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FEATURE ARTICLE -

WHAT'S A BELIEVER TO DO AT THIS POINT? - BY CLAY NUTTALL



(For several years Bro. Nuttall has sent me his shepherdstaff comments, and I find them to be very useful. He is one of the elderly Christians who is still blest with keen spiritual eyesight. He believes, as do a few other "biblicists" that we are already seeing the judgments of God upon the nations. We are so close to the catastrophic, cataclysmic, calamitous destruction of the world we live in. I have gone through his article and changed it slightly by making certain phrases into bold lettering. Please take time to read the entire article. And then look around you. There IS a new era of slavery underway. Most Christians ARE playing silly little church games. This is 2015. We are running out of time to WAKE UP! STAND STRAIGHT! STAND TALL! - Ed)

Some time ago we had an active discussion about what is happening in our world. It centered on God's involvement in weather and the freefall of society in general. **God does use weather events to accomplish His purposes and to judge humans for their evil actions.** Bible prophets were not popular in most cases because they told the truth. Their message was not popular or welcome. Even believers did not want to hear truth if they deemed it negative.

Like it or not, **God has begun to judge this world.** He is doing this by using serious weather events, as He did in the past. His purpose is to bring judgment on those who violate His person and holiness. **God is using government leaders to punish nations who turn their backs on Israel.** Wickedness of the most

serious nature, such as the murder of the unborn and the acceptance of sodomy, is something God cannot ignore. Worldwide economic disaster waits in the wings, and the planet "groans" under horrible military conflicts like we have never seen. **The growth of Islam with all of its atrocities is just part of what happens when a world forgets the sovereign creator God.**

HERE AT HOME

All of the above events are real threats to our own nation. I have said repeatedly that **we are just one major event away from civil war in our own land.** Now rioting in the streets has become a national pastime, with the approval of those who are supposed to be protecting everyone's freedoms. All these things are in the hand of God, and He uses them to judge those who have trampled His truth underfoot. **Any serious student of Nazi Germany would recognize what is happening in our country.** Instead of a free people, able to speak and practice what they believe, **a new era of slavery is underway.** We are not free to condemn the evil of sodomy; we must be silent or pay the price. It is one thing for people to practice evil; it is another thing to force other people to recognize it, to accept it, to be silent about it, or to be punished for opposing it.

So here we are, and you don't want to talk about these subjects. You don't want to hear about them because they are negative. **We are just supposed to play our silly little church games.** Let me sound a warning: you will not escape the fallout of all of this. Let me add that the problem is made much worse by evangelical leaders who have taught us to hide our heads in the sand of activity and self-centered theology. We do have a responsibility in this world, and it is about light and truth.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

The sounds and images of conflict are on the horizon. Please consider some ways that God would have us respond.

Deal with ignorance. There is no safety in not knowing. Those who told you not to waste your time on current events have simply given you a sleeping pill, but the truth will be there when you wake up, as you most certainly will do.

Deal with denial. To say that something isn't happening when it actually is serves only to rob us of the very attitude of power that we need for the coming conflict.

Study the scripture. I and II Peter, along with other books of the Bible, give us direction for dealing with situations similar to the ones we face today. They provide a proper

perspective that will help us to stand tall. Let me remind you of a great truth: **in the end, WE WIN! We are not losers; we are overcomers, so stop talking and acting like a loser!**

We are strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land, and we need to look at this challenge from heaven's point of view. I don't like pain any more than you do, but it is part of the believer's challenge in this world. I don't like rejection, either, but remember that if they hated our Lord, we should expect the same treatment.

You can't compromise with pagans. To the worldlings, you are a bit less than human with almost no thinking ability. We might be able to fly under the radar for a while, but the day will come when what you believe and practice will be considered criminal. We already know the results of the final judgment, so their condemnation of us is but a small thing.

Pay no attention to cowardly professing Christians. They will criticize you. They should be holding your arms up, but they will condemn you. You will be accused of being political, or of lacking love. You will be accused of ignoring or hindering evangelism. When you speak the truth as it is revealed in scripture, they will allegorize the text in order to cover their disobedience. You don't have to have the approval of those who live with superstitious fear;

Fear God alone.

STAND STRAIGHT AND STAND TALL

Stop whining and start winning. The present and future persecution is small compared to that of saints of the past. This is not a time to feel sorry for ourselves; rather, **hateful opposition should cause us to REJOICE!** We should be thankful for the privilege of suffering for our Lord. This is biblical Christianity. See the enemy for what he is and the compromisers for what they are, but stand straight and stand tall. Some of my readers may live long enough to win a martyr's crown, but we do not fear those who can kill the body; we only fear Him who can condemn the soul.

Sorry to disturb your fairy-tale, sugarplum mindset, but if you think all this will go away because you don't know (ignorance) or don't care (denial), you are in for a rude awakening.

Wake up, stand straight, and stand tall - be an overcomer!

<http://shepherdstaff.wordpress.com/>

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Dear Boys,

Do you remember the day we went to the drugstore and the lady said, "Wow, you are the first kids I've seen all day with nothing in your hands." Remember how she marveled at how you didn't need an electronic device to carry through the store? I know how her words made you feel. I know how it reminded you that you are different because your mom limits your electronic usage. I know it was yet another reminder. The same reminder you receive when we are out to eat and you notice all the kids playing their phones and iPads instead of talking to their parents. I know it was a reminder of all the sporting events where you feel you are the only kids whose parents are making them cheer on their siblings rather than burying themselves in a phone. I know it was another reminder to you that you feel different in this electronic age we live in.

Well, boys, it's not you. It's me. Me being selfish maybe. **You see I can't bear to miss a moment with you.** Let me explain.

I want to talk to you when we are out to eat. I want to listen to your questions. I want to have training opportunities. I want to allow space for conversation that can take us deeper. **And if you are always distracted with electronics, well...** I might miss those moments. I could give you all the statistics about how damaging it is to your development, your attention span, your ability to learn. While all of those are valid reasons to keep electronics away, that is not my primary reason why I say no to you so much. It's more than that. Much more. I need you to understand this.

When we are together, I want all of you. The fullness of you. I want to experience you. Truly experience you. And I can't do that with you when there is an electronic device between us. You see it acts as a barrier. I want to see what brings life to those eyes. I want to watch the wonder and magic dance across your face as you discover the wonders of this world. I want to watch you as you figure things out. I want to watch you process life, develop your thoughts. I want to know you. I want to know your passions. I want to watch you as you discover your God-given talents and gifts. **And when you hide behind a screen, I miss out on all of that. And my time with you....well it will be over in the blink of an eye.**

I want to guide you into an understanding of life and who you are. Boys, kids today are starved for attention, true connection and relationship. I don't want you to feel starved. That is why I say no. I know that feeding the



desire to play in your device is like giving you candy. It satisfies for a moment but provides no long term nutrition. It does more harm than good.

I don't want to look back when I'm out of the trenches of child training and regret a second I had with you. I don't want to merely survive. I want to thrive in this life with you. We are in it together. We are a family. Yes, when we are waiting at a doctor's office for an hour, it would be easier to quiet you with my phone. But if I did that, I fear I would send you a message that says I'd rather hush you than hear those precious words falling from your lips. I can't bear the thought of allowing you to miss out on the wonders and mysteries of this world. When you are transfixed on a screen, the beauty of this world will be lost to you. **In every moment beauty is waiting to be discovered. I don't want you to miss it.**

I want you to be comfortable with yourself. I want you not to feel a constant need to be entertained and distracted. **If you stay behind a screen, you never have to experience just being you, alone with your thoughts.** I want you to learn to think, to ponder life, to make discoveries, to create. **You have been gifted by God in unique ways. I want those to bloom. They can't bloom in the glow of a screen. They need life, real life, to bring them to light.**

I want you to be confident in who you are. I want you to be able to look people in the eyes and speak life into them. If I allow you to live behind a screen, you get little practice relating eye to eye. **To truly know someone you have to look into their eyes. It's a window into their heart.** You see what can't be seen in cyberspace.

When I tell you no to devices, I'm giving you a gift. And I'm giving me a gift. It's a gift of relationship. True human connection. It's precious and a treasure. And you mean so much to me that I don't want to miss a second of it. I love how God created your mind. I love to hear the way you

think and process life. I love to see what makes you laugh. I love to watch those eyes widen when a new discovery is made. And when your head is behind a screen, I miss all of that. And so do you. In this life we have few cheerleaders. In this family we will cheer each other on. I know it is boring to sit at swim lessons and watch your brother learn to swim. I know it is boring to sit through a 2 hour baseball practice. And in all honesty, it would be easy for me to give you the iPad and keep you quiet and occupied. But we all lose out when we do that. You will miss out on watching your brother's new accomplishments. You will deprive him of the joy of his moment to shine for you. You will miss out on what it means to encourage each other.

I want you to grow up knowing the world doesn't revolve around you. (One day your wife will thank me) I want you to learn to give selflessly of yourself....to give away your time, your talents, your treasures. If I distract you with electronics when you should be cheering for your brother, well, I'm simply telling you that your happiness is more important than giving your time to someone other than yourself. **This world needs more selflessness. This world needs more connection. This world needs more love. We can't learn these behind a screen.**

I want to raise sons that know how to look deeply into the eyes of the ones they love. I want my future daughters in law to know what it's like to have a husband that looks deeply into her eyes because he knows the value of human relationships and the treasure of love. And that is best communicated eye to eye. **I want to watch your face illuminated by the majesty of life – not the glow of a screen.** I want all of you. Because I only have you for a short while. When you pack up and leave for college, I want to look back with no regrets over the time I spent with you. I want to look back and remember how your eyes sparkled when we talked. I want to look back and remember how I actually knew those little quirky details of your life because we had time enough to be bored together. It's ok to be bored. We can be bored together. And we can discover new things together.

I love you. I love you too much to quiet you with an iPhone or an iPad or a DS. And I can't even apologize, because I'm really not sorry. I'm doing this so that I won't be sorry one day.

With all my love,

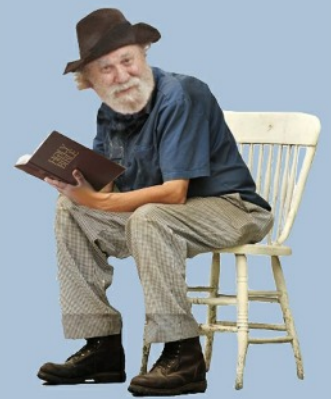
Mom

<http://renee-robinson.com/a-letter-to-my-sons-the-real-reason-i-say-no-to-electronics/>

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DEACON TRUE SEZ -

We call him "Little Abey".
His real name is Abraham.
He is a bit slow, but
sometimes he comes up
with sump'n awful sharp the
rest of us wish we'd
thought of.



