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FEATURE ARTICLE - WIKILEAKS, WIKIPEDIA, OPINIONJOURNALISM
AND THE LATTER DAYS — by Buddy Smith



"And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Daniel 2:42-44

THERE IS MORE CLAY ALL THE TIME -

We are presently seeing a subtle (and maybe not so subtle) change in the proportion of clay to iron in the feet of the great image of Daniel chapter 2. For those of you who have escaped Augustine's allegorizing of Scripture, and especially his twisting of all prophetic Scripture, Daniel's words are very relevant to today's world. For some years I have been pondering the phrase, "they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men" and observing the changes in the political framework of the nations. It is obvious that the latter stages of the Revived Roman empire, as depicted in the feet, and toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, are increasingly "democratic, that is, ruled by the people." The extremities of the fourth kingdom are described as a mixture of iron

and clay, of monarchy and democracy. It is "partly strong and partly broken".

A DEMOCRACY IS INHERENTLY WEAK -

As much as we enjoy the freedoms of living in a (relative) democracy and appreciate the privileges we have, we need to remember the structural weaknesses that are inherent in clay. The Hebrew word in Daniel 2:42 for "broken" is "tebar", and is also defined as being "fragile". The analogy here has to do with the fact that the molecular bonding in clay is quite weak, even if it is fired in a furnace. It is easily shattered with a blow, as is depicted in Daniel 2:34. Note that the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ smites the image on its feet and (in v. 35) totally destroys it. We ought to ponder the quote, "A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by dictatorship. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years." Alexis de Tocqueville (?) What we are seeing in western democracies at present makes us wonder if we are seeing them unravel because of this largesse.

In recent years the word "largesse" has been expanded to mean, "unlimited largesse". Almost without exception, elections are being won by deceptive politicians who promise voters this "unlimited largesse."

DICTATORS DEMAND DEMOCRACIES ? WHY?

Students of history see a tide of democracy that ebbs and flows. Sometimes it is at high tide and sometimes the tide is out. We think we see, since the French Revolution at least, a rise in the tides of democracy worldwide. To listen to the daily news we get the impression that "democracy" is accepted worldwide as the default form of government for all nations. No doubt, this is a false impression. Many nations that claim the title "democratic" are anything but, and the ones that we think are "democratic" are increasingly ruled by tyrants who speak with forked tongues. You know them all.

Here is a puzzle: The General Assembly of the (dis)United Nations demands that every nation everywhere be "democratic"- ally ruled, but then presumes the right to dictate to them that they are to conform to all the other nations(?) Strange anomalies, these terms. And strange "animules", these spokesmen from the UN!!!! There really isn't any such thing as a sovereign nation any more. Do you disagree? Well, try to remember the last time you heard of a nation that actually chose its own form of

government without interference from the UN. Let a nation reject the agendas of the United Nations and see what happens. Global warming, Muslim terrorism, drilling for oil, or cutting down its own trees, the death penalty, or gay marriage; a nation's sovereign right to decide its own policies on any of these is viewed negatively at the UN. The nation that presumes that it has the right to do so will be severely criticized in the media, and may even have sanctions placed on its trade with other nations.

I suspect that this is all a part of the Mystery of Iniquity described in **2 Thessalonians 2:3-11** *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"*

HOW LARGE A PART DOES THE MEDIA PLAY?

Somewhere, somebody has written a much more thorough and coherent and penetrating analysis than I of what is happening to the political framework of a world in rebellion against God. I am only saying here that people's input into the internet provides massive amounts of clay for the feet of the image of Daniel 2. Every computer that is connected to the internet provides an opportunity for common men to pump out megatonnes of clay for the feet of the coming Revived Roman Empire. More and more, the common man decreases the strength of the image. And just so, the integrity of the feet of the Roman Empire is decreased. It makes so much sense, the more clay there is in the toes, the weaker the nations are.

THE PLACE OF WIKILEAKS IN CLAY PRODUCTION -

For what it is worth, I stumbled across this article recently from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia) (<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/technology-news/how-i-met-julian-assange-and-secured-the-american-embassy-cables-20101210-18sxj.html>). It

describes an interview with Julian Assange, the man behind WikiLeaks. The author, Philip Dorling, says more than he realises when he describes the lengths he had to go to to see Assange. One thing that struck me when I read the article is how Assange's control of top secret information elevates him to a tyranny that dictates terms to men and nations. In the information age, Information is power, and the man who controls the most Information (or the Information men want the most) is King. How else did Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Steve Jobs come to own all the megabucks?

THE PLACE OF WIKIPEDIA IN CLAY PRODUCTION –

One of my friends posted an article on Wikipedia a few years ago. When he went back to look at it later he discovered that it had been so altered by others that it no longer represented his views. The owner of Wikipedia intended that it be "the common man's online encyclopedia." But there is a problem with that. The common man often does not know what he is talking about, especially when it comes to quantum physics, or Chamforan, or Christian Baptism. Oh, he has opinions and is entitled to them. What I object to is being expected to give the same weight to a Redneck Texan's explanation of $E=mc^2$ as I do to Albert Einstein's. When clay pretends to be iron, well, no matter what colour you paint it, and no matter what honorary degree you give it, and no matter what testimonials it boasts.....it's still clay. It's still the (often worthless) opinion of a common man. Have you ever wondered why we used to never find these opinions in Encyclopedia Britannica? And have you questioned why Encyclopedia Britannica has dropped off the radar?

THE PLACE OF "OPINION JOURNALISM" IN CLAY PRODUCTION-

It dawned on me a few years ago that what I was hearing on the radio was opinion, not fact. The same is true on television. In fact, all media is now geared toward the distribution of biased opinion. The ABC (Australia Broadcasting Corporation) where we live pumps out enormous volumes of leftwing ideology. Evolution, socialism, global warming hysteria, cultural, theological, and politically liberal opinions are shouted, whispered, and sung to the masses every day of the year. Sadly, rightwing media has copied the radicals and runs to the opposite extreme in their opinions. Whatever happened to the facts? I remember when news programs were factual, and if there was any editorial opinion offered, it was identified as such.

THE PLACE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CLAY PRODUCTION –

As an outsider I watch (and occasionally overhear) my church folks as they use social media, and sometimes they tell me what useless trivia they've dredged up lately. There is no question that instantaneous communications with our missionaries make it possible for us to pray today for today's emergencies. But what disturbs me is the weight God's people give to useless (an often deviant, even ungodly) opinions. Scripture no longer has the authority a text received on their iPhone has! Tweets from birdbrains and Twitters from philosophical sparrows are esteemed more highly than the voice of God was when it was heard from Mt. Sinai! I wonder if any of our people who are addicted to their smartphones

DEACON TRUE SEZ -



When you sing in the choir ever' Sunday you sorta get a ringside seat and see lots of stuff nobody in the pews sees. Like the time our old preacher spit his false teeth out on the pulpit in the middle of a sermon! No foolin'.

Of course, most of the folks saw the time when the preacher was using his index finger to emphasize every point in the sermon and accidental like got his finger hung in the earpiece on his glasses and flung 'em all the way out to the third row. Can't exactly reckymember who brung 'em back to him, but somebody did.

