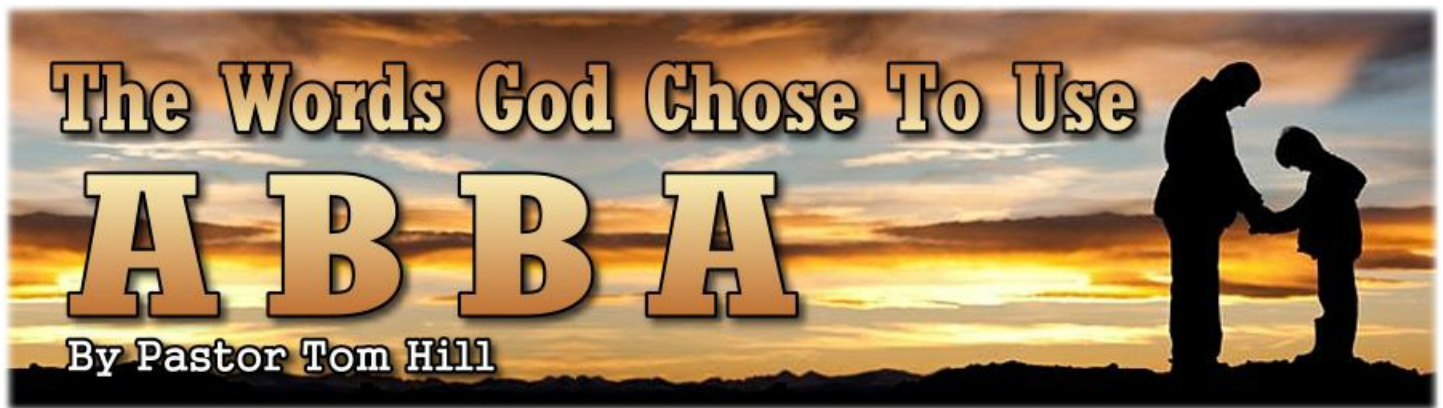
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/style-blog/wp/2015/01/15/boy-who-came-back-from-heaven-going-back-to-publisher/?hpid=z5>

<http://pulpitandpen.org/2015/01/13/the-boy-who-came-back-from-heaven-recants-story-rebukes-christian-retailers/>

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2015/01/15/377589757/boy-says-he-didn-t-go-to-heaven-publisher-says-it-will-pull-book>

Only God's word, the Bible, is totally trustworthy. If anyone's descriptions of Heaven are not found in the Holy Scriptures, then that person's claims are to be taken with a grain (or a tonne) of salt. Yours, mine, or anybody's description.

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Several years ago, at a meeting, a younger preacher was “preaching” at an associational meeting. Trying to remember the subject is impossible, but what this young liberal minded pastor said remains with those in attendance. Somehow, in his message, the subject slanted toward the prayer of our Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane. This liberal minded preacher demonstrated by physically bowing, and looking up, said, “Dad, let this cup pass from Me...”

“Dad?” Where in the world did this no-longer-associated-with-true-Baptists preacher get this? He went on to say something along the line that it came from the Aramaic word that Jesus used in [Mark 14:36](#), *“And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.”* He said that it meant “Daddy or Dad.” Really? The word in question as to its meaning is the word ABBA.

What exactly does it mean? Can it be used in the manner of “Dad?” As to such a use, not one credible serious Greek lexicon allows for such a definition. The source of such a stretch of this very intimate word can be credited to some of the modern preachers that such younger preachers tend to pattern themselves. It seems that there are few commentaries that concur that Abba fits our modern day usage of “Daddy.”

Being people of the book, we must ask, what does the Scripture say? To answer that, the word must be examined more closely. The word ABBA is a transliterated word, which means it is like the word “baptize” which comes almost letter for letter from the Greek word BAPTIZO. ABBA is found only three times in the New Testament. Bullinger’s Critical Lexicon says that ABBA is “the pronunciation in our Savior’s time of the Hebrew ‘AB’ (or AV).” AB is the Hebrew word for “father.”

