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*Congratulations on your Conversion*



"But the path of the just is as the shining light,  
that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Proverbs 4:18

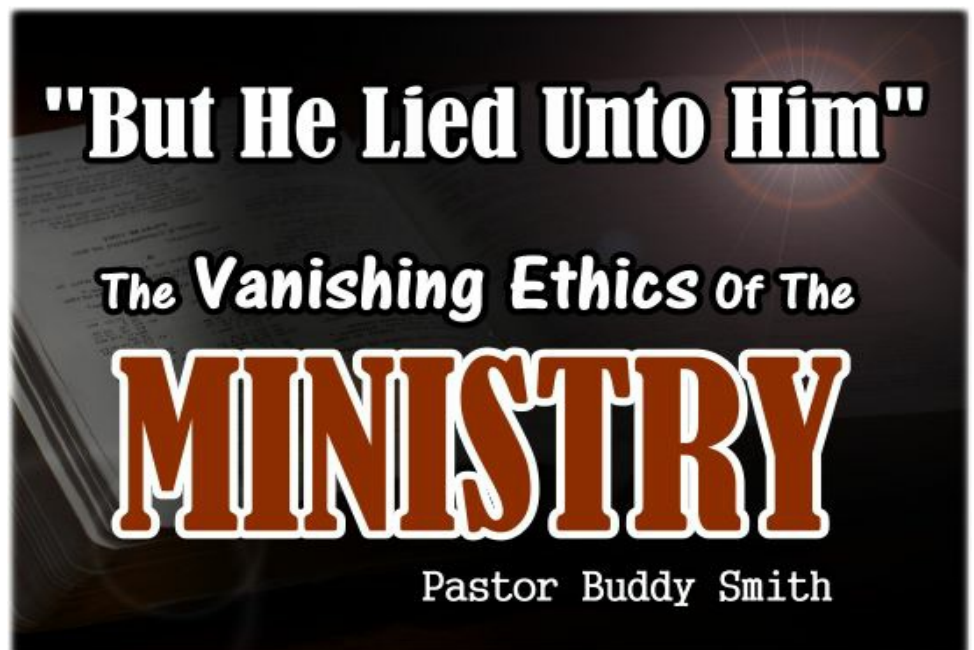
## **Heads Up!**

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FEATURE ARTICLE - "BUT HE LIED UNTO HIM" - Pastor Buddy Smith



**1 Kings 13:11-18** *"Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. **But he lied unto him.**"*

The most important questions of the ministry are not quickly answered. At least some of them.

There's one question that perplexed me for over fifty years. It just got answered. In fact, I think the light bulb not only lit up, but exploded. Now to pick up the pieces.

In case you are interested, I'll ask you the question. It is this, **"Why do so many men in ministry have very poor Christian ethics?"**

I pondered that question the first time when I was about fifteen years old. It was raised at a youth camp in the middle of a softball game. Every year the preachers challenged the high school boys to a game, and every year we beat them. We were young and strong and fast, and they were old and slow and overweight. Some of our teammates were good enough to play pro-baseball after they graduated, at least their coaches thought so. We thought so too and walked on air to be on the same team with them. They hit home runs, we stole bases, we caught the preachers out, and did double and triple plays, we beat them hands down, play by play. Every year. But we always lost, we never won a game. We beat them, every inning, but lost every game.

You see, the umpire was always an older pastor and he called balls strikes and strikes balls according to who was up to bat. He called us out when we were safe by a mile, and called the preachers safe when they were out. So we lost every game, never won a one. Till finally there was a call that was so biased that we walked off the field in protest. We just shook our heads, dropped our gloves on home plate, and walked off the field. Our spirits were so deeply wounded, as much by the taunts and laughter of the preachers as by the unfairness of the umpiring.

If you'd asked me about a Christian minister's obligation to practice Christian ethics or if I had ever heard that virtue is moral excellence, I would have shaken my head in ignorance. Those concepts were too deep for me. I just knew something important was out of kilter, but I didn't know how to put into words the question, **"Why do so many men in ministry have such poor Christian ethics?"**

My universe had developed an imbalance that threatened something dear, and somehow it hurt me inside. Yes, now I understand that everyone has a world view, and that their worldview depends on their discernment of right and wrong, but teenaged boys don't have any of that systematized yet.

Looking back, I realize that those pastors were tossing moral hand grenades at their teenaged boys, and in doing so, they slew many of us. Survivors? There were a few, but even they were ballfield casualties. Most of us walked off the field and out of the churches and into the world, never to return.

I'd never even heard of "ethics". I knew nothing about ethics being the "science of morals". I just knew I felt sick inside that a pastor would cheat so that his preacher friends could win a softball game.

What made it worse was that I was not even a Christian. I came very close to turning my back on God, once and for all. The men I respected and looked up to lacked basic Christian ethics.

### **WHAT PREVENTS ANYONE FROM BEING DESTROYED BY THIS ABSENCE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS?**

How I thank God for my Christian parents, for my Sunday School teachers, and especially for my Preacher. He never cheated on his wife, he never lied, he never stole from the church, he never turned a blind eye to a songleader having an affair with the pianist, or even the janitor playing his guitar in a beer joint. He discerned the difference between good and evil, and never mingled them together. He preached on Hell, on separation, on dancing, on movies, and on bad language. He preached a saving gospel with fire and power, he challenged the Sunday School teachers to visit more, and study harder, and teach better, and saw our church grow when every other church in town went into decline during the summer months. He had virtue and integrity and morals and godliness and Christian Ethics! He knew what was right and stuck to it, and we loved him for it!!!