Like the time we had that
character with shaggy hair
come bustlin' into the church dressed in a bedspread and
wearin' a skullcap with funny markings on it. Our little
country church never seen nothin' like that before. If he
hadn't been sportin' a real bushy black beard, we wouldn't
have known whether he was Arthur or Martha, the way he
was dressed. The singin' was already started and our vocal
chords was warmed up pretty good when we saw the
songleader, Bro. Sammy's eyes open real wide when that
dude came in the door. We all just had to sneak a look,
and when we saw him, the singin' got a bit puny there
for a few bars.

That sorta Arab lookin' feller found a empty seat acrost
the aisle from Little Abey and tried to look important and
dignified. When we made it to the end of that first song,
Bro. Sammy called on somebody to pray and we sat
down. Before he could announce the next song, Little
Abey spoke up real loud and clear. He stared at that feller
across the aisle and said, "We heared about you last week
when our 'vangelist wuz here. He told us about an ol'
bachelor what lives on the Tyber. He dresses like Mama,
too, and calls hisself Papa, and he ain't got no kids! Hey,
mister, you ain't him by any chance, are ya? Yuh're drest
like mama. Do you call yourself Papa? You got any kids?"
Everybody in the church could hear Little Abey clear as a
bell.

Well, you guessed it. That feller got as red as a beet and
ran out the door. We later heard he was a fake Jew who
dresses up like a Arab in order to get up in the pulpit
and milk the gullible saints of whatever greenbacks they
happen to be carryin'.

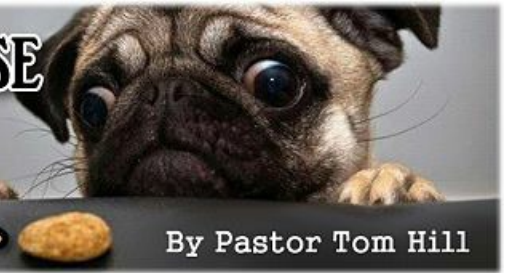
We couldn't help laughin' out loud. And Little Abey got a
bunch of pats on the head from us old grandpas and lots
of hugs from grandmas.

Every church oughta have a Little Abey, just for when the
fakes walk in the door.

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THE WORDS GOD CHOSE TO USE

PLEONEXIA



By Pastor Tom Hill

It is in Luke 12, that we find Christ teaching His disciples with an innumerable multitude nearby. We read in verse 13, *"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me."* Jesus replies in verse 15, *"And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* One of the ugly words of the language of the New Testament is found in the word that Jesus used for COVETOUSNESS. I find it interesting that immediately after this declaration, Jesus tells the parable of the rich fool.

The word for COVETOUSNESS in all its forms is found only fourteen times in the New Testament. The Greek word is PLEONEXIA. PLEONEXIA speaks of "that greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice." One lexicon says that "one even feels a force" to do this. It does not matter if one has a need or not of that item, they still covet. It is a deep embedded desiring of more and more.

This word is made up of two words, PLEION, which means "greater, more" and the verb, ECHO, which means "to have." It is the desire to have more, to have what is forbidden.

Even in the secular world of Jesus' day, the idea of GREED was thought of as a grasping for what is beyond that which is ordained for a man. Further, PLEONEXIA was thought of as the evil that always sought to take advantage of your fellow man in order to get gain for yourself. According to secular writings of that day, when the word was used, it was condemned by even the lost. They thought it to be a shameless sort of conduct. It was an overreaching ambition with violence and injustice. Often this word was used of a dishonest official who was out to fleece the district of which he was in charge. Even the Romans said that it was the "accursed love of possessing." You see, even society as a whole had a strong condemnation for the sin of coveting.

Such a desire for things which belong to others is condemned over and over in the Scriptures. For example in Exodus 20:17, when God gave Moses and Israel the Law, He said, *"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."*

When the word for greed or covetousness was used in the Hebrew, at times, it had the idea of that which was desirable, that which is pleasant. Other times, the word spoke of the same evil as does the New Testament. Remember what Eve did in the Garden of Eden? The Bible says that she saw that the tree was good for food and that it was PLEASANT (not the same word). The word used by Moses is speaking of such a greed. Remember Achan's sin at Jericho? He DESIRED (Joshua 7:21) the spoil.

The issue concerning COVETOUSNESS can be summed up like this: *God is not doing enough for me, He is not taking care of me, He is neglecting me, I cannot depend upon Him.* No wonder Jesus condemned this horrible sin!

Paul uses PLEONEXIA in Romans 1:29, *"Romans 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers."* This is a sin of the society that has rejected God and everything having to do with God. God has Himself abandoned such a people to their own lusts, and part of the lust is that of greed.

Back in Luke 12:15, *"And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* When the parable of the rich fool is kept in that context, Jesus is speaking about a person that evaluates things in this life FROM THE TERMS OF MATERIAL THINGS. The value of life is in what I have, it is in what I possess. The sin of greed is that the person who is being greedy focuses UPON HIMSELF completely. The meaning of life then, is in THINGS. But the word is not just about having material possessions. Even God's children can covet position and blessing, among other things.

We find PLEONEXIA also in 2 Peter 2:3, *"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."* The context of Peter's words is dealing with the false teachers. Peter is saying here are men who use their position to take advantage of, to "make merchandise" of the people they should have been serving. People are only the objects of exploitation so as to make a fast buck. They are not seen as children of God to serve. What drives them to make people

merchandise? It is the greed that is in their blackened hearts. The way that Peter states this shows that this is their aim and their goal.

This covetous, greedy spirit shows itself in this method: feigned words. That means plastic words. These are words that are fabricated and molded to achieve their purpose. That is not how a true teacher would ever act. A true teacher would show an UNFEIGNED (unhypocritical) love of the brethren (1 Peter 1:22).

Take a look at the Word of Faith people with their constant begging for money. They make merchandise of people. Like with a counterfeit coin of that day, these teachers would use their arguments to make a profitable bargain with the students. Is it not interesting how the methods really never change of the agents of the enemy?

Suffice it to say, **PLEONEXIA** is the sin of a man who has allowed this desire to have more, to reign in his life. He thinks that his desires and lusts are more important than anything in the whole world. Others are seen as objects to exploit and he has no god except for himself and his own desires.

Are we ever guilty of coveting or having a covetous spirit? Let it not be even one time named among us. We must believe that God is doing enough, that He is taking care of us, that He is not neglecting us and that we can depend upon Him.

Beware of covetousness, brethren!

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DID I HEAR SOMEONE SAY "SYNCRETISM"?

(It is becoming easier and easier to connect the dots between the Ecumenical Movement and The Great Harlot Religion of the Antichrist (Rev. 13, 17, 18). One of the intermediate steps, possibly the final step, is the combining of religious groups that are not of the same faith at all. This combination used to be called "syncretism", but the word has fallen out of use in recent times. Nowadays it is called "Faith Communities Come Together in Peace." More and more evidence accumulates that Islam is actually the old time worship of Baal. It comes as no surprise that one of the daughters of Mystery Babylon is smooching up to another of her siblings. - Ed.)



IN QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA, FAITH COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER "IN PEACE"

Source; Toowoomba Chronicle - 20th December 2014

The face of modern day Toowoomba in Queensland, Australia, with its diverse multicultural mix was evident at St Luke's Anglican Church on Saturday with the second of three **Community Prayer for Peace forums**.

Representatives of the city's **range of faiths came together in prayer and healing** in **response to the Sydney siege tragedy**. While the Sydney siege **prompted the forum**, other violent events around the world such as the Pakistan student massacre were also in the forefront of attendees minds.

"This (gathering) is a renewal and recommitment to **peace and harmony between us**," apostate Reverend Dr. Jonathan Inkipin of St Luke's told the forum.



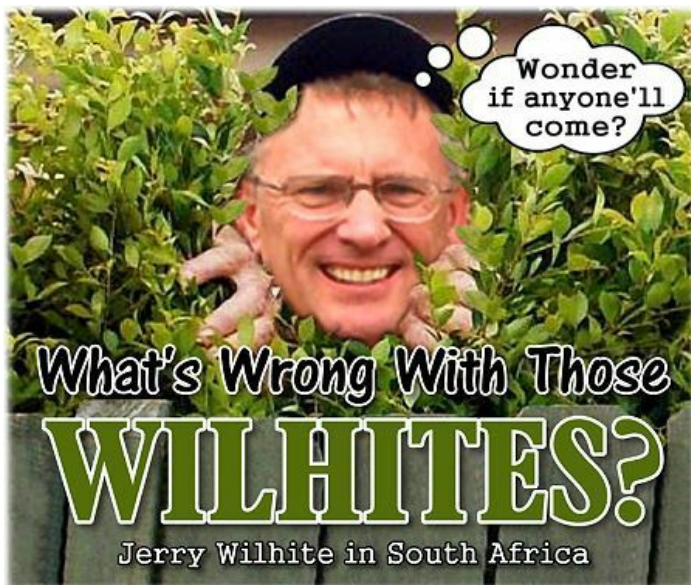
Above: Syed Ghazali of the Islamic Interfaith Multicultural Committee addresses the congregation of St. Luke's Anglican Church in Toowoomba - Queensland.

Other speakers included Reverend **Sharon** Kirk of the Uniting Church, Syed Ghazali of the **Islamic Interfaith Multicultural Committee**, **Roman Catholic Bishop** Robert McGuckin, Sr Deirdre of the **Muslim community** and **Anglican Bishop** Cameron Venables.

In a released written statement, Bishop McGuckin expressed sympathy and prayers for those affected by the siege. *"My thoughts and prayers and those of the entire Catholic community, go out to those who have been affected by the siege that took place in Sydney,"* he said.

"We pray for those who tragically lost their lives and for those who were held hostage during this ordeal. We unite in prayer in support of all who are grieving and pray that they will find healing and peace."

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As for this coming Sunday, attendance will probably be down. I'm wondering if anyone will show. And why? Well, one lady has a funeral; a man is away on holiday; several college students have gone home; another family will be out of town visiting relatives; a newer lady convert is being urged by her husband to attend a function with him this weekend; one gal is several months pregnant and soon won't be able to walk the long distance; another man is scheduled to work...BUT... the Wilhites will be in church, Lord willing, and thanks to my parents who ingrained church attendance into me when I was young.