The funniest thing we ever saw was the little bantam rooster type preacher we had preach one time. I reckon his spring was wound up tooooooo tight from the factory. He couldn't stand still even one second. If he wasn't pullin' his glasses off he was puttin' 'em on, and if he wasn't unbuttonin' his suit coat he was buttonin' it up, and if he wasn't pullin' the right hand side of his trousers up he was pullin' up the left side, all at the same time he was preachin' all over the platform. Well, it was pretty obvious pretty quick that he'd tucked his shirt into his boxer shorts that morning, and it wasn't his trousers he was pullin' up. It was his red and white polka dot boxer shorts! By the end of the sermon he had them half way up to his collar and never suspected a thing, that is, until he told everybody to bow their head for prayer.

He said later he wondered why everybody was paying such close attention to the sermon (so he let 'em have it both barrels!). I asked him what he thought about his wardrobe malfunction? He said he reckoned we oughta just pray and go home in situations like that.

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ever pause to ponder where their addiction is taking them. Or how much clay they are ingesting into their hearts and minds?

WE ARE PRODUCING A LOT OF CLAY FOR THE TOES OF THE ANTICHRIST'S EMPIRE! –

I know, this sounds like I oppose democratic rule, but I don't. I just know that, when the common man's heart is far from God, it is dangerous for the common man to rule his nation. You disagree? Have you read the book of Judges lately? "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Sound familiar?

It is just as bad for a monarch whose heart is wicked to rule a nation. Pharaoh, Ahab, Belshazzar, Nero, and Obama squandered the opportunities they were given by God to do their people good and lead wisely.

The overwhelming desire of the common man is for goodies (dare we call it consumer driven political covetousness?). In democracies the tendency for us is to vote for the candidates who promise us the most "goodies". I personally think that all the Clay Factories of modern technology need to be seen biblically and prophetically. They simply represent an increase in the power of the common man, or rather, the common sinner. And if they are, we will see very shortly, a corresponding increase in the common man's demands for more rights, more lollies, and more control.

The toes are getting very weak!

I see it as another signpost of the soon return of Christ.

Perhaps today!

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EVANGELICALS AND GAMBLING – contributed by David Bennett in AIB

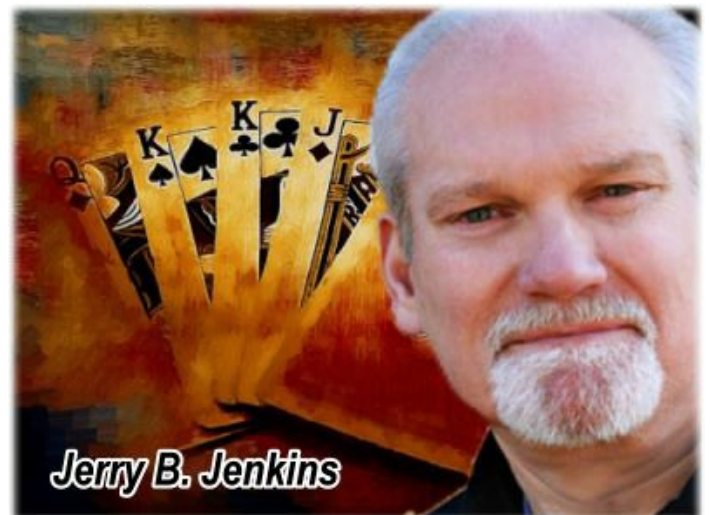
(If anyone still has any doubts about the present anemia among evangelicals he only needs to read the secular press. Remember the Left Behind series of "prophecy thrillers" authored by Tim La Haye and Jerry Jenkins? Well, Jerry Jenkins is back in the headlines, but this time it is for his gambling success. So how should we define "evangelicalism" these days? Try "anti-integrity christianity." That's a good fit. - Ed)

NO BLUFFING October 18, 2013, (Edited by DCB) - When you thought you had read just about everything you find out that Moody's "...board chairman and top author Jerry B. Jenkins is among Christians who have taken up tournament poker."

Jenkins, a well known author, "has sold over 70 million copies of his novels and nonfiction works." He is a "former vice president of publishing at Moody Bible Institute" and "now volunteers as chairman of the school's board of trustees."

According to the Global Poker Index data, "Jenkins has won \$8,065 at two casinos, including \$4,580 at Commerce Casino near Los Angeles during the 2008 California State Poker Championship, where the buy-in was \$1,500 (plus an \$80 fee to the casino). He also had poker tournament winnings from 2010 and 2012 at Horseshoe Casino in Hammond, Ind., a 30-minute drive from downtown Chicago."

However, Jenkins has decided not to play in Hammond any longer as "It's too close to Chicago."



As an unpaid trustee Jenkins is "not required to submit to Moody's employee guidelines. But Jenkins said the school expects trustees to be professing Christians and to 'exhibit the biblical characteristics of an elder.'"

Jenkins who is 64, would not say what his annual income is but he did say he was a "high-income person" and has enjoyed a few "pretty flush years with the Left Behind series. ... You can do the math."

Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."

http://www.worldmag.com/2013/10/no_bluffing/page1

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There are a few voices yet to warn pastors of the incremental surrender of the Christian faith. For the most part, the responses they receive to their warnings are sceptical. If these 'voices in the wilderness' were required to stand in a courtroom and defend their message, all they would need to do would be to present the overwhelming evidence that shows how Rock Music has crept into our churches. It is happening through "incremental surrender." In fact, it is a growing conviction I have that every battle we ever lost was lost a millimetre at a time. - Ed

ROCK MUSIC AS RELIGION

October 30, 2013 (*David Cloud*, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org)

The following is excerpted from *ROCK MUSIC VS. THE GOD OF THE BIBLE*, which is currently out of print.

It is not surprising that rock & roll has been adapted for contemporary worship since it has the power that contemporary worshipers are looking for. It has the power to create strong emotional experiences, the power literally to take control of the individual and carry him into spiritual realms.

Rock & rollers have long described their music in glowing spiritual and religious terms, but the spiritual fervor described in the following quotes does not pertain to the Spirit of God; it pertains to the "god of this world" who masquerades as an angel of light.

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).

Rock & roll (which encompasses all forms of secular pop music that features a heavy back beat and other types of dance syncopation) is one of the chief gods and idols of the modern world. To think that God would be pleased with the Christianizing of rock & roll is to think that He would be pleased with the Christianizing of Hindu idols.

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

Consider the following statements by rockers regarding the "spiritual" nature of their music:

Rock historian **Michael Moynihan** says: "In spiritual terms MUSIC IS A MAGICAL OPERATION, A VEHICLE FOR MAN TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE GODS. Depending on whom the celebrants invoke, this can mean soaring to heaven on the voices of angels or raising beasts from the pits of hell" (*Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground*, p. 1).

"Rock concerts are the churches of today. Music puts them on a spiritual plane. All music is God" (**Craig Chaquico, Jefferson Airplane** guitarist, *Why Knock Rock?*, p. 96).

"Rock music is more than music, IT'S LIKE CHURCH" (**Jimi Hendrix**, *The Dick Cavett Show*, July 21, 1969).

"We're making the music into ELECTRIC CHURCH MUSIC, A NEW KIND OF BIBLE you can carry in your hearts" (**Jimi Hendrix**, quoted in *Crosstown Traffic* by Charles Murray, p. 161).

"... THE MUSIC IS A SPIRITUAL THING of its own" (**Jimi Hendrix**, interview with Robin Richman "An Infinity of Jimis," *Life* magazine, Oct. 3, 1969).