Vines Expository Dictionary defines ABBA as “Father...the word framed by the lips of infants, and betokens unreasoning trust...the love and intelligent confidence of the child.” H.D. Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon says that, in addition to its meaning, “Father,” it is used as “a customary title of God in prayer.” He then adds that it came to acquire the nature of a most sacred proper name.

Finally, Kittel concurs with the fact that it is the language of the child to his father in usage.

It was only used by Jews or a proselyte of the covenant. It was a term of the greatest endearment, and respect. It recognized the role and the honor of the father in that home. That is the reason for Jesus’ usage of the word in Mark 14:36. It was as in the model prayer – our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. This is an honoring of the name of our heavenly Father. It is the recognition that He is the Creator, the Ruler, and the Sustainer of the entire universe. He is God. He is due honor because of Who He is.

When Jesus used the term ABBA, He was using it of the highest respect that can be given. In fact, the words can be translated as, “Father, MY FATHER.” That is how Paul used ABBA in the only other two occurrences of the word in the New Testament – Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6.

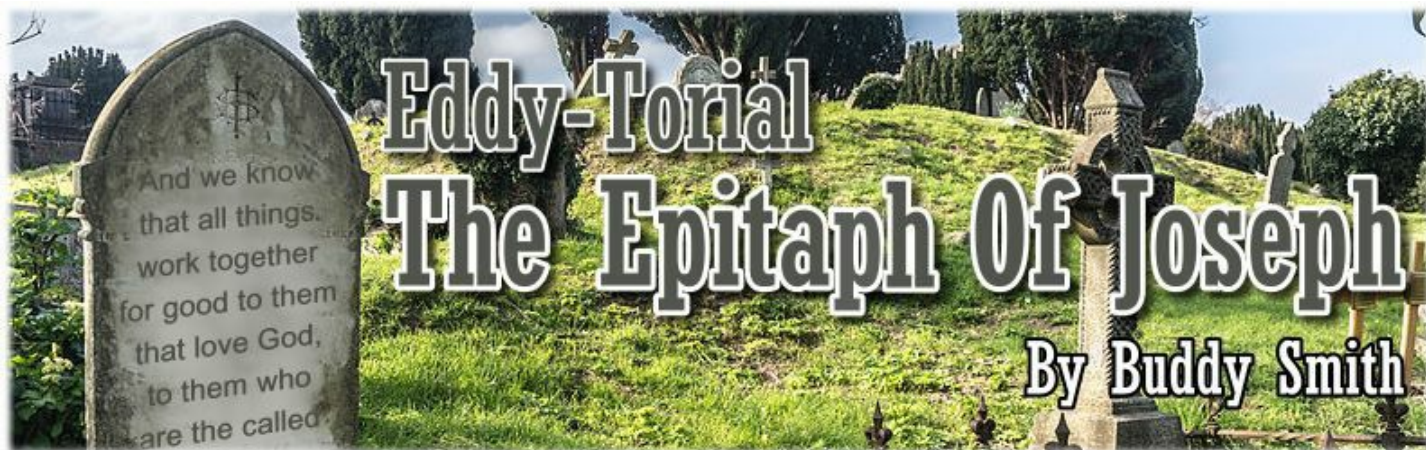
“Dad or Daddy?” Dad and daddy are very commonplace in usage today, and the connotation is generally not of the highest respect. But using “father” to describe our earthly fathers is a term of great respect, intimacy and love.

“Dad or Daddy?” In a generation that believes that it is alright to wear shorts when we come together to worship or use the music of the world to offer praise and who even wear hats in the congregation, the lack of respect shown in preaching and in praying is the next natural step of those who lack a true fear of God. How dare the creation seek to use anything less of a term than Father to describe our heavenly Father. Abba, Father... “Father, my Father.”

It is the greatest expression of respect and endearment in which we are to address our heavenly Father.

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After many years in far north Queensland we finally decided to drive up to Cooktown for a day or two. What an interesting town to visit! Captain James Cook's ship, the Endeavour, ran aground on a coral reef south-east of a little river he named the Endeavour River. That was in 1770. One hundred and three years later it became the port of entry for most of the prospectors who rushed the Palmer River goldfields about 100 kms to the southwest.