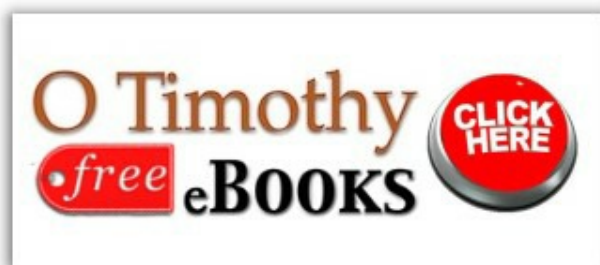
My earliest memory was of my father taking me outside and whopping me for fussing in church, but I was in church even earlier than that. Mother tells me she birthed me on Wednesday and ten days later I was in God's house.

While growing up, my father was determined for us to be in the house of God and that 30-45 minutes before Sunday School. I don't remember a Sunday when we weren't the first ones there, even though we lived the farthest away. "You never know when you might have a flat tire," he would always say. Now, we never had one, but IF WE WOULD HAVE we would have still made it to Sunday School on time. Amen?

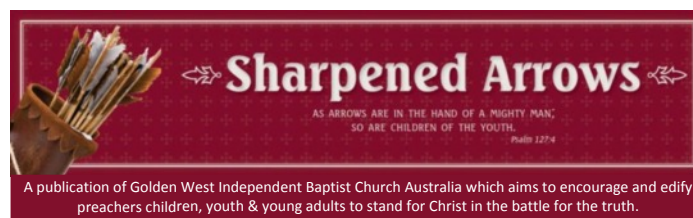
One wintry, snowy eve Mom bundled up the four of us children, and we slipped and slid in the old Chevy on a gravel road the entire eight miles to the First Baptist in town from the farm...only to discover the church service had been cancelled. The pastor met us in the foyer and said, "We didn't call you because we didn't think you would try to make it in." He must have been new and didn't know my dad very well.

How grateful I am to God for parents who didn't send me to church; they took me to church!

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CASTING CROWNS' CORRUPTING LEAVEN

"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." (Matthew 13:33).

During the early years of my Christian journey, sitting under Pentecostal/Charismatic teachers, I was encouraged to believe for a massive end-time revival, in which we should expect to see literally multitudes of unbelievers being swept into the Kingdom of God. We were to urgently prepare ourselves for an impending revival of a magnitude never before seen in the history of the church.

Justification for this flawed belief is based upon a number of Scriptures, perhaps the most abused being the Parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, found in Chapter 13 of the Book of Matthew.

As I continued in my journey with the Lord, I discovered that there is another way we can look at how these Parables should be interpreted, a way that puts a completely different meaning upon what they actually mean. If one takes off the Pentecostal/Charismatic glasses and replaces them with Biblical ones something amazing is revealed. It becomes plain that the Lord is not indicating something positive happening in the Kingdom of Heaven, but actually something negative. He is giving a clear warning of apostasy, not revival. He is speaking of something 180 degrees opposite to what is popularly taught by Kingdom Now/Manifest Sons of God revivalists.

For the purpose of my article, I will appeal to just the fourth in the series of Matthew 13 Parables, where the Lord likens the Kingdom of Heaven (the Church) to a woman who secretly introduces leaven into three measures of meal, until the whole of the meal becomes leavened.

Leaven, as used in Scripture, is never representative of good, but always of evil, which indicates that Pentecostals have called evil good, and good evil, and that the woman is actually up to some mischief. Rather than saying that the church is going to expand to a gigantic size in the last days, Jesus is actually revealing that false doctrines and practices are going to be secretly introduced into the teachings and life of the church congregations, until all of Christendom, all professing churches, come under the influence of leaven.

After forsaking and denouncing anything to do with the dangerous teachings and practices of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements, for the last fifteen or so years I have associated with professed Fundamentalist Independent Baptists. I have become convinced that, as a movement, or a group, they are perhaps the last bastion of defenders against the rampant apostasy that is globally sweeping through practically every denomination and religious assembly that professes to name the Name of Christ. And it's for that reason that I am absolutely astounded and alarmed at the compromises and harmful associations of numerous professing Fundamentalist Independent Baptist leaders of influence who are putting the reputation of the rest of the IB movement at risk – not to mention giving the gentiles further reason to blaspheme the Name of the Lord.

In May, 2012, I was copied in on an email that revealed that in May 2011, Paul Chappell, pastor of Lancaster Baptist Church and West Coast Bible College in the US, had been questioned regarding the use of Casting Crowns songs in their church/college. When asked about this obvious error of judgement, friends of Paul Chappell rallied around him and defended him, saying that it was a one off mistake that was out of Paul Chappell's control, but that he had dealt with the matter in an appropriate, scriptural manner, and that the person making the complaint should more or less just mind his own business.

However, despite assurances from Lancaster that everything was back on course, it was discovered in the following February 2012, some eight months later, that Lancaster Baptist Church choir had performed a further Casting Crowns song in their service, accompanied by their Music Director, Jon Guy. The Casting Crowns song that Lancaster performed and posted to YouTube was entitled "Always Enough," but the video has since been removed. I wonder why?

Unbelievably, during that very same service the Lancaster choir also performed a song entitled "Mighty To Save" which also was posted to YouTube. It didn't take much effort to discover that "Mighty To Save" is a Hillsong production!!! The music and the lyrics of "Mighty to Save" are copyright property of Hillsong. This video has also been removed and now has an announcement that says, "The YouTube account associated with this video has been terminated due to multiple third-party notifications of copyright infringement." It seems Lancaster/West Coast had to learn the hard way that Hillsong is a money-making business that doesn't abide by "freely ye have received, freely give."

Never-the-less, I was astounded, to say the least, that Paul Chappell's highly respected and influential, Independent Baptist church and Bible College, could even consider performing a Hillsong production, let alone be brazen enough to post their performance of it to YouTube, particularly after recently being approached for using Casting Crowns materials. Consequently, I made the following email comment to some friends at the time:

"Here's one Lancaster performed... IT'S FROM HILLSONG!!! HILLSONG!!! Astounding!!! Maybe they'll be inviting "Pastor" Darlene next? Or maybe Brian could come preach on why we "Need More Money"? Or maybe Mrs "Pastor" Bobbie could do a session on why "Kingdom Women Love Sex"? That always goes over well and draws a big crowd if your mind is in the world and on the things of the flesh."

When I viewed Lancaster choir's rendition of Casting Crowns' "Always Enough," I took time to read some of the accompanying comments that professing Christians had posted on the YouTube site. Adulation was being heaped upon the Lancaster choir, and not only by impressionable young idol worshippers, but I also by parents. In amongst all the praise and admiration I read one particular comment that greatly disturbed me, and which prompted me to comment:

"I see one lady posted a comment under the Casting Crowns song asking where she could get the lyrics because she wants to sing the song at her [own] church with her

daughters. There's a magnificent example of leaven in action friends. Obviously, she's never heard the song before, but now she's been introduced to it from the acclaimed Bastion of Fundamentalism, Lancaster Baptist Church. Once she finds the lyrics she'll also want to hear Casting Crowns doing a 'professional' job on the song – she [will no longer] be satisfied with the imitation. Then her poor little daughters are going to get hooked as well. And it won't end in the church, everyone. That's only the beginning - that's just where it starts nowadays for an increasing multitude of young IB kids. It's introduced to them at church and then ends up in their homes, and then they end up with friends who listen to the same stuff and next thing they're hooked and out in the world, and everyone (specially the IB pastors) starts asking each other 'What happened?'"

Unfortunately, the CCM music being promoted at Lancaster/West Coast won't remain within the four walls of that highly influential organization. Any church with a youth department that has any connection with Paul Chappell's Lancaster Baptist Church would soon be wanting to emulate what they saw them posting on the Internet, and they'd soon be posting their own performance as well.

True to my predictions, within a couple of months, during the evening service of Sunday 24th April, 2012, the worship singers at Lighthouse Baptist Church in Rockhampton, Australia, a church in close liaison with Paul Chappell and Lancaster, performed the song "City on a Hill." This song also is a production of the worldly CCM artists, Casting Crowns, the same group that Lancaster Baptist Church in the U.S. continued to promote, even though they denied doing so. The copycats were already performing their imitations.

That's how leaven works. It spreads and contaminates the whole of the meal. Not only does it spread from choir, to congregation, to homes, and to friends up the street, but it also spreads to other churches, and to other countries, especially to countries that have churches which share the same philosophies about how to have a successful church which will impress your peers, like Lancaster and Lighthouse apparently do.

I have discovered over the years that CCM artists are, generally, notoriously terrible theologians. Along with their responsibility for wrecking young church people's enjoyment for psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and for them ever being able to enjoy worshipping God by making melody in their hearts to Him, along with the addictive beat of the CCM artist's music it's the false doctrine that sticks forever in their young heads. It's the leaven of false doctrine that's going to destroy a truly

scriptural understanding of who God is and what He requires of them – if they want to serve, honour, obey and please Him. It's the Word of God that young (and old) people need to hide in their hearts in order that they might not sin against Him, not the lyrical theology of some CCM musician who has dined at the poisonous feeding troughs of the unsaved musicians of the world, all the while filling their heads and hearts with unbelief and fleshly lusts.

Available on the Internet for everyone to access, including pastors and other church leaders who profess to be called of God as shepherds to feed and protect His sheep, is a video produced by the Lead singer of Casting Crowns, Mark Hall, in which he describes the motivation and the message behind their song "City on a Hill." I went and had a look at it, checked out the lyrics, and true to form, it's nothing more than ecumenical, one world church, false doctrine. This is what Lancaster has passed on to Lighthouse, and that Lighthouse is now doing a good job of spreading to an Independent Baptist church somewhere near you. Or maybe it's actually already in your church?

For those interested to do their own bit of doctrinal evaluation, the video is posted on YouTube at the link copied below.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mriQXowzRIM>

After doing my own bit of research I made the following comments to some friends by email:

The song's message is about perceived, unnecessary and destructive division in the church. However, right from the start the theology is in error. Like most of the CCM musicians and song writers, Casting Crowns has taken a portion of Scripture they have misunderstood and used it to promote their popular, but misguided message. Whether intentionally, or unintentionally, they have twisted Scripture and promoted error.

Young Christians, the target audience of CCM musicians, are, for the most part, doctrinally immature. They will hear the message of the song and be influenced by that rather than "what saith the Scripture?" The leaven will have been introduced. Scripture warns that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. CCM leaven is like any other leaven. As young people continue to swallow small doses, eventually the leaven becomes their world view, shaping the way they think and behave.

Perhaps there is some excuse for worldly "Christian" musicians and immature Christians, who don't have too much of a clue as to what Scripture teaches, for getting

themselves snared, not just by the wrong music, but also by the wrong theology, but what excuse is there for the church leader, who has been commissioned (Acts 20:28) to take heed to himself and all the flock which the wolves are determined to feed upon? Do you think the pastors know what the lyrics say? Apart from the use of ungodly, worldly music, are they aware of the unscriptural message that is being promoted? It's actually their job to know what the sheep are being fed.