"I used to go to Sunday School BUT THE ONLY THING I BELIEVE IN NOW IS MUSIC" (**Jimi Hendrix**, cited from Curtis Knight, *Jimi*).

Paul Stanley, guitarist for KISS, said he turns into "a holy roller preacher" during concerts. "I'm testifying and getting everybody riled up for the power of almighty rock 'n' roll" (*Guitar Player*, November 1974).

Bruce Springsteen used to open his concerts with these words: "WELCOME TO THE FIRST CHURCH OF THE ROCK, BROTHERS AND SISTERS" and has stated that he was dead until rock and roll changed his life. *USA Today* observed: "Displaying an awesome musical chemistry, Springsteen and his E Streeters at times turned the Meadowlands' Continental Airlines Arena [in East Rutherford, New Jersey] into a raucous revival tent, playing off themes of redemption, salvation and resurrection via rock 'n' roll throughout the nearly three-hour show. ... Typical of the pacing was the roof-raising *Light of Day*, which saw the Rev. Springsteen roaringly promise his flock 'the power, the majesty and the ministry of rock 'n' roll..." (*USA Today*, July 19, 1999, p. 9D).

On the 25th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death **Springsteen** said: "ELVIS IS MY RELIGION. But for him, I'd be selling encyclopedias right now."

"For many participants, ELVIS WEEK HAS OBVIOUSLY BECOME A QUASI-RELIGIOUS OCCASION. The Meditation Garden is an American Lourdes, a place where miracles sometimes happen. Every year on August 15, the sick and the lame hobble up the hill, full of hope. As every one of the faithful well knows, on the first anniversary of Presley's death, a fan aimed his camera skyward and photographed a cumulus cloud forming a familiar profile, right down to the famous pompadour. Elvis is watching over them. Addressing co-religionists in a letter printed in an Elvis fan club publication, an enthusiast from Belgium put it this way: "Dear friends, our LOVE and RESPECT for Elvis are unlimited ... Let's continue to work hard for him, because his LIGHT on our world today is the guarantee to give HOPE and PEACE for the next generations. ... We believe in Elvis just like we believe in God ... and I'm sure that we are on the right way" (**James Miller**, *Flowers in the Dustbin*, p. 345).

Robbie Kreiger, guitarist for the Doors, said the band members were "revivalists and WANTED OUR AUDIENCE TO UNDERGO A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE" (*Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison*, p. 190).

Jim Morrison of the Doors said, "I FEEL SPIRITUAL UP THERE PERFORMING" (*Newsweek*, Nov. 6, 1967, p. 101). Even as late as the early 1990s, Morrison's gravesite was the third most popular visitor destination in Paris. In July 1991, on the 20th anniversary of Morrison's death, nearly 1,000 fans gathered outside the gates of the cemetery.

"As a self appointed messiah, I view music as far more than just entertainment" (**John Denver**, cited in *The Rock Report*, p. 10).

Remembering Bob Marley's rock concerts, **Judy Mowatt**, one of his backup singers said: "It was a crusade, it was a mission. We were like sentinels, like lights. ON TOUR THE SHOWS WERE LIKE CHURCH; Bob delivering the sermon. There were mixed emotions in the audience: you see people literally crying, people in a frenzy, on A SPIRITUAL HIGH ... These concerts were powerful and highly spiritual. There was a power that pulled you there. It was a clean feeling ... For months and maybe years it stays with you" (Sean Dolan, *Bob Marley*, p. 95).

Grateful Dead concerts have been described as "A PLACE TO WORSHIP. "The band was the high priest, the audience the congregation, the songs the liturgy, and the dancing the prayer" (**Gary Greenberg**, *Not Fade Away: The Online World Remembers Jerry Garcia*, p. 42). "The Grateful Dead embody not only the cultic potentials historically inherent in rock 'n' roll, but the entire submerged linkage between rock and religion. ... the Dead's legendary live concerts bear uncanny resemblance to religious festivals..." (*Stairway to Heaven*, p. 196).

In interviews with **David Gans** (*Playing in the Band*), Grateful Dead band members admitted that THEY LOOKED UPON THEIR MUSIC AS SOMETHING LIKE RELIGION. Lesh said, "WE USED TO SAY THAT EVERY PLACE WE PLAYED WAS CHURCH." Garcia added, "... on a certain level it's a religion to me, too."

Before he died, **Muddy Waters** admitted that the BLUES WAS HIS RELIGION (James Rooney, *Bossmen: Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters*, p. 137).

"I LOOK AT ROCK LIKE A RELIGION" (**Blackie Lawless** of W.A.S.P., *Faces*, Feb. 1985, p. 53).

A music reviewer described a **Backstreet Boys** concert as "worship" (*Express Writer*, August 16, 1998).

"Now **Billy Squier** is taking the gospel to America and Europe, PREACHING HIS OWN ROCK SERMONS in sold-out concerts" (*Circus* magazine, cited in *The Rock Report*, p. 10).

Judas Priest had an album called "Defenders of the Faith," and when asked about its meaning they replied, "We're defending the faith of heavy metal music" (*The Rock Report*, p. 10). They said: "Heavy metal isn't just music to us. It's a philosophy and a way of life" (**Judas Priest**, *Hit Parader*, July 1984).

In his song "You Can't Kill Rock & Roll," **Ozzy Osbourne** sang, "... ROCK 'N' ROLL IS MY RELIGION AND MY LAW/ Won't ever change."

Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones said, "MUSIC IS MY RELIGION" (cited by Stanley Booth, *Dance with the Devil*, p. 109).

Michael Jackson said, "On many an occasion WHEN I AM DANCING, I HAVE FELT TOUCHED BY SOMETHING SACRED. In those moments, I felt my spirit soar, and become one with everything that exists" (cited by Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 12).

George Harrison said: "Through the music you reach the spiritual. MUSIC IS VERY INVOLVED WITH THE SPIRITUAL, as we know from the Hare Krishna mantra" (cited by Turner, p. 71).

Brian Eno says that WHEN HE DISCOVERED ROCK AND ROLL, IT WAS "A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE" to him and IT OCCUPIED THE RELIGIOUS PART OF HIS LIFE (Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 150).

Dr. Paul King, medical director of the adolescent unit at Charter Lakeside Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, was told by drug addicted teens that he had to understand their music if he wanted to understand their world. "He conducted a study of 470 adolescent patients and found that 60 percent of them designated heavy metal music as their musical choice. They said the music was a very important influence in their lives. In fact, IT WAS THEIR NEW RELIGION" (Terry Watkins, *The Truth about Rock*, p. 35).

Sting of the group Police said, "The pure essence of music is very spiritual" (*Musician*, Feb. 1987, p. 41). He says: "MY RELIGION WOULD BE MUSIC, AND I HAD JUST RECEIVED MY FIRST SACRAMENT [WHEN HE FIRST HEARD THE BEATLES AT AGE 11]" (*USA Today* , Jan. 27, 1984, p. 2D).

"Hip hop shows were LIKE CHURCH FOR ME WAY MORE THAN ACTUAL CHURCH WAS. A lot of lessons I learned were from my personal interpretations of the songs I would listen to. I felt like God was speaking to me through these people's thoughts and words" (Darlina, HipHop fan, commenting on "The Metaphysics of HipHop," Sept. 1, 2006, <http://rapyouodhiphopyoulive.tribe.net/thread/88ad663f-b18d-46ea-aed2-c693f961b5f6>).