When we visited Cooktown the first time we wandered through the ancient cemetery and stooped to read the epitaphs of the pioneers. Some of them are as old as the town.

An epitaph is defined as being "a funeral oration." We now use the word to sum up the life message of the person entombed there. Sometimes it conveys what may be the last words of the deceased.



EPITAPHS IN MY BIBLE -

I keep finding epitaphs in my Bible. Phrases that describe good men, bad men, forgotten men, unsung men, all of them men God took note of. And He tells the story of their life in just a few words.

Like, Abraham's, "the friend of God", or David's, "a man after God's own heart", or Elijah's, "one of 7000". One of my favourites is John the Baptist's "This man did no miracle, but everything he said about Jesus was true." If James and John had been laid side by side, would both their tombstones have read "Sons of Thunder"?

Recently the Lord has directed my attention to the Old Testament Joseph. And I think I found his epitaph. In Genesis chapter 50, in verse 20. It is what he said to his brothers when they bowed down to him for the fifth time. He said to them, "God meant it unto good." That, I believe, is the life message of Joseph. That sums up the entire one hundred and ten years of his life.

He told them his life message already.

It was previously written in chapter 45, verses 5, and 7, and 8, *"God did send me before you to preserve life"* and *"God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance"* and *"it was not you that sent me hither, but God."*

God meant it unto good!

What an epitaph!!! It is the Old Testament equivalent of **Romans 8:28-29**, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

WHEN IT COMES TO THESE VERSES WE ARE VERILY GUILTY OF BEING "SELECTIVE FUNDAMENTALISTS"!

We say, "I believe that! I am a Fundamentalist! I believe ALL the Bible!!" So, of course, we read verses 28 and 29 and boldly proclaim, "I believe those verses!!!" And I do,

- Just as long as I get to choose which things God is going to use to work good to me
- and just as long as I get to choose what good He is going to work for me
- and just as long as there are no conditions I have to meet."

But that is not how the verses read, is it?

There are conditions to be met before we can claim the promises in these verses:

We must love God. We must know and do His will.

And there is a particular good He has purposed to work all things toward. It is conformity to the image (or likeness) to His son (v.29).

THE COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING OF ROMANS 8:28 -

We have all been guilty of using v. 28 wrongly. We ignore the conditions for all things to work for good. The promise only applies to those who love God and are doing His will knowingly. The average Christian loves the world, not God and does his own will.

Can he expect God to work all things together for good? Not at all! No, not ever! God will resist the proud, and when we would be friends of the world, He counts His own children as His enemies (James 4:4).

Of course, the evangellyfish Christians are offended by this understanding of those verses. If you are a jellyfish Christian, you ought to go back and read the story of Lot. He loved comfort and money and a life of ease instead of God. He sought his own will instead of God's. Would you say that God made all things to work together for good to Lot?

Read Genesis 19.

If I wrongly claim Romans 8:28, I then become guilty of believing a Baptist version of the charismatics' Health, Wealth, and Prosperity heresy!

SO WHAT DID GOD WORK FOR GOOD TO JOSEPH? -

He worked for good

• The Very Best Things Joseph Experienced -

His father's love, imperfect as it was. God spoke to him and he understood what God said. God blest the works of his

hands in every situation. God gave him knowledge and wisdom in the fear of the Lord. And God worked in him a forgiving spirit.

• The Very Worst Things Joseph Experienced -

The hatred of his brethren, their envy, their criticisms, their slanders, being robbed of his coat, being imprisoned, being rejected and sold into slavery. Being lied about by Potiphar's wife, and unjustly imprisoned. And finally, forgotten by the king's butler.

• The Very Least Expected Things Joseph Experienced -

The six dreams God gave, two to Joseph, one each to Pharaoh's butler and baker, and two to Pharaoh.

God worked all these together for good. The best, the worst, and the least expected things. These are the raw materials he uses to make each one of us Christlike.

And so He works all things together for good to us - If we love God and submit to His will.

I think I'd like to have Joseph's epitaph on my tombstone - And I can have it, if I meet the conditions.

God meant it for good!

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Heads Up!

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