The frightening and inexcusable thing about this end time apostasy, is that mostly, when there is some attempt to make a pastor aware of the problem, to awake him out of his slumber, he becomes defensive and looks to other pastor friends (who are doing the exact same thing) for comfort and reassurance that he is not really doing anything God wouldn't appreciate. Anyway, it can't be too bad – what he's doing draws a crowd and keeps the young people coming back. It's much better to have them in the church where they at least get a chance of hearing the Gospel, isn't it? How can you argue with that? And then he compares himself with the other "successful" pastor friends that he is emulating, rather than looking at what's been complained about – instead of consulting Scripture to see what it says about the situation. As well, he has already listened to, and been influenced by what his other "successful" pastor friends have had to say about the legalistic, pharisaical messenger God used to bring the situation to light, so, he becomes comfortable, lulled into a false confidence that all is well with him and them, and goes back to sleep and allows his (mostly scripturally ignorant) youth pastor to set the standard.

What's wrong with the song? Why should we speak out about it? Well, the city on a hill mentioned in the song by Casting Crowns is misinterpreted to be representative of the church. The city on a hill in Scripture, however, is actually representative of a Christian's testimony to the world. Two entirely different things, really.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16).

You see, if Casting Crowns can swap the meaning of the city to represent the church, then it absolves the individual Christian of any responsibility to live the kind of life that reflects what Scripture plainly teaches they should. There's no requirement for the individual Christian to live a scripturally holy and sanctified life that honours God (they mistakenly think they're already doing that through

their worldly music and heretical lyrics). The pressure's off. It now becomes the responsibility of the corporate church to shine the light, and they can convince their followers that it's the current batch of dry, lifeless, divisive, complaining church leaders that are putting that light out. It's not an individual, lawless and worldly lifestyle that claims to be Christian that is bringing a reproach upon the name of Christ, but it's those unloving, whinging, legalists who are giving the church a bad name and extinguishing the lights of the city. You know who they are.

However, Casting Crowns, like most CCM musicians, is promoting an unbiblical, ecumenical unity and sees contending for the faith and promoting doctrinal purity, as commanded by God in the Book of Jude, as unscriptural and divisive.

CASTING CROWNS' VIDEO MESSAGE BY MARK HALL

Mark Hall complains that the church is split in all directions with this group saying that one is wrong, and that group saying this one is wrong. He says that any Christian book you read starts out with what's wrong with everybody else's Christian book. Every Pastor talks about what's wrong with all the other churches. But, he reckons, when we pull together and stop talking about what we're against and a little bit more about what we're for, then we start to see God move.

Well, I reckon with their song, Casting Crowns is doing exactly what Mark Hall says he is wanting to counteract in the video. He has pointed his finger at someone or some group and said they are wrong and he is right. Does singing about the perceived problems in the church make it different, does it? Writing, or preaching about error in the church is not allowed, but singing about it is?

Mark Hall claims that "God is going to save the world. He's drawing the whole world to himself. He's going to win. Right?" Wrong Mark! Really, really wrong!!!

That's typical Latter Rain/Kingdom Now/End Time Revival/Reconstruction heresy. If professing Fundamental Independent Baptist pastors are going to allow this type of heretical doctrine loose in the IB churches, I might as well go back to the Pentecostal AOG church I fled from years ago. At least they're the experts at it – at this stage anyway.

Mark Hall reckons God told him he wants him to be a part of this "world-saving" strategy. "He's going to let me be a part of it," he tells us. And it's not just by being preachers, or just being teachers. He reckons God is fitting everyone together, all the different gifts to do the work of the

ministry. Of course, he's obviously including his special "gift" of musician as one of the important ways God is going to get the Gospel out to the masses and save the whole world.

As with most CCM musicians, Hall promotes that his way of spreading the message of salvation through rock music is better than dusty, boring old foolish preaching. Hmmmm.... Amazingly, it's only in the closing days of the church age (which the Bible warns will be easily recognised by the amount of false teachers and false doctrine in the churches) that we see music being used as a medium for "preaching" the Gospel. No mention of it in Scripture.

He talks about Barnabas and Peter, although being totally different in personalities and nature, being able to work together. But, he complains, today the Barnabases and the Peters and the John the Baptists of the world are all fighting against each other.

Has Mark Hall considered that perhaps Barnabas and Peter in Scripture had a common purpose that negated the necessity of them pointing their fingers at each other? They had a unity of the Spirit, and a unity of the faith, and a knowledge of the Son of God. They had a common message they preached, which was the basis for their unity. The reason there are complaints coming from some quarters is because the messages promoted by various groups, like the CCM song writers, are all different from the message Barnabas and Peter and John the Baptist were united on. If he thinks we're wrong on that, he needs to read the Bible and then read his song and then try to convince us, as well as himself, that there is no inconsistency. Despite what Mark Hall thinks and has freedom to promote, Scripture commands the Christian to stand up and make noise about such things.

He finishes by saying that we all need to pull together and stop talking about what we're against and a little bit more about what we're for, then we will start to see God move. Yep! The old unity at any cost message that has been sprouted far and wide, probably since the church began. But anyone who reads any amount of Scripture, in context, knows this is not what God promotes.

A serious question we need to ask and seek the answer for is this, "What do all these young "Christian musicians" feed their minds on at home? What music do they listen to and who do they read? What do their young friends listen to, the ones they meet and influence at church, and then have contact with during the week?" I'm not that bright, but I know the answer to that!!! They're preoccupied with unsaved, worldly (and mostly, demonic) rock musicians. And some of these young people who



have now come under the “musician’s” influence probably came to the church from an environment where rock music hadn’t previously been part of their lives. The Pastor who allows it in his church will answer for that.

The Bible assures us all in Romans 14:12, that “...every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

I can only appeal to the certainty of Scripture as to where all of this will end, but I do know for sure where it has presently progressed to. In the case of Lighthouse Baptist Church in Rockhampton at least, it has progressed to where the Senior Pastor, Robert Bakss and his son, Ben, were quite willing to attend the 2014 Hillsong Conference in Sydney in company with Eric Capaci, the exceptionally liberal senior pastor from Gospel Light Baptist Church in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in the U.S. Professing to be a fundamentalist Independent Baptist, Eric Capaci is a person who proudly has himself photographed with the apostate and heretical Rick Warren, even posting the resulting happy photograph on his Twitter site for all the Independent Baptist world to see – and be warned of.

While it is obvious that Capaci is not ashamed to associate himself with those who God clearly commands us to mark and avoid, it is also obvious that the Bakss’s are also not ashamed to attend a Hillsong Conference in company with Capaci, and even to be photographed with him. In the case of Ben Bakss, at least, he was even prepared to have his photo taken with Capaci in front of the Hillsong Conference entrance, with the Hillsong sign boldly displayed just behind them.

Judging from the comments and photographs on [Capaci’s Twitter Site](#), he had been a guest speaker at the Lighthouse Baptist Church Couples Retreat during the last weekend in June this year, from which they all adjourned from Rockhampton to the Hillsong Conference that was

currently under way in Sydney, and where Capaci’s apostate friend, Rick Warren, was guest speaker, along with just as apostate, Mark Driscoll.

In my way of thinking, in the same manner as the Roman Catholics or the Pentecostals, all these influential IB Pastors are free to promote whatever they wish in their churches, but I reckon they should stop calling themselves Fundamentalist Independent Baptists and come out and clearly tell everyone where they stand on issues that I thought Fundamentalist Independent Baptists traditionally stood strong on.

If they want to compromise themselves and team up with the ecumenical crowd, then come out and say so. Let’s have a clear line drawn in the sand. That way, everyone can make a calculated decision either to stay and enjoy the worldly CCM music and buddy up with the apostates, or else they can look in their Bibles and see what the Lord has to say about it all, and jump over to the other side of the line to the Lord’s side. People should be given the clear choice and opportunity to make that decision.

Oh, did I mention that Eric Capaci is a great fan of Casting Crowns? He proudly announced on Twitter, just two weeks prior to his visit to Lighthouse Baptist Church in Rockhampton in June, 2014, that he was excited to be at his first ever Casting Crowns concert in his home town of Hot Springs, Arkansas. Get ready for some more Casting Crowns songs to be performed at Lighthouse. That’s how leaven works. Once you get a little bit of it in the meal, you can’t get it out. It just continues to permeate throughout the entire mixture.

Jesus clearly warned that “...the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” (Matthew 13:33).

The Lord Jesus is not talking about revival here in this parable, as CCM musicians like Hillsong and Casting Crowns promote in practically every one of their doctrinally erroneous songs, but He’s talking about the leaven of error and the apostate condition of Christendom, which only intensifies as we approach the closing of the Church age.

Despite Paul Chappell’s feeble attempt to now stop the leaven spreading by posting his blog article “[Doctrine Still Matters: What’s Wrong With Hillsong?](#)” it’s too late, friends. And despite Paul Chappell’s hypocritical warning

that “When a Bible-believing Baptist looks to Hillsong for ideas on relevancy and relatability, the Baptist is not looking to a church of like faith and practice,” the very thing he’s done himself, and despite his claim that “I am a biblical Baptist, and I encourage my Baptist brethren to promote biblical doctrine, Baptist polity, and the power of the gospel – not only in word but in affiliation and ministry practice,” even though he’s done just the opposite himself, it’s all a little too little, a little too late.

The leaven’s been let loose in the meal and, according to the Lord Jesus, the contaminating effect is going to permeate throughout the entire professing church. And

despite Paul Chappell’s attempt to now present himself as the champion voice of caution on the “deeper issues” and the “significant issues” that really matter, he can’t escape the fact that he has aided that lady, whoever she might be, to introduce the very leaven the Lord warned about – the corrupting leaven that has migrated to the uttermost part of the earth, like to Lighthouse Baptist Church at Rockhampton in Australia, and now, even to the remote mountains and valleys of Papua New Guinea where Lighthouse now has influence.