"Dancing at raves may be construed as the method by which ravers worship the god of altered consciousness" (Russell Newcombe, *The Guardian*, Jul. 22, 1995).

MARKS OF NARCISSISM - by Buddy Smith



Somewhere I came across the following earmarks of self love. One of the neglected texts of Scripture is II Timothy 3:1,2 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, For men shall be lovers of their own selves..."

Robert Schuller learned self love from Norman Vincent Peale and then taught it to all his disciples, including Rick Warren and Bill Hybels (We can't help wondering how much of this self love is being absorbed by the staff from Lancaster Baptist Church as Paul Chappell sends them to Rick Warren's seminars, according to one of the former staff members.)

We see these marks of self love in almost all the world politicians. It sticks out like a sore thumb when you watch Obama and Al Gore and his climate change clones. Sadly, it is more and more prevalent among pastors of churches. We expect to see these attitudes when we watch the televangelists spruik their fake miracles, but we don't expect to see them in the little churches in country towns. - Ed

A NARCISSIST IS SOMEONE WHO IS:

- Prone to grandiose visions and to overestimating their own capabilities
- Hypersensitive to criticism and liable to fly into anger
- Continually pursuing power at all costs leading to infighting and suspicion which ultimately brings them down
- Easily bored, and changes course often
- Lacking in empathy and trust, but always saying the socially acceptable thing in public
- Always gathering around him those who agree with him

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"**Andrew WK** truly helped me let go. HIS SHOWS WERE LIKE CHURCH SERVICES, I felt rejuvenized, and for weeks following them I was happier and made people around me happier (which in turn made me feel even better)" (**Andrew WK** Paradigm Shift, <http://www.dontstopthenoise.com/josh.html>).

"Their [**Far's**] live shows were like church (without all that religion). They inspired a lot of kids my age" (<http://www.amazon.com/Water-Solutions-Far/dp/customer-reviews/B0000062H7>).

Rock My Religion is a black and white documentary by Dan Graham that describes the nature of rock & roll as religion to multitudes of people.

Many rock fans exhibit devotion that has a religious intensity. Consider the following testimony which speaks for many others that could be given: "I'm obsessed. I'd do anything for her. . . I LIVE FOR BRITNEY SPEARS, you don't understand. I live for Britney Spears. I live for her. . . Like my life wouldn't be complete without her" (unidentified fan interviewed on *ET*, July 10, 1999).

A fan of the Backstreet Boys said, "I love Nick! For Nick, I'll die. If God says, 'Die and let Nick live,' I'll do that" ("Boy Wonders," *People Magazine*, Sept. 14, 1998).

The memorial to John Lennon in Central Park, across the street from the Dakota building where he was murdered, has heavy religious overtones. A steady stream of fans place flowers and other offerings on the monument, which is inscribed with the title of his song "Imagine." The 20th anniversary of Lennon's death in December 8, 2000, was observed in many parts of the world in religious ways. Events included candlelight vigils, the lighting of large "peace flames," and the 24-hour playing of Beatle records by radio stations.

Sadly, it is not only the secular world that worships rock musicians. Popular evangelical speaker **Josh McDowell** made the following amazing statement:

"Thank God for Steve Camp. The body of Christ is enriched because we have his heart and his music. My oldest daughter thinks he hung the moon" (*CCM magazine*, August 1991, p. 15).

Someone might argue that McDowell was just talking off the cuff and didn't really mean that his daughter worshipped CCM musician Steve Camp, but it was Almighty God who hung the moon and it is foolish to apply such terminology or devotion to a mere man.

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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



There is a rather obscure word that Paul uses in Colossians 2:14, that is used only five times in the New Testament. There Paul writes, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

The word is the word for BLOTTING. The word for BLOTTING is EXALEIPHO (or EXALEIPHEIN). In classical Greek, it simply meant "to whitewash, to paint over, or to wash over" like someone might whitewash a wall or a tomb. The word was also used in the secular world in the sense of "wiping away or wiping out." There are instances in Greek society that it spoke of wiping out a person's memory of an event. Soon, the word was used exclusively to speak about wiping something out as with a wet cloth or sponge. According to the Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Rienecker, Rogers), it was used for "the washing out" of the writings on a papyrus.

In the Revelation, John uses EXALEIPHO three times. In 3:5, it speaks of wiping someone's name off a scroll. In 7:17 and 21:4, it speaks of the wiping away of tears. Luke uses the word one time in Acts 3:19 in reference to sins being wiped away once and for all, when Peter preached at Solomon's portico.

In the passage Paul penned in Colossians 2:14, he speaks of the Savior blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. What exactly is the "handwriting of ordinances?"

The word for HANDWRITING (only used here in the New Testament) is the word CHEIROGRAPHON. A CHEIROGRAPHOS was a document that spoke of one's debt. It is an I.O.U. statement of indebtedness, that was signed by the debtor. It said "I owe this amount." This was a certificate of debt that had to be paid. That is seen in the word for ORDINANCES, which is the word DOGMA. This was a legal obligation that required action. This is

what Jesus blotted out for us as He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Jesus wiped out the debt.

In the New Testament times, documents were either written on vellum (animal skin) or on papyrus. Most of the time, they were written on papyrus. The ink that was used, was a very simple mixture of soot, gum and water. If it was allowed to dry, it was permanent. Further, it lacked any sort of acid, and therefore it would not etch into the papyrus. If something was written, and the ink was still wet, a wet sponge could be wiped across the papyrus and every trace of the ink would be wiped away.

There are some writings from New Testament times that state that sometimes a debt could be canceled by putting the Greek letter CHI which looks like an "X" across the document. But Paul does not say that Jesus put an "X" on it. It was wiped away. The effect of either the "X" or the wiping away would be the same, but the obvious difference is that the wiping away would leave no trace, whereas the "X" would allow all to read the original debt.

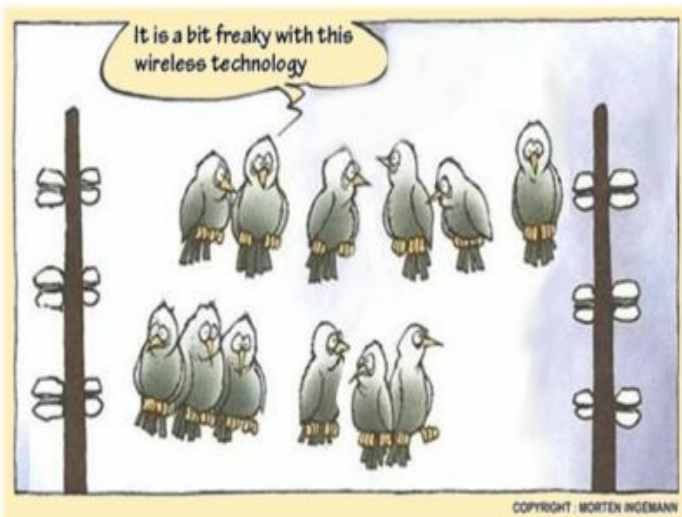
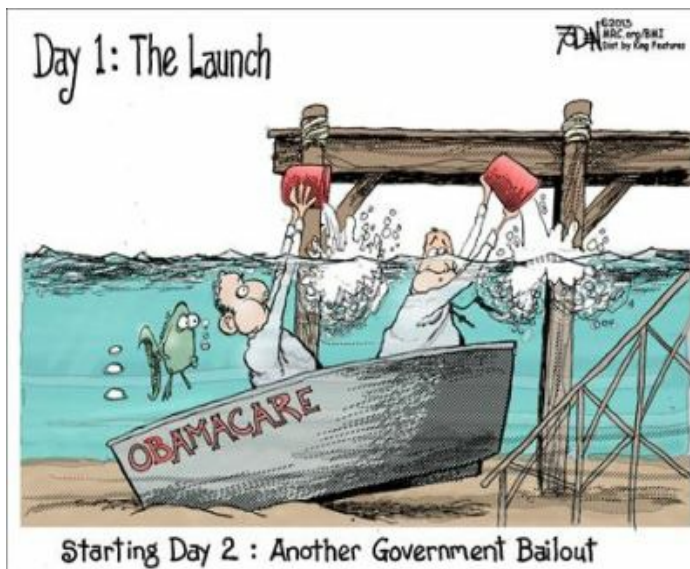
In light of this being wiped away, does that declare that we do not have a past as sinners? Of course not. Paul reminds us frequently in the New Testament of what we were before Christ. We were dead in trespasses and sins. But what it does do is to say that our DEBT has been wiped away once and for all.

Most of us have heard the phrase, "forgive and forget." It is a cute cliché, but impossible for men to do. But it is something God does do in light of our sin debt. He forgives and He wipes the debt and the memory of it away never to be brought up again!

The way for men to have their sin debt wiped away was secured when Jesus cried out the words, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Truly, the debt was paid in full.

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CARTOONS FOR THE WISE –



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NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- If when you woke up this morning all you had was what you gave thanks for yesterday, what would you have?
- "Any man, who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the American government take care of him, better take a long, hard look at the American Indian." ~ Henry Ford
- We knew more about Edward Snowden in 5 hours than we've known about Obama in 5 years.

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THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE -

A young father asked the salesman in the swimming pool shop, "You got any inflatable pool toys I can buy for my kids?"

"Sure! Any particular sort?"

"Well, they like animals, so maybe a horse and a dolphin and a duck?"

"Yep! Here they are! Would you prefer Muslim or Christian?"

"What's religion got to do with it? They're just pool toys, after all."

"Well, it's just that the Muslim inflatable pool toys blow themselves up!"



For those who do not live in FL to be in on the joke you need to know it is raining so much we are having flooding and it is suppose to continue.



Because there are no mosques in Venice, the Italian Government has allowed Muslims to pray in the streets.

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Once upon a time, on a lonely, wind-swept hill, there stood a church, with its spire raised to the sky. The shepherd of this flock, an old gray-haired man, on whose face time had carved its lines, toiled endlessly for his Master. You would never find him, with his head in his hands, bemoaning his life's work, or throwing his hands into the air in an act of surrender. No, you would see him out in the fields, tending to his flock. Tenderly, compassionately, lovingly. Whenever there was work to be done, he was right there, first to serve.

His love for his master was so great that the problems he faced seemed to pale into insignificance, when compared to the riches his Lord so freely gave in His Word. But he was only human, after all, and could not carry all the burdens alone. So, he gathered his beloved flock around him, and explained his situation.

"My brethren", he said, with a gentleness in his voice, "I have need of willing workers, to help me to till the ground. I need some co-labourers, to help me carry my load. I can use any and all of you, young or old, in gathering in the harvest. There is more than enough work, so that no one need be overlooked.

There are the children to be taught and the elderly to be visited. There are sick and needy souls, crying out for comfort. I need singers to sing and musicians to play. Cleaners to clean and gardens to weed. There are souls to be reached with the message of God's love. There are those who are new to the fold that need a guiding hand and those wanting someone to look up to, someone grounded in the Word to lead them."

When he had finished speaking these words, he cast his eyes over the whole congregation, with a look that left no one untouched, and with tears in his eyes he cried, "Who

will help me? Who will work with me in my field?" At this, there was silence throughout the room. Not a stir, not a movement.

Then all at once, as if the cover was lifted from a hive of bees, a buzzing filled the room. The old man listened, and as the tears streamed down his face, this is what he heard,

- "I am too busy with my own work."
- "I have children to care for."
- "I have just recently been married."
- "I have bought some land that needs tending to."
- "I don't wish to be involved in so lowly a task."
- "I have much more important things to do."
- "My health is not good."
- "I don't have enough time."
- "I'm just a baby Christian."
- "Someone else will do it."
- "I'm too tired."

And on and on it went, until it was a constant murmur in the old man's ears. He walked out the door and climbed a grassy hill, and as he knelt there, the people inside continued making their excuses, not realising that their shepherd was no longer there.

Their hearts grew colder and harder, and their ears more deaf to their masters' pleading.

You may wonder what became of this little church on the hill. Well, the old man continued working for his Master till the end of his days.

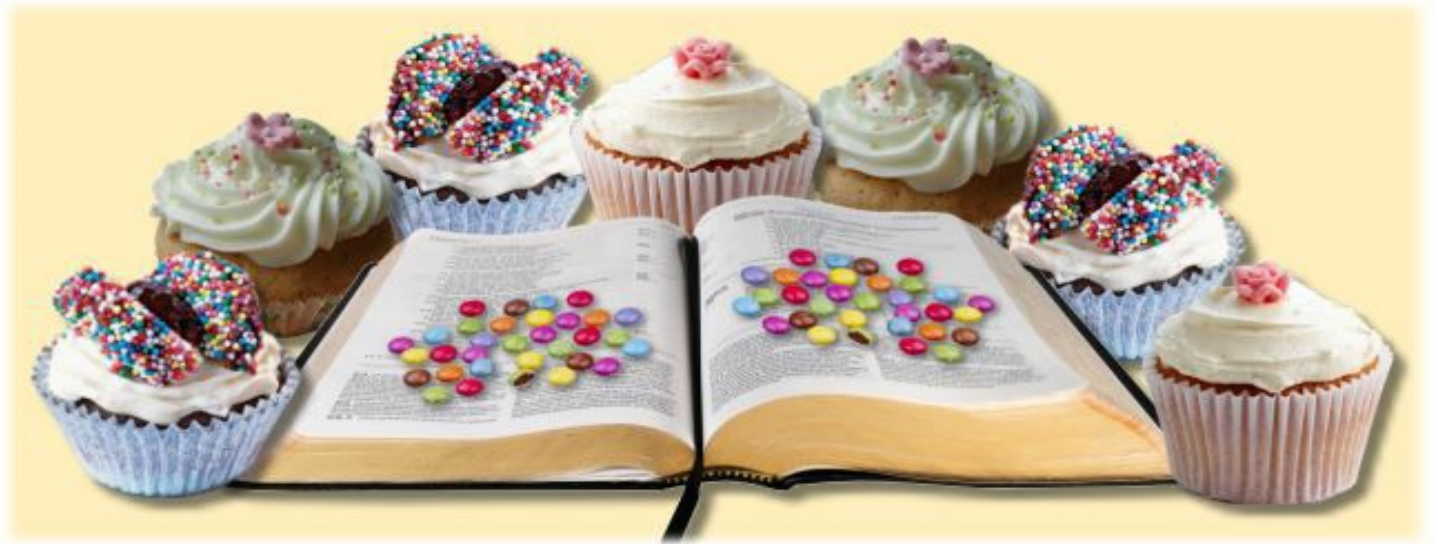
But as for the people, well, I fear, if you take a look inside the window, you will find them there still. Loudly making excuses for not doing their Lords' work.