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CASTING CROWNS - FROM THE DIRECTORY OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSICIANS - By David Cloud

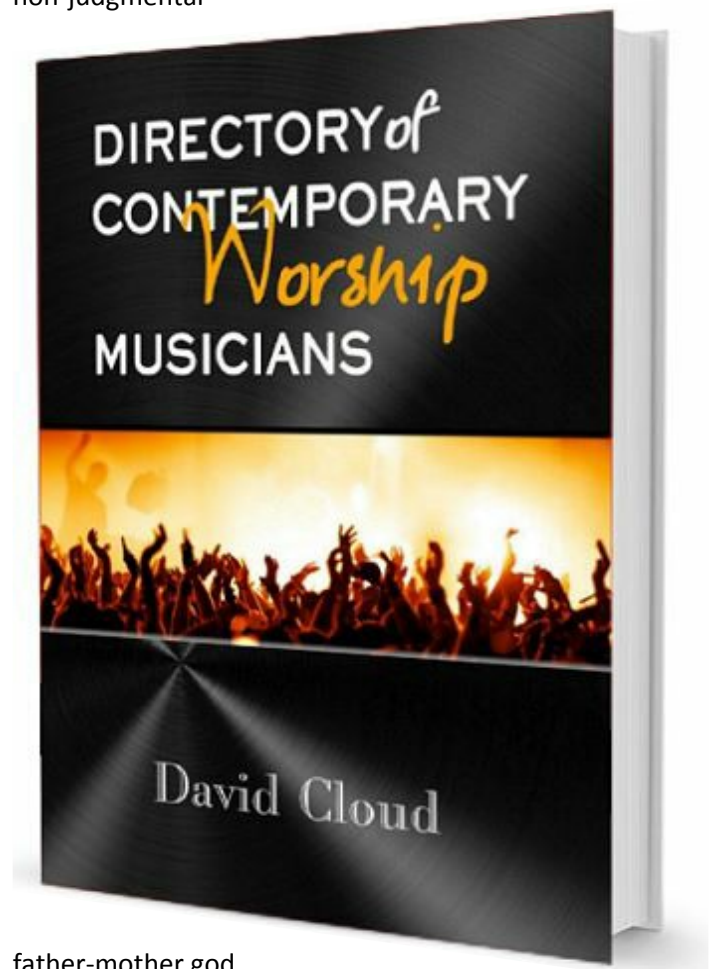
The popular contemporary worship band Casting Crowns is led by Mark Hall, a youth pastor at Eagles Landing First Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta. The band leads the contemporary worship services with their rock music. The group has broad influence through songs such as “Come to the Well,” “Always Enough,” “Who Am I,” “Courageous,” “Glorious Day,” “If We Are the Body,” “Praise You with the Dance.”

Casting Crowns songs are increasingly popular among fundamental Baptists. For example, “Prayer for a Friend” has been performed by a group at Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster, California.

Casting Crowns’ radical ecumenism and spiritual carelessness is evident in that they participated in the National Worship Leader Conference in 2011, joining hands with men such as Jack Hayford who says God spoke to him and told him not to judge the Roman Catholic Church.

Another prominent speaker at the conference was Leonard Sweet who promotes a wide variety of New Age heresies. He calls his universalist-tinged doctrine “New Light” and “quantum spirituality” and “the Christ consciousness” and describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). Sweet defines the New Light as “a structure of human becoming, a channeling of Christ energies through mindbody experience” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 70). Sweet says that “New Light pastors” hold the doctrine of “embodiment of God in the very substance of creation” (p. 124). In *Carpe Mañana*, Sweet says that the earth is as much a part of the body of Christ as humans and that humanity and the earth constitutes “a cosmic body of Christ” (p. 124). Sweet says that some of the “New Light leaders” that have influenced his thinking are Matthew

Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber. These are prominent New Agers who believe in the divinity of man, as we have documented in the book *The New Age Tower of Babel*. Sweet has endorsed *The Shack* with its non-judgmental



father-mother god, and he promotes Roman Catholic contemplative mysticism and dangerous mystics such as the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton. (For documentation see the book [Contemplative Mysticism](#), which is available in print and eBook editions from Way of Life Literature -- www.wayoflife.org.)

At the National Worship Leader Conference, Casting Crowns also joined hands with Tim Hughes who heads up Worship Central and is on staff at Holy Trinity Brompton, one of the birthplaces of the Laughing Revival in England and the Alpha program which has a close association with the Roman Catholic Church. Worship Central definitely follows “another spirit” (2 Cor. 11:4). (See “Tim Hughes” in this Directory.)

Casting Crowns performed with Sanctus Real in December 2011. Matt Hammitt of Sanctus Real participated in the 2003 tour of the *!Hero* rock opera, which depicts Jesus as a cool black man. In *!Hero*, the Last Supper is a barbecue party and ‘Jesus’ is crucified on a city street sign. Sanctus Real and Steven Curtis Chapman played a concert in 2003 at St. Mary Seminary sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. (See “Sanctus Real” in [The Directory Of Contemporary Worship Musicians](#).)

In “What This World Needs” Casting Crowns attacks every Bible-believing “fundamentalist” church. They sing that we need to “stop hiding behind our walls,” which is a brash denunciation of biblical separatism. On the video of “What This World Needs” they say that “this world doesn’t need my denomination or my translation of the Bible; they just need Jesus.” This is foolish heresy. To say that the world doesn’t need “my denomination” is to say that it doesn’t matter what a church believes, that any denomination is fine. And to say that the world doesn’t need “my translation of the Bible” is to say that it doesn’t matter what translation we use, when it most assuredly does matter! What this world most desperately needs is the sound teaching of a translationally-pure Bible. What this world needs is the true Jesus, but the Bible warns

repeatedly and forcefully about false christs, and the only way to know the true from the false is to have sound doctrine taught from an accurate Bible, and this requires a doctrinally-sound denominational stance and a sound translation.

In July 2012, Casting Crowns was one of the bands featured at the 14th annual Lifest in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Christian rock’s one-world church building enterprise was in full steam at this event. Other popular groups and artists participating were Switchfoot, Newsboys, Underoath, Building 429, Norma Jean, Steven Curtis Chapman, Tammy Borden, Love & Death, and Disciple. 15,000 enthusiastic fans gathered to celebrate ecumenical unity through the sensual power of rock & roll. Participants could choose from three worship services, including a Catholic Mass led by Bishop David Ricken, who officially approves of the “Marian Apparitions” at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in northern Wisconsin. The apparition appeared to Adele Brise in 1859 and said, “I am the Queen of Heaven, who prays for the conversion of sinners,” plainly identifying itself as a demon, since the only Queen of Heaven mentioned in Scripture is an idolatrous goddess that was condemned by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 7:18).

That Christian rock is intimately associated with such things is clear evidence of its apostasy.

Casting Crowns is the blind leading the blind, and Bible-believing churches that are messing around with their music are not wise.

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HOW THE OLD HYMNS WERE ONCE USED -

During the war in the Transvaal (1st Boer war) a gentleman at a meeting in Exeter Hall, London, in 1900 said, “When the soldiers going to the front were passing another body of soldiers whom they recognized, their greetings would be, ‘Four-nine-four, boys; four-nine-four;’ and the salute would invariably be answered with ‘Six further on, boys; six further on.’ The significance of this was that, a song book ‘Sacred Songs and Solos,’ had been sent to the front for the soldiers, number 494 was ‘God be with you until we meet again;’ and six further on than 494, or number 500, was ‘Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine.’”



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THE OLD BREEDS ARE ALMOST GONE.

Border collies, Kelpies, Blue Heelers, and "Bitsers" (bits of this and bits of that) are seldom found herding sheep any more. Instead of "Ol' Blue" guarding the flock, there's a new breed, part poodle and part Basenji. Poodles that are soft and rather effeminate and Basenji that can't bark. Oh, they can yodel and howl, but they can't bark. It's just not in their repertoire.

[Isaiah 56:9-12](#) is the only text in the Bible that deals with sheepdogs. It describes *"dumb dogs (that) cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber... greedy dogs which can never have enough, that cannot understand, they all look to their own way, every one for his gain."*

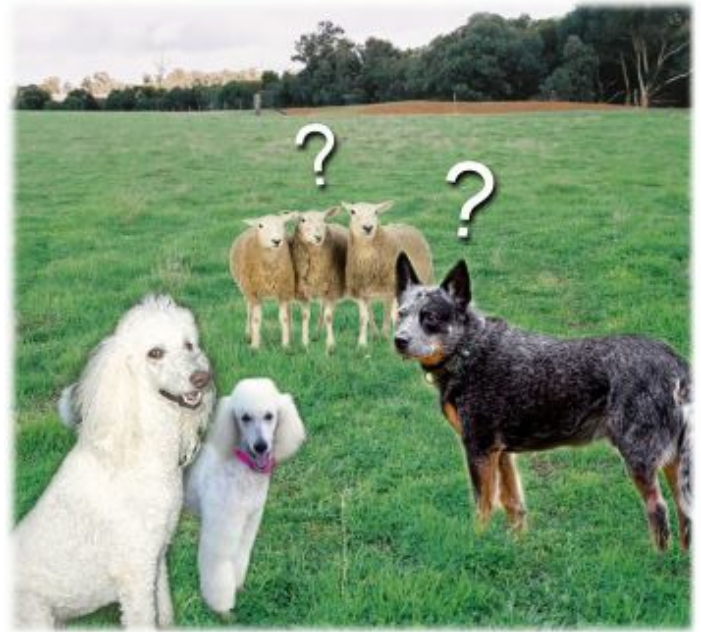
A better description of post-modern, toothless, spineless, voiceless pastors of God's flock could hardly be found. You'll hear from them no warning growls to alert the flock of approaching apostasy. You'll hear no barks of authority from the pulpit. You'll see in them no fierce defenders of the lambs. Gone are the sharp fangs, and the lightning attacks on ravening lions and wolves in sheep's clothing.

Think back. How long is it since you saw an old fashioned pastor with enough backbone and grit to be "set for the defence of the gospel?"

Most of that breed were pensioned off twenty years ago and have been replaced by the poodle/Basenji cross. The new breed puts on a pretty good show. They've been carried off to a high class hairdresser and permed and perfumed, and patted and pampered so now they know how to pirouette and dance and beg and roll over and play dead. But barking is thought to be crude and unrefined.

Christianity Today (magazine) printed an article a few years ago titled "Attack Dogs of Christendom." It was an expose' of the preachers who still know how to bark. If you read it you heard a pack of "basenjipoodles" yodeling.

One of my old friends used to say that if you throw a rock at a pack of dogs and one of them yelps, well, you know which one you hit. The article sounded like somebody had hit a "Basenji-poo". It made me wonder



if Old Blue had maybe nipped one of the Pope's lapdogs in his pocketbook. Or maybe he'd rudely wakened it from its nap. Maybe he was even guilty of rebuking a cute and cuddly clergyperson for welcoming a unitarian wolf or an Islamic ayatollah into the flock.

You can be sure somebody is going to howl if Fido eats Fifi's beefsteak.

It might pay, the next time you hear one of the new evangelical, or emergent journalists complain about "attack dogs" to ask why?