But what blessings they missed and what riches they cast aside, when they chose not to bring in the harvest, on that fateful day.

John 4:35. "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Isaiah 6:8. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

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This may come as a shock to most Christians, but if you do a search of the less contemporary translations of Scripture, the word “feelings” is virtually nonexistent. Where it does appear, it is cited as more of a superficial, even negative attribute than a positive; and yet, as we watch and listen to many from today’s churches, be they leaders or laymen, not only do we see a clear fixation on feelings, both physical and emotional, we notice that those feelings have by and large become a replacement for faith.

In fact, if you substitute the word “feelings” wherever you see the word “faith” in those older Bible versions, it will become clear to you what motivates and guides the average “Christian” today – point being: most of us are not following the Living Word of God by faith, we’re simply following our feelings and calling it “faith.”

THIS DOESN'T REQUIRE A BIBLE.

When one considers the sobering words of the prophet Jeremiah, who said: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked...” it should cause us to take a discerning look at what moves us. If our worship and service to Jesus Christ is measured by mood, then may I suggest our “Christianity” is more theatrical than theological?

Could it be those laughing and crying masks taken from Greek comedies and tragedies that once hung in old movie theaters now belong on the walls of today’s churches? Honestly, is that not what many of us come to church for these days – to hopefully experience a good laugh or cry with friends, aided by mood-altering music, motivational speakers, movie clips, drama and sugary snacks? Is this not what many modern day preachers, teachers, pastors and worship leaders attempt to

facilitate among their congregants and class members through emotional presentations and elaborate productions... strong feelings that generate laughter, tears and applause?

And, if you haven’t noticed, leading the charge are people who are very “passionate.”

You see, “passion” is a buzzword that is commonly used among contemporary Christians to give assorted “ministries,” however abstract and bizarre, a perceived legitimacy. If a Christian is “passionate” about something, it is automatically assumed and accepted by the brethren to be God-ordained, in spite of what the Bible teaches.

As flesh, we are naturally drawn to whomever or whatever gratifies us; but that does not mean all people, places and things that make us feel good are good for us. Feelings are easily manipulated, especially in group settings where consensus is king; and those feelings can become obstacles in our obedience to Christ when we make them our primary motivation and navigation through life.

We know that drugs, alcohol, food, sex, entertainment, recreation and career can all be addictive and destructive when misused and abused. Add wealth, fame, power and influence to the mix, where pride becomes an accelerant, and you have an explosive combination. What most of us, even Christians, don’t realize though is that at the heart of it all is the subtle setting-aside of God’s Word in order to feel good.

Some of us do it for results, and others, for relationships.

Eve was deceived by the serpent’s seductive words and took of the forbidden fruit to get results and thus feel

good about herself. Adam accommodated her because of their relationship in order to sustain the connection and good feelings between them. She chose results and he chose relationship – both chose to feel good at God's expense; and it backfired.

THIS IS THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH.

Mind you, the objective here is not to feel bad, but to hear, obey and proclaim the Word of God regardless of how it makes anyone feel. When we ignore His Word to spare our own feelings, we resist the Holy Spirit. And, when we withhold the Word from others to spare their feelings, we stifle our witness and demonstrate to one and all that we are more interested in gratifying goats, seducing sheep and running rampant with the herd, than submitting to the Shepherd.

This is why the church is in such decline – because we are going out of our way and sparing no expense to

accommodate people and their passions instead of God and His Word.

Do we really expect the Lord to bless and multiply that?

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2nd Timothy 4:1-4.

<http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=5683>

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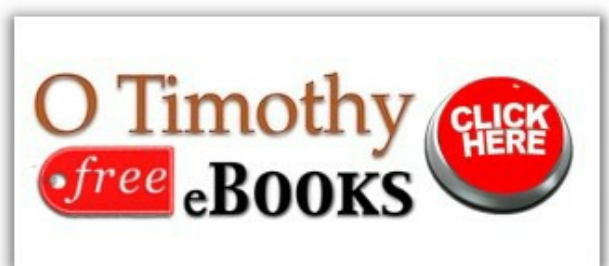
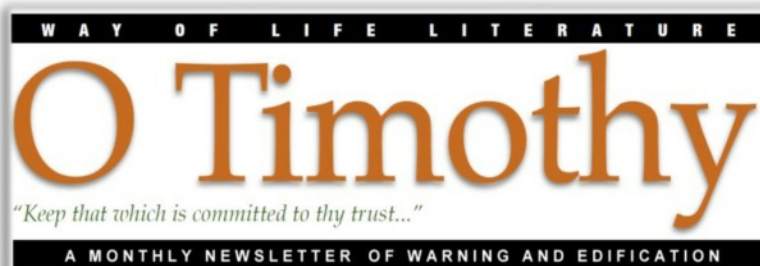
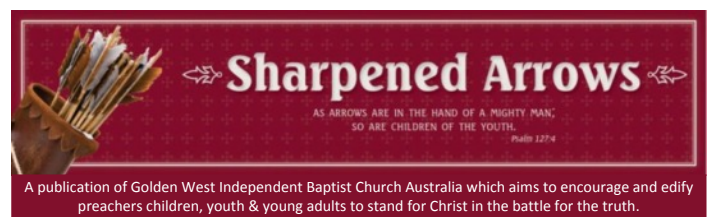
AUSSIE PLATYPUS GETTING TICKLED –

(Bro. Cloud sent me the following link of a platypus getting a tickle from a handler at a game sanctuary in Victoria. None of us ever suspected that "platys" even had a sense of humour - Ed)

The platypus is endemic to eastern Australia and is recognised for its strange combination of features: the bill and webbed feet of a duck, the body of an otter, and the tail of a beaver. It is a type of mammal called a marsupial, but females lay eggs.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/platypus-gets-tickled-2013-10>

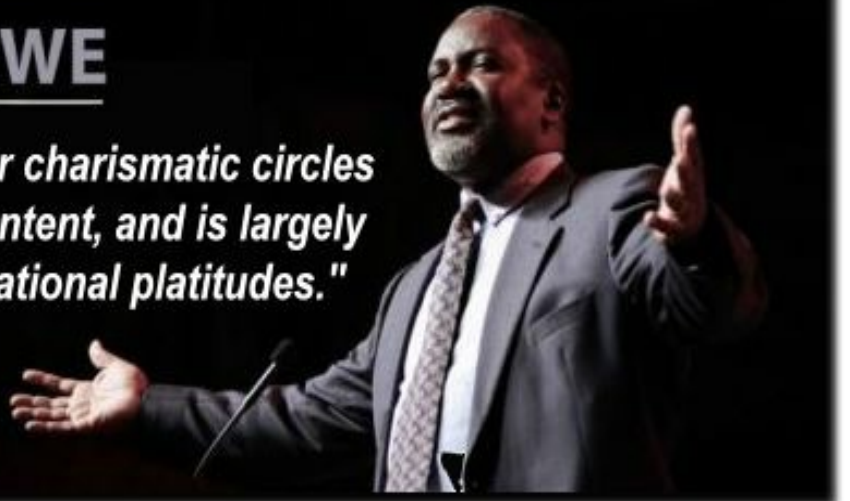
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CONRAD MBEWE

"Preaching in the popular charismatic circles across Africa has lost content, and is largely nothing more than motivational platitudes."



The Reverend *Conrad Mbeve*, the pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church in Lusaka, Zambia, opened the third day of Pastor John MacArthur's *Strange Fire* conference in Sun Valley, California on Friday by asking the question, "Are we preachers or witch doctors?"

Mbeve acknowledged that asking such a question is "strange for the American ear" to hear, but added that, for him, as a pastor in Africa, he believes *the modern charismatic movement is taking on the image of false traditions*, in which pastors are acting like witch doctors by telling people ancestral spirits are keeping God's blessing from reaching them; but *if they are paid a sum of money*, they will *wrangle with the spirit*, or demon, and cast them out.

According to Mbeve, in Africa, there has been *a seismic shift in the popular understanding of who a pastor is supposed to be*. This lack of understanding, he said, has led to *a number of immoral and criminal acts being committed by pastors who've assumed the title of "man of God,"* and are using their position to spread false doctrine and *take advantage of their followers*. [Sound familiar?]

"Preaching in the popular charismatic circles across Africa has lost content, and is largely nothing more than motivational platitudes, followed by a lot of shouting and chanting," he commented, adding that *the U.S. equivalent would be some of the televangelists who preach a similar message of their ability to heal and bring prosperity*.

Mbeve opened the third day of Pastor John MacArthur's Strange Fire conference in Sun Valley, California on Friday by asking the question; "Are we preachers or witch doctors?"

To illustrate his point, Mbeve cited newspaper articles that report on a preacher in Africa who *impregnated young women in his church*, and, according to his wife, also performed as a witch doctor.

A second incident he noted was of pastors who told two women to walk up a hill, naked, in the middle of the night, because they were going to pray for them, but *instead, they raped the women*.

According to Mbeve, in Africa's charismatic movement, many pastors fail to provide biblical counselling when people come to them with their problems. Instead, they encourage them to attend overnight prayer meetings where *they profit from motivational speeches* that are followed by the laying on of hands.

"The work begins after the motivational talk is over. It begins with the laying on of hands when the multitudes come forward, often during prolonged church services, overnight prayer meetings, and all-day prayer times on the hills," he described.

Mbeve added that these pastors tell people that *what they need in order to solve their problems* – be it infertility or marital relationship issues – is "deliverance" and a "breakthrough" that can come *only by attending an overnight prayer meeting*.

"That's the panacea for all the ills," he said. *"It's precisely what the witch doctor in the village does."*

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We need to teach our young children how to listen to a sermon and teach their parents how to teach them to listen to a sermon. Many children are taken out when the preaching begins. Some have “children’s church” but this is seen as a “fun” time and by the time they are old enough to sit in church and listen to a sermon from the pastor they become bored. But wait it goes even further than that.

In this day and age, many of our IB churches are meeting either in homes or in halls. If that is you on a Sunday morning, or evening, here is an exercise I would like you to do. Watch the children in your church. Observe them, watch them, and ask yourself how are they reverencing the place of worship? Are they running around chasing each other through the hall/room. Are they making lots of noise while others are trying to prepare their hearts to hear the word of God? Look at what their parents are doing? Are they standing around talking, fellowshiping and with a minute to go they find their seats? Observe these parents and ask yourself, “have they prepared their hearts?” Is it any wonder their children have been running around? What does the Bible say we ought to do?

- **Firstly**, the Lord teaches us that the place of worship is also to be a place of prayer. Isaiah 56:6; Matthew 21:13. How can one pray in a school hall where the children are running around causing mayhem and their parents stand around fellowshiping instead of preparing their hearts to hear the word of God?
- **Secondly**, The Lord is present. Matthew 18:20, Exodus 3:5. There is to be a reverence in the presence of God. Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11-12; Philippians 2:11; Revelation 13:8 to name but a few verses that demand a reverence at His presence. Dare I say that we have lost this reverence?

Are we treating our great God, our Lord and Saviour as a “mate” and not as God? Have we lost respect for God? Has Hebrews 4:16 come to mean that we come flippantly, arrogantly, and with an air of familiarity before His throne? Is Nehemiah 8:5 meaningless today in reverence to God’s word? Because we have such easy access to God’s word (KJ) do we have no regard for it – easy come easy go?

I believe, and see in my church, as well as in others, (and you may have seen it too,) that this unpreparedness, this over familiarity spills out into how young people listen and accept the Lord’s message. I read somewhere that not everyone is called to preach but we are all called to



listen. Are they listening? Or are those in the congregation Christians that James is talking about in James 1:23?

SOME SUGGESTIONS TO IMPLEMENT

1. Parents teach your children reverence for the place of worship as well as the preaching of God’s word and the word of God.
2. Pray with them before the service. Teach them to pray. Get them to pray. Just as God is real in your life you must make God real in the life of your child or you will lose them to the world.
3. Pastors/deacons set aside a room/place where Christians can prepare their hearts to hear the Lord’s message from the preacher.
4. Preaching is powerful if only we listen. Don’t talk to your spouse friends or children without good reason. You might miss something.
5. Don’t play with your iPad, iPhone, or even your iPod! Listen, take notes, and mark your Bible so that the Lord may mark you.
6. Don’t slouch in your seat. Sit up and listen to the Lord’s message to you. Yes He is speaking to you! Sit up and take notice. Wives don’t hang your head on your husband’s shoulder
7. Listen in awe and reverence of God. Apply 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; and 1 Thessalonians 2:13.
8. Take heed to God’s word. A time may come where 2 Timothy 4:3-4 may apply. Pray that it wouldn’t apply in your life or the life of your children!
9. Take time to pray for the preacher as a servant of God.
10. Dress as though you were meeting the king. In fact you are meeting the King of kings and Lord of Lords! (1 Timothy 6:15)
11. Ensure children who stay in church though the sermon are toileted before church. It is distracting to those around when children continually go in and out of the room during the message.

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Mark 10:47-50 *"And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus."*

POOR BARTIMAEUS!

He almost missed out on Heaven. If it had been left to the disciples, he would have perished. "Many charged him to hold his peace!" Alright, maybe the hinderers were not the twelve disciples themselves, but why did they not immediately encourage Bartimaeus and assist him to the Saviour?

Sometimes soulwinners, sometimes church members, are a hindrance to sinners. Sometimes we are not stepping stones, but stumbling blocks!

Many years ago I heard evangelist Phil Shuler preach on blind Bartimaeus. In the sermon he made a statement

that shocked me. He told us that it is hard in some churches to "get saved." He told how he preached in a church that made no provision for counselling those who were seeking salvation. He said he took a screwdriver and removed the screws that held down the front pews and turned them around so that people had a place to kneel and pray when they responded to the invitation.

LOST MEN HINDER THE LOST!

If we were to list all the ways in which religious leaders hinder the lost from being saved, the list would be longer than an elephant's trunk.