If you listen to Christian radio and TV, you will soon hear the yodel of a "basenjipoodle." It is a whiny sound that appeals to the megachurch crowd, and fits right in with the CCM they love so much. But it has no resemblance whatsoever to the faithful barking of Old Blue.

It isn't easy nowadays to find a sheep dog who still knows how to bark, but there are still a few around.

If you were to come across any Ol' Blue's, hold on to them. They are the sheepdogs that obey their Shepherd, and will die for the sheep in order to protect them.

Just like their Master.

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It started out innocently enough. I began to think at friends' barbecues now and then to just sort of loosen up. Inevitably though, one thought led to another, and soon I was more than just a social thinker.

I began to think when I was alone - just "to relax," I told myself - but I knew it wasn't true. Thinking was becoming more and more important to me, and finally I couldn't help myself. I was thinking all the time.

I began to think on the job. I knew that thinking and employment don't mix, but I couldn't stop myself. I didn't do it out loud or where my workmates could see me. I would sneak off to the storeroom as though I was looking for paper clips or copier paper and spend fifteen blissful minutes pondering the etymology of "empiricism" or "Fine Distinctions Between Descriptive and Prescriptive Grammarianism". I really just wanted to think. I tried locking my office door and unplugging my phone to have time to explore the depths of String Theory or Deep Time, but I finally stopped when the other guys in the office asked me what I was doing in there. I kept McLuhan's and Postman's books in the bottom drawer of my desk and sneaked them out to read when my calls were put on hold.

I started to avoid my friends at lunch time so I could read The History of Philosophy. I would return to the sales office dizzied and confused about the crassness of consumerism, asking, "What is it exactly we are doing here?"

Things weren't going so great at home either. One evening I turned off the TV and asked my wife about the meaning of life. She spent that night at her mother's.

I soon had the reputation as a heavy thinker. One day the boss called me in. He said, "Skippy, I like you, and it hurts me to say this, but your thinking is becoming a real problem. If you don't stop thinking 24 hours a day, you'll have to find another job. It would be different if you just did your thinking after hours." That gave me a lot to think about.

I came home early after the conversation with the boss. "Honey," I confessed... "I've been thinking..."

"I know you've been thinking. That's all you do any more. You get that faraway look in your eyes and start asking questions and wanting reasons for everything. Why do you have to know what life is all about? I've had it with you and your thinking!" she shouted, "I want a divorce!"

I said, "But Honey, surely it's not that serious."

"It is serious," she said, lower lip aquiver. "You think as much as college professors, and college professors don't make any money, so if you keep on thinking we won't have any money!"

"That's a faulty syllogism, and it lacks a constructive enthymeme," I said impatiently, and she began to cry. I'd had enough. "I'm going to the library," I snarled as I stomped out the door. I headed for the library, in the mood for some ancient history books and some physics, maybe even a bit of calculus. I skidded into the parking lot and ran up to the big glass doors...they were locked. The library was closed.

To this day, I believe that somebody was looking out for me that night.

As I sank to the ground clawing at the unfeeling glass, whimpering for Shakespeare, a poster caught my eye. "Friend, is your thinking ruining your life? Have you become a THINKAHOLIC?" it asked. You probably recognize that line. It comes from the standard Thinker's Anonymous poster.

Which is why I am what I am today: a recovering thinker. I never miss a TA meeting. At each meeting we watch a non-educational video; the first week it was "Finding Nemo." Last week it was a speech by Joe Biden. Next week we are going to watch Oprah and Rob Bell in a TV special. After we spend time doing this non-thinking therapy we share experiences about what we each did to avoid thinking since the last meeting. Oh, I forgot to mention that we all had to go out and buy a new iPhone 6 and learn to text before we could start the TA course. Just to help us break the habit of thinking.

I still have my job, and things are a lot better at home. We watch a lot of television and never discuss what we watch. I think my wife spoke to me twice last week. Maybe it was the week before.

Life just seems easier now since I stopped thinking.

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IS IT WRONG FOR CHRISTIANS TO EXPOSE AND OPPOSE ERROR?

FOR THE BIBLE ANSWER, READ:

Matthew 7:15-20
Matthew 23:1-39
Acts 13:4-12
Acts 15:1,2
Romans 16:17,18
I Corinthians 5:1-7
II Corinthians 6:14-7:1
Galatians 1:8,9
Galatians 2:11-14
Colossians 2:8
II Thessalonians 3:10-12
I Timothy 4:17
II Timothy 3:1-9
II Timothy 4:1-5
Titus 1:10-14
James 5:1-6
II Peter 2:1-22
I John 4:1
II John 9-11
III John 9,10
Jude 1-23
Revelation 2:6
Revelation 2:14
Revelation 2:20-23
Revelation 3:14-19



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SO WHO IS WORSHIP FOR? -

(It usually takes fifty years or so for Christians to see through the silly fads of a previous generation. By then we've discerned the fruits and facts and follies of what was all the rage in our youth. I suspect, if the Lord tarries for fifty years, that the tiny remnant of 2064 will declare that the entire "Praise and Worship Movement" of the early 21st century was all about worshipping self, just like Victoria Osteen says (below). Why are we so slow to learn? - Ed)



VICTORIA OSTEEN SAYS WORSHIP, OBEDIENCE IS FOR SELF

(Friday Church News Notes, September 12, 2014,
www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)



The following is from "Osteen Says Obedience, Worship 'Not for God,'" *Christian News Network*, Aug. 28, 2014: "A recently recorded video is circulating online of Victoria Osteen, wife of megachurch speaker and author Joel Osteen, calling on congregants at Lakewood Church to 'do good for your own self' because obedience, the church and worship are not for God as much as for self-happiness. 'I just want to encourage every one of us to realize when we obey God, we're not doing it for God--I mean, that's one way to look at it--we're doing it for ourselves, because God takes pleasure when we're happy,' she declares in the undated 36-second clip with her husband standing by her side and nodding. 'That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy...' 'So, I want you to know this morning: Just do good for your own self. Do good because God wants you to be happy,' Osteen continues. 'When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really. You're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?' Osteen is the author of the book *Love Your Life*, and is 'co-pastor' of Lakewood in Houston, Texas. Her husband Joel is known for his motivational speeches and his books *Your Best Life Now* and *It's Your Time*."

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AD SEEN ON THE BACK OF A TRUCK -



BY PREACHING ACCEPTANCE AND QUESTIONING GENDER, THE COMPANY'S KIDS FILMS OFFER A QUEER-STUDIES CRASH COURSE.

The culture warriors have decided: Disney's *Frozen* is queer. Elsa hiding her ice-powers could be read as a metaphor for the closet, the Oscar-winning "Let it Go" plays like a coming-out anthem, and a character in the film evokes the question of whether homosexuality is a choice by inquiring of Elsa's powers, "born with it or cursed?" Some liberals have praised the film for its subtext; some conservatives have denounced it. But the most remarkable thing about queer readings of the film may be how unremarkable they really are. Through both its corporate practices and the content of its films, Disney for decades has implemented the so-called "gay agenda"—which is to say, helping make the world a more accepting place.

To start in the most obvious place: As a business, Disney has long held a progressive attitude toward LGBT people. Gay pride events have been hosted at Disney World since 1991, and the company started offering its gay employees health insurance benefits for their partners since 1995, a decision that wasn't entirely popular back then.

One of the most poignant examples of the company's tolerant atmosphere is the case of lyricist Howard Ashman, who was openly gay and died of AIDS in 1991. Not only did Ashman write songs for *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*, he was also closely involved in those films' productions, casting actors and holding story meetings with animators. At the end of *Beauty and the Beast*, Disney acknowledged his contributions with this tribute: "To our friend Howard Ashman who gave a mermaid her voice and a beast his soul, we will be forever grateful."

But Ashman's story also offers an example of how the substance of Disney's films reflect an interest in LGBT peoples' struggles. Ashman worked on *Beauty and the Beast* while suffering through the worst (and final) phases of his illness, and composer Alan Menken called the film Ashman's "personal story." The result is a movie that can be viewed as an allegory: Shunned from society, his body hideously transformed, and his life wilting away like the enchanted rose, the Beast is a figure of degenerative disease. Belle's love and the ultimate breaking of the curse is the fantasy cure that Ashman was denied. But even without Ashman's involvement, queer kids could



identify with Disney protagonists, who are usually outcasts set apart from society by some innate desire (usually indicated by an "I want" song that details whatever dream that particular character is pining to attain). Ariel (*The Little Mermaid*) wanted to be part of another world, the townspeople think Belle (*Beauty and the Beast*) is "a funny girl ... different from the rest of us" and Pocahontas (*Pocahontas*) does not want to be steady as the beating drum. This marks the Disney protagonist as odd, unusual, *queer*.

Queer kids can uniquely identify with Disney protagonists, who are usually outcasts set apart from society by some innate desire. Even classic Disney films featured these archetypes. Initially mocked by his peers, Dumbo (*Dumbo*) "comes out" and waves his freak flag after hallucinating pink elephants and learning to fly. Pinocchio (*Pinocchio*) reflects queer anxiety since he doesn't know how to act like "a real boy," and he thinks performing masculinity through smoking, cursing, and misbehaving will earn his father's love.

Then there's the fact that Disney protagonists often reject traditional marriage partners. Ariel wants to marry a human against her father's wishes, Belle rejects Gaston's proposal in front of the whole town, Jasmine refuses to marry the sultan's suitors, Pocahontas refuses to marry a tribal warrior, and Mulan rejects conventional matchmaking. In this way, even though Disney films usually offer a traditional happy ending with a heterosexual marriage, the journey always involves rejecting parental and societal expectations, and exercising a "freedom to marry whomever you love" spirit that is endemic to gay rights.

Indeed, many Disney romances are examples of "impossible desire," a trope that is crucial to the queer

experience, as gender-studies theorist Heather Love argued in *Feeling Backward*. It was impossible for Ariel to be with Eric unless she became human, or for Belle to be with the Beast unless he became human, or for Aladdin to be with Jasmine unless he became a prince, or for Pocahontas to be with John Smith unless she left her people.

In the seminal *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler pointed out how gender was in part performance-based, a fact that Disney has often depicted with cross-dressing and gender subversion. The company's animators cite the drag performer Divine as the inspiration for Ursula in *The Little Mermaid*. Just as Divine was cast in *Pink Flamingos* because "society saw [drag characters] as perverts so they decided to revel in their status," so too Ursula is marked a pervert by introducing sex to a children's animated film. She encourages Ariel to use her body to lure the prince, and her magic not only gives the mermaid legs but also (presumably) a sexual organ, as Ariel emerges from the sea completely naked and must be covered up.

In another instance of gender bending, the Genie in *Aladdin* shapeshifts into many characters, including female ones, and even dons feminine clothes and underwear at different points in the film. Indeed, Aladdin's romance with Jasmine is much less developed than his friendship with the genie, and his decision to free the genie provides the movie's poignant climax. Robin Williams's character even acknowledges the queer undercurrent: "I'm getting kinda fond of you kid ... not that I want to pick out curtains or anything."

Another obvious example: *Mulan*, where the protagonist disguises herself as a male soldier. When the soldiers later dress themselves as courtesans so they can sneak into the palace, the film completes its theme of gender as performance, with women pretending to be men and men pretending to be women. Mulan's "I Want" song also plays like an anthem for kids born into the wrong gendered body—"When will my reflection show who I am inside?"—and intriguingly, the film insinuates that her male captain fell in love with her while she was masquerading as a man.



More subtly, Disney protagonists often mature in ways that evoke the queer experience. In *The Queer Child* Kathryn Bond Stockton argues that queerness is not just about homosexuality, but also about growing in abnormal ways that makes the child an outcast. First there is "growing sideways"—children who in physical ways signify that they're different—which Disney has depicted through Pinocchio's nose, Dumbo's ears, and Rapunzel's hair. Secondly there is "delayed growth" as seen in *Peter Pan* and *The Jungle Book* where Peter and Mowgli want to remain in Neverland and the jungle respectively so they

won't grow up. Similarly, the enchanted objects in *Beauty and the Beast* cannot grow until the spell is broken and they become human again, and Quasimodo and Rapunzel have been locked away in towers all their lives, precluding adult socialization. Thirdly, there is "growth by animals" where pets reflect the inner lives of their queer masters. Certainly this last conceit is all over the Disney canon, where aside from the obvious anthropomorphism of films like *Bambi* or *The Lion King*, there are also lots of animal sidekicks reflecting the emotions of their masters in films about human protagonists. Jiminy Cricket represents Pinocchio's conscience, Ariel's pet fish reflects her joy or sorrow, and even villains get their own vicarious pets, like Iago parroting Jafar's evil.

Thus, Disney films have been both traditional and subversive, serving wholesome princess stories to a largely hetero-normative global audience while also subtly appealing to queer children. You don't need to be up on your queer theory or buy into the "It Gets Better" campaign to understand why any of this matters. Through conventional happy endings for outcasts and oddballs, Disney films let every child know that it's ok to be different.

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NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

"All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible." ~ T. E. Lawrence

"Those who hate truth call truth hate!" ~ Peter LaBarbera speaking to Vic Eliason on VCY America Crosstalk

"Another problem is pastors who move every time U-Haul runs a special!" ~ Dr. Don Boys

"A narrow mind and a wide mouth usually go together." ~ Dr. Don Boys

"An honest politician is one who, when bought, will stay bought." ~ Dr. Don Boys

"We are advised to NOT judge ALL Muslims by the actions of a few lunatics, but we are encouraged to judge ALL gun owners by the actions of a few lunatics. Funny how that works." ~ Anon

"The ideal wife is one who helps her husband with the dishes." ~ Anon

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For all those who want to REALLY want to communicate with their family and friends.

It doesn't make calls, you can't use it to text and it doesn't have a camera, but what this anti-iPhone 'smartphone' lacks in technology it makes up for by helping you connect with the real world.

The NoPhone is aimed at stopping people from ruining nights out, getting distracted at the movies and clogging up the pavement.

The New York-based creators of the tongue-in-cheek device have raised over \$10,000 for its development on crowdfunding website Kickstarter.

As well as a reminder there is more to life than a piece of plastic you spend so much of the day staring at, the NoPhone offers a fun game in which you place it on the table during social interactions and wait to see if anyone notices it's not a phone.

And the selfie-inclined aren't forgotten either.

The finished NoPhone will have a mirrored front, allowing for "real-time selfies" when you're out and about.

"With the NoPhone, my eye contact skills have improved 73 percent," said one NoPhone fan known as 'Whitney R'

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THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE -

REDNECK ENGINEER EXAM

I, for one, am sick and tired of hearing about how dumb people are in the South, and I challenge any "smart alec" Yankee to take this exam:

1. Calculate the smallest limb diameter on a persimmon tree that will support a 10 pound possum.
2. Which of these cars will rust out the quickest when placed on cement blocks in your front yard?
(A) '65 Ford Fairlane
(B) '69 Chevrolet Chevelle
(C) '64 Pontiac GTO
3. A woodcutter has a chainsaw which runs at 2700 RPM. The density of the pine trees in the plot to be harvested is 470 per acre. The plot is 2.3 acres in size. The average tree diameter is 14 inches. How many half gallon bottles of Coke will be drunk before all the trees are cut down?
4. A front porch is constructed of 2x8 pine on 24-inch centers with a field rock foundation. The span is 8 feet and the porch length is 16 feet. The porch floor is 1-inch rough sawn pine. When the porch collapses, how many dogs will it kill?
5. A man owns a Georgia house and 3.7 acres of land in a hollow with an average slope of 15%. The man has five children. Can each of his grown children place a mobile home on the man's land and still have enough land for all their electric appliances to sit out front?
6. A 2-ton truck is overloaded and proceeding 900 yards down a steep slope on a secondary road at 45 MPH. The brakes fail. Given average traffic conditions on secondary roads, what is the probability that it will strike a vehicle with a muffler?
7. With a gene pool reduction of 7.5% per generation, how long will it take a country town which has been bypassed by the Interstate to breed a country-western singer?

I betcha thought that this test was gonna be an easy one, didn'tcha? It's okay if y'all didn't do all that well. Just goes to show ya there's a whole heap of things that big city book-larning don't prepare ya for in this life.

As an added bonus for taking the "RED NECK CHALLENGE," here's some southerly advice that may come in handy down the road a piece....

Next time you lose ya license, just walk to the nearest pizza shop and place an order. When they go to deliver it, you can catch a ride home with them. Now that's what we call smart!!!

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GUESS WHAT? ANOTHER "MEGA-CHURCH" BITES THE DUST -

MARS HILL IN SEATTLE, MARK DRISCOLL'S EMPIRE CRUMBLES - Ruth Moon

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2014/august/acts-29-removes-mars-hill-asks-mark-driscoll-matt-chandler.html>

Acts 29 Removes Mars Hill, Asks Mark Driscoll To Step Down and Seek Help

(UPDATED) Paul Tripp says Driscoll's accountability model 'will never be able to do what it was designed to do.' Mars Hill board insists church is 'making real progress' on problems.



Read more at:

<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/#P71YV4tWqGcE4oFk.99>

MARS HILL CHURCH WILL CLOSE ITS DOORS FOR GOOD

<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/slices/mars-hill-church-will-close-its-doors-good>

Very big, very unexpected news out of Mars Hill today. Following the sudden, surprise resignation of famously controversial pastor Mark Driscoll, the massive, multisite church he founded will dissolve over the next two months.

Each of the 13 churches that comprised Mars Hills' empire will either go their own way, merge with another church or close their doors for good. As Mars Hills teaching pastor Dave Bruskas wrote in a letter to the church today:

"Rather than remaining a centralized multi-site church with video-led teaching distributed to multiple locations, the best future for each of our existing local churches is for them to become autonomous self-governed entities. This means that each of our locations has an opportunity to become a new church, rooted in the best of what Mars Hill has been in the past, and independently led and run by its own local elder teams."

In the meantime, Mars Hill will sell all their existing church properties or allow them to be assumed by the new, independent churches.

Mars Hill will also fire all their existing staff and then dissolve entirely. "Ultimately, the success of this plan, and the future viability of each of these new local churches rest solely on all of us continuing to be faithful in supporting Jesus' mission through our attendance and continued giving," wrote Bruskas.

WHY MARK DRISCOLL'S FALL AND MARS HILL'S BREAKUP ISSUES A WARNING FOR MEGASTAR PASTORS - Sarah Pulliam Bailey

<http://www.religionnews.com/2014/11/05/mark-driscolls-fall-mars-hills-breakup-raises-questions-megastar-pastors/>

(RNS) Can a megachurch survive the departure of its megastar pastor?

For Seattle's Mars Hill Church, it's an open question.

Mars Hill announced last week that it would dissolve the multisite network of 13 churches across the Northwest that took root under pastor Mark Driscoll, who stepped down in October after supporters lost confidence in a high-wattage leadership style that was criticized as bullying, hypermacho and intolerant.

Controversial megachurch pastor Mark Driscoll resigned from his church Oct. 15, according to a document obtained by RNS. Photo courtesy of Mars Hill Church

For many megachurches, a pastor can become larger than the church itself — particularly for multisite churches where the pastor's sermon is the only thing binding disparate congregations connected by little more than a satellite feed.

Before his resignation, the name "Mark Driscoll" was more widely known than "Mars Hill." The dueling brands sometimes clashed along the way; some say Driscoll once told staff "I am the brand."

Driscoll's edgy personality built up a congregation of an estimated 14,000 people at 15 locations across five states. Weekly attendance is now reportedly about 7,600. In August, the church saw a budget gap of nearly \$650,000 as expenses exceeded revenues.

According to Mars Hill leaders, by the start of 2015 locations within the Mars Hill network will either become independent, self-governing churches, merge with another church or disband completely. Mars Hill's existing church properties will either be sold or the loans on the individual properties will be assumed by the newly independent churches. Central staff in Seattle will be laid off as the formal Mars Hill organization dissolves.

Megachurches across the country have faced similar dips in attendance once their popular pastor left, a problem that can plague any church but one that can be exacerbated in a megabrand context. If the CEO of McDonald's left, for instance, the company would face fewer questions about its survival than "The Colbert Report" will when its star leaves.

"It's not uncommon for CEOs to say the first agenda item is to talk about 'What happens when I'm not here anymore?'" said William Vanderbloemen, co-author of the recent book "Next: Pastoral Succession That Works." "The key is to have an emergency succession plan."

After former megachurch pastor Rob Bell's controversial book "Love Wins" raised debates over whether hell exists, his Grand Rapids, Mich.-based church experienced a loss. Current pastor Kent Dobson said the church lost about 1,000 people during the controversy and now has about 3,000 attendees.

Every megachurch pastor wrestles with challenges of brand and leadership," said Mark DeMoss, who handled some public relations for Mars Hill before Driscoll resigned.

"If the pastor is the best communicator and preacher and pastor in that local context, I think you can make a good case for that's who ought to be up there," he said. "The dangers are sometimes in succession."