Paul warned the Galatian churches of the defective gospel being preached by the Law Keepers and John warned the churches of the false Christ the Gnostics promoted. For centuries, Catholic priests have offered the "wafer god" to sinners, But these were lost men who hindered lost men.

WHAT ABOUT SAVED MEN WHO HINDER LOST MEN FROM BEING SAVED?

- An unclear gospel, a truncated message of salvation may prevent men from coming to saving faith in Christ!

Every Christian needs to know everything there is to know about the gospel! We need to know the basic facts, as in **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**, *"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"* We need to know why Jesus had to have a body, and why he had to die and why He had to rise again. We need to know the nature of true faith (in distinction to the devils believing - James 2:19b). We need to know the nature of sin, and what justification is, and when sanctification begins, and about the inevitability of glorification. We need to know the difference between remorse and repentance and why repentance is not optional, and why it is a part of the believer's life from conversion onward.

- A trust in one's ability to win souls instead of a dependence on the Holy Spirit may prevent men from coming to saving faith in Christ!

Is there a difference between the Christian's witness of the gospel to the lost and the sales pitch of an insurance salesman? Of course there is! Sadly, I heard Jack Hyles boast once that his soulwinning method was so successful that a large insurance company used it to train their

salesmen. Shame, shame! Though we do thank God for holy men with a holy boldness in their witness to the lost, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOLY BOLDNESS AND WORLDLY BRAZENNESS!

Who is it that empowers the Christian for witness to the lost? It is the Holy Ghost! - **Acts 1:8** *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* Your soulwinning course diploma has no power in it at all. In fact, the cute little sales pitch is dead as a hammer, without the Holy Ghost.

Who is it that convinces men that they are sinners and must be saved? It is the Comforter, the Paraclete. John 16:7-8 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" It is the Holy Spirit who draws near, who comes alongside poor lost sinners and reproves and convicts them of their awful sinfulness before God. He is the one who convinces them by evidence that they are guilty before God and deserve Hell this instant.

Who is it that does the converting work so that sinners are saved? It is the Holy Ghost. We do not have the ability to impart the New Birth to sinners. They are born of God. John 1:13 "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They are born of the Spirit. John 3:5-6 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Who is it that confirms, that assures, the new convert that he is saved? It is the Holy Spirit. **Romans 8:16** *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"* **1 John 5:10-11** *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."*

It is the Holy Spirit's work to Convict, Convert, and Confirm every person as He draws them to Christ through our witness. **John 15:26-27** *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear*

witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." There is nothing sweeter than singing a duet with the Holy Spirit.

Woe unto the man that supposes he can do the work only God the Holy Spirit can do in a sinner's heart!!

We memorised all the verses in the Romans Road. We knew how to coach a sinner to pray the sinner's prayer for salvation. We knew how to ask them to repeat it after us. We knew all that. But what we didn't know was how to depend on the Holy Spirit to do the work in a sinner's heart. We mistakenly thought it was our job to save the lost.

It was forty seven years ago and I was in my first pastorate. My brother in law Wayne and I were out on visitation one night near Galena, Missouri, and it was getting pretty late, only time for one more visit. We'd knocked on a few doors in Railey Creek Road and turned up Carico Road. There was a light on at the house at the top of the hill so we knocked on the back door.

When the owner opened the door we introduced ourselves and he told us his name was Joe Crank. To our surprise he said he had been expecting us. We spoke to him about the Lord and he told us he was saved, but out of fellowship. He said he had been drinking a lot lately and just the night before the Lord woke him up really sick and told him if he didn't quit drinking He would kill him. He promised to be in church the next Sunday, and he was, with his wife Virginia and his daughter Julie.

The first Sunday he was in church Joe responded to the invitation and repented of his beer drinking. In a week or two his daughter came forward and called on the Lord for salvation. Virginia told us she wanted to be saved too, but just couldn't quite see how, and couldn't quite bring herself to ask the Lord. She began responding to every invitation, Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. We read the Scriptures to her and prayed for her and presented our strongest arguments, and she cried buckets of tears, but no salvation!

I think we wore all the tar off the Romans Road, and resurfaced it three times, all to no avail. Week after week went by and Virginia struggled and groaned and begged us to help her get saved. We struggled and groaned and prayed and preached and enlisted prayer partners, and Virginia was still lost. Months went by and still she yearned after salvation and it seemed as far away as ever. We feared she would despair of ever being saved and give it up as a lost cause.

What could we do more?

We began praying about our own hearts and our own witness. Was there something in us that was holding her back? And an unusual thing happened.

It started on a Thursday. The night before, we had prayed on our knees with Virginia after prayer meeting until 10:30, and she had no peace, so we promised to come across to see her on Thursday morning to pray with her and read the Scriptures.

Our landlady knocked on our door early the next morning and asked if we could come down for an hour or so and help her burn off some dead pasture she wanted to reseed. It would only take an hour, she thought. So we went. And the Lord sent a wind and the fire got away from us. We fought it all day, and finally about dark, we beat out the last sparks. We had no phone to call Virginia and let her know we wouldn't be coming. We thought we would just go on Friday.

Early Friday morning the landlady was knocking at our door to tell us the fire had broken out again and she needed us. The wind sprang up and we fought the fire all day and finally beat it about dark. So we said, "We'll go see Virginia Saturday."

Before we were hardly out of bed there was a knock at our door and there were dear friends who had driven an hour down to see us and spend the day with us. It seemed that the Lord had just blocked our every attempt to win Virginia to the Lord. After our friends left for home, we studied our Sunday School lessons and I wrote out my sermon notes and we fell into bed.

The next morning at church, Joe and his family were there, and we apologized to Virginia for not keeping our promise. She accepted our apology with a smile, in fact she looked so much better that we asked her how she was doing. She smiled again and said, "Really good. I waited all day Thursday for you and then all day Friday for you, and when you didn't come by the afternoon, I just gave up on you, and asked the Lord to save me. And He did!"

The truth dawned on us. She had been trusting in us, as though in some way we could help to save her.

So the Lord, in all His wisdom, took us out of the way. He pulled away all her props so there was no one else to trust in but Christ.

And so we began to learn that it is the work of the Spirit of God to save the lost.

It is His job to convict, convert, and confirm the sinner, and we can't do any of His work. We must not try to do His work. Only God can save the sinner. Our work is to prayerfully, dependently, helplessly, faithfully, lovingly give the simple gospel to sinners. and wait on the Lord to do His work.

Sometimes He does it immediately. Sometimes, as John Bunyan says in his book *Grace Abounding*, He takes 7 years. Sometimes, as in my case, He takes 11 years. Sometimes, as in Ray Hipworth's case, He takes 40 years.

There is a footnote to the story of Virginia's conversion. Joe started driving our Sunday School bus, but even better than that, he started driving once a month cross country to their home town (60 miles away) and bringing back a carload of kinfolks to stay the weekend and go to church with them.

And right from the first there were nieces and nephews, and sisters and brothers and uncles and aunties that responded to the preaching of the gospel and were converted. I think there were about thirty of them that professed Christ by the time we left the church a year later.

I need to know how to lead a person to Christ. I also need to know how to avoid being a hindrance to them coming to Christ.

I need to know how to depend on the Holy Spirit to do the work in their hearts only He can do.

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"...I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith..."

Romans 1:16-17



On the Atherton Tablelands in Tropical North Queensland - Australia

Heads Up!

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