Not all churches with large followings experience a loss in attendance after a pastor's departure. After Joel Osteen's father died unexpectedly from a heart attack in 1999, his Lakewood Church in Houston surged from 5,000 to more than 50,000 today.

Attendance at Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., was about 4,000 when he died. Under his son, Jonathan Falwell, the church now boasts about

10,000 attendees. Similarly, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., founded by the Rev. D. James Kennedy, an icon of the religious right, had an average attendance of about 1,000 (and a broadcast reach of about 3 million) when he died in 2007.

After facing turmoil during the transition, under Tullian Tchividjian, Billy Graham's grandson who is a popular pastor in his own right, the church's membership is around 2,400.

Driscoll's fall from grace came after a combination of growing scrutiny of church finances, plagiarism allegations concerning his books and comments he made under an online pseudonym. Much of the criticism came from bloggers and on social media from people who did not even attend the church.

Could Driscoll make a comeback at another church or ministry? For an evangelical movement that values forgiveness, redemption and second chances, anything is possible.

For one, Driscoll's resignation did not reach the scandalous level of Jim Bakker or Jimmy Swaggart in the 1980s. Bakker was accused of fraud related to time shares, while Swaggart was accused of adultery. Both men remain active in the ministry but aren't seen much beyond late-night cable TV.

Other high-profile pastors have stepped down and attempted to come back with varied success. After allegations of gay sex and drug use were made by a male escort, Ted Haggard stepped down from his Colorado Springs church (and as head of the National Association of Evangelicals) but has since started another church.



In 2011, Sovereign Grace Ministries founder C.J. Mahaney took a leave of absence from his church-planting network amid charges of "various expressions of pride, untreatability, deceit, sinful judgment and hypocrisy."

Mahaney was reinstated after a year, and he is now pastoring a local church in Louisville, Ky.

In 2010, John Piper took an eight-month leave from Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, explaining that his soul, marriage, family and ministry pattern needed “a reality check from the Holy Spirit.” He returned for a few years before retiring.

Some evangelicals see high numbers as a measure of success for a minister — something that could be hard for Driscoll to reproduce in a second act.

“If (Driscoll) can continue to draw people in and have a successful ministry, then his authority — even if it has been questioned — will still rest on what he’s producing,” said Scott Thumma, a megachurch expert at Hartford Seminary.

Some critique evangelicalism as a tradition that encourages a drive for more and more numbers, regardless of the costs. Wendy Alsup, who attended Mars Hill from 2002 to 2008, said she sees a growing movement of evangelicals asking whether bigger actually is better.

“There’s a big reaction among some to identify with something that has longevity,” Alsup said. “They’re rejecting fast growth and going back to the slow, methodical structure.”

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LINKS IN THE MEDIA CHAIN -

<http://safety.trw.com/texting-while-driving-now-leading-cause-of-us-teen-deaths/0710/>

<http://www2.potsdam.edu/alcohol/files/Driving-while-Texting-Six-Times-More-Dangerous-than-Driving-while-Drunk.html#.U-AKRvmSxLg>

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/study-texting-while-driving-now-leading-cause-of-death-for-teen-drivers-1.5226036>

http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted_driving/

<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-07-30/the-best-way-to-stop-texting-while-driving-make-it-illegal>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/innovations/wp/2014/10/24/elon-musk-with-artificial-intelligence-we-are-summoning-the-demon/>

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The Bible is filled with "eccentric" people. Eccentric in a godly way. Noah, the original marine engineer, Elijah and John Baptist (with their unusual diets and rustic clothes), and then there was that tree climbing tax collector, Zaccheus.

I wonder if Ezekiel would have been thought to be "eccentric" when he saw the visions of God, or when he "portray(ed) upon (a tile) the city, *even* Jerusalem:" and then built a diorama with a miniature fort, and battering rams, and a wall of iron to lay siege against it? Would anyone have thought him eccentric when he lay on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, and then on his right side for forty days, to picture the iniquity of Israel and Jerusalem?

SO WHAT IS AN "ECCENTRIC?"

Apparently, the roots of the word reach back as far as the 15th century. Latin and French, and finally English usage have caused the word to snowball for half a millennium until it gathered up synonyms like wacky, oddball, screwball, erratic, and exorbitant (and those are the nicer ones!!!).

Add them all up and you arrive at a collective definition, "*odd, whimsical, different from ordinary people, unaccountable, and often irregular*" (from the Century Dictionary). This source also defines "eccentric" as being a "*circle or orbit not having the Earth precisely at its center.*" (also from the Century Dictionary).

THERE ARE WORLDLY ECCENTRICS AND THERE ARE GODLY ECCENTRICS -

We have met people who have all their ducks lined up, not in rows, but in concentric circles, or maybe even in fractal forms.

In this generation we've seen unconverted men like Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, Burt Rutan, and Robin Williams turn their eccentricity into gilt edged assets. The media loves to publicize oddballs, and especially if they blaspheme the name of God.

I remember when the dress code for preachers was a three piece suit, and facial hair was tabooooooooooooo! Red ties and moustaches are no longer frowned upon, but these alone do not an eccentric make. Eccentricity has more to do with novel approaches to legitimate Christian ministry, like, well, like these

John Wesley, who preached from the tops of tombs in the cemeteries that adjoined the Anglican churches where bishops refused him permission to preach from their pulpits.

George Whitfield, who preached in the open air to miners leaving the coal mines and seeing their tears "cutting white gutters down their blackened cheeks."

David Brainerd, who knelt in the snow to pray for the Indians he yearned to win to Christ in the 18th century.

Rowland Hill, who preached Christ in the streets of England and won many to Christ.

And all the preachers Charles Spurgeon included in his book *Eccentric Preachers* (A MUST read book for every God called preacher!!!!)

THE GODLY ECCENTRICS THAT MAKE MY ANTENNAE WIGGLE

We have some of the choicest godly eccentrics here in Australia. Evangelist Kevin Currell speaks at our Youth Camp every year and is a kid magnet. He is delightfully eccentric and godly at the same time. Tell him I said so.

Evangelist Chris Hustler is one, as well. Pastor Luke Hyland and his brother Phil are two more. Dave Crowe, our missionary to Papua New Guinea (and his nephew Chris Dagan, who is starting deputation now to go to PNG) are both godly eccentrics.

David Cloud may not ever speak to me again, but he is as eccentric as a three bob watch, and you ought to meet Hughie Seaborn that formats O Timothy for him (and

Heads Up for me). And if you are in the market for an eccentric preacher, you ought to meet Jeff Barclay at Little Glory Baptist Church in Adelaide.

Also, among my eccentric friends I count missionary to South Africa, Jerry Wilhite, all four of our children, and most of our grandchildren. Some of our younger kids, like my dear wife, have escaped without harm.

Say, it just dawned on me that most of my friends, most of the preachers I know and love and emulate are ECCENTRICS!



One of my favourite Bible Eccentrics is the Good Samaritan. He was the odd one out in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. All the rest were Jews. He alone showed neighbourly love toward the wounded traveller. That makes him an eccentric. He was different from all the rest.

It dawned on me the other day that the story is not actually called a parable. Now I wonder, was it an actual event, like the rich man and Lazarus?

Reading it over and over before preaching on the Good Samaritan, it hit me that the same six character types are everywhere I look.

They are found in homes, in churches, in schools, in the workplace, in clubs, just about everywhere.

The five sorts of people are:

- 1) The traveler
- 2) The robbers, the violent people who care nothing for others, but whose sole occupation is to wound and rob them
- 3) The indifferent religious people, the priest and the Levite
- 4) The neighbourly and compassionate man who cares for the wounded
- 5) The helper who is enlisted to assist the compassionate man

At the same time as I was thinking on this text, I was studying the chapter about Doeg and his sword.

In I Sam. 22 Saul is seeking someone to sympathize with him in his anger at David. Doeg's tongue was the sword that slew 85 priests and family members before the sword of his hand ever shed a drop of their blood.

I am convinced that we have in our churches violent people like Doeg. They unsheath the swords of their

tongues on a weekly basis, wounding and slaying people left and right. Many church members have no concern for the wounded in our midst and walk past them with hardly a glance.

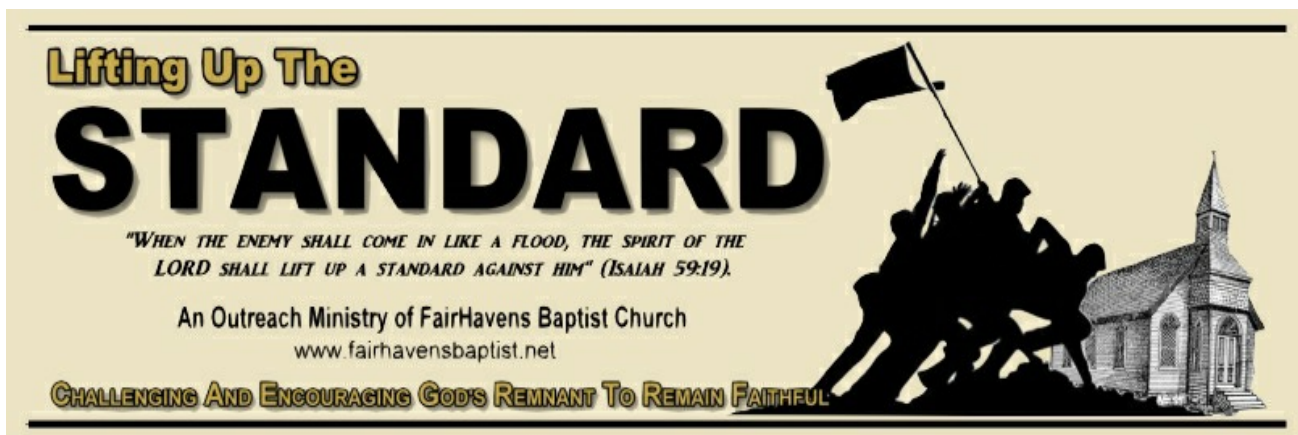
But we do thank God for the eccentrics, those people who come to church with a biblical first aid kit and who are forever binding up wounds, pouring in oil and wine, going to great lengths to care for and provide for the wounded, even to the point of enlisting others to help them.

These are the godly eccentrics, the exceptions to the (sub)norm(al).

I was so moved by the scene in Luke 10, and so stirred by the realisation that the characters of the story are found even in the church I pastor that I started sticking band-aids on my tie and adding to them every Sunday in hopes people would ask why so I can tell them that I am committed to carrying a Bible first aid kit to church to bind up the wounded, instead of wielding the sword of my mouth to chop them in pieces.

What we need is more Godly Eccentrics.

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Heads Up! - Back Issues Archive



Heads Up!

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