He was our preacher for thirteen years. We never had better! It could never be said of him what God said of the apostates in Ezekiel's day, *"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."* **Ezekiel 22:25-26**

It was because of our preacher and his helpers that I saw through the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the pastors who had virtually no Christian ethics. Men who spent church money on themselves and were asked to leave, men who kept a mistress and pastored a church at the same time, men who smilingly lied to their congregations, men who stole sheep from other churches, men who covered up for each other when they were caught out, men who slandered those who questioned their immoral conduct, men who stole faith promise money for missions and spent it, men who did their best to split another pastor's church, men who lied to the tax department, and men who shut struggling little churches down, sold the building and pocketed the money, ad infinitum, ad nauseum. The list goes on forever.

I thank God that I had a pastor who led his church to know and to practice Christian ethics.

Richard Bennett wrote a book titled *Howell Harris and the Dawn of Revival* in which he described a fellowship of Baptist pastors in Wales. A single phrase caught my attention, the one that told of a pastor who was "destitute of grace", another description for the absence of Christian ethics. That question keeps coming up, "**Why do so many men in ministry have such poor Christian ethics?**"

I keep coming across that question in the pages of Scripture. I read of the old prophet who deceived the young prophet in I Kings 13, and in doing so he slew him and destroyed his credibility. I read of Obadiah's compromise, the Old Testament equivalent of Bunyan's Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, trying to be a friend to Ahab and Elijah both. I read of Gehazi running after Naaman for Mammon's spoils and then returning home to find Naaman's leprosy waiting for him on Elisha's doorstep. I read of the sons of thunder asking Jesus again and again for places of honour. I see Peter's fear of man and his denial of his Lord. I see Simon Magos' bitterness unmasked by Peter. I read of Demas' love for the world resulting in his defection. I read that the pastor of the church at Thyatira allowed Jezebel to teach and to seduce the saints into fornication.

The pages of Scripture are filled, not only with the valiant and the virtuous, but also with villains. You can always spot the villains. They are the ones who lack Christian ethics. They may preach well, but they lack a grasp of Christian ethics.

Closer home, we observe pastors in Australia assisting other pastors in taking their brethren to court, or projecting one image at pastors' conferences and another at their youth rallies, or calling themselves fundamentalists and then contradicting their profession by sitting admiringly at the feet of Emergent and charismatic CEO/pastors, disciples by charlatans on how to build an empire larger than theirs.

Have you met them, these pastors who claim great and unwavering allegiance to God's Word all the while rejecting and despising God's commands? Shades of Saul and the Amalekites!

Or maybe you've met the reverend gentlemen who fiercely reprove their reprovers arguing that reproofs are unloving? They remind me of the soft evangellyfish Christians in our churches who buttonhole the pastor after a sermon on separation and angrily threaten him, saying, "If you believe that narrowminded rubbish about separating from a brother, then I am going to leave the church and never speak to you again!" It is a level of hypocrisy that exceeds even that of the Pharisees.

Oh, I know these things leave most of the brethren cowed and fearful, afraid to hew to the line, fearful of making an enemy, but they ought to cause every true hearted and valiant man to lie awake at night, asking over and over, "**Why do so many men in ministry have very poor Christian ethics?**" To the point that we determine, by God's grace, to find, to embrace, and to defend the ethics of the Son of God.

Any day now I expect to receive in the mail an invitation to join the Aussie branch of the IBDRTBF. It is the new name for the Old Boys Club. It stands for Independent Baptist Don't Rock The Boat Fellowship. It is for those anaemic preachers with timid souls. You know, the ones with bobble heads, always nodding yes to everything a reverend Doctor says.



### CHRISTIAN ETHICS? PLEASE EXPLAIN!

G. Campbell Morgan once described the church at Corinth as being the one church in the New Testament that was most under the influence of its culture. It is doubtful if his comment is any longer true. Emergent-wanna-be preachers openly claim that they are "theologically conservative and culturally relevant." If there was ever a theological oxymoron (uttered, no doubt, by a theologically challenged hyperventilating moron!!!) that would have to be it. It is simply impossible for any man to be sound in theology and walk in step with the culture of a godless world, in this age or any age.

Write it down, the man who describes himself or his church thus is more interested in befriending the world than he is in being orthodox.

So, are there any verses that describe Christian ethics? Or that lay out distinctly the morality of the Christian faith? Yes! In fact the Bible is full of verses that preach Christian ethics. Consider these verses on ethics:

- Truthfulness - **Ephesians 4:25** Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.
- Knowing the right use of anger, and refraining from the wrong use of it - **Ephesians 4:26** Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
- Edifying, not corrupting speech - **Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
- Having a gracious spirit, being without malice - **Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.



- Willing to forgive - **Ephesians 4:32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
- Avoidance of all immoral conduct - **Ephesians 5:3** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- Practicing biblical separation from all evil - **Ephesians 5:11** And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.
- Being content with what God has given you, not covetous - **Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*
- Setting your sights on becoming like Christ, not the world - **Romans 12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
- Being modest in self evaluation - **Romans 12:3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.
- Being diligent in your service for Christ - **Romans 12:11** Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
- Being generous - **Romans 12:13** Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.
- Remembering that honesty is the only policy - **Romans 12:17** Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.
- Being a peacemaker, not a troublemaker - **Romans 12:18** If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
- Leaving revenge to God - **Romans 12:19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
- Grieving over your own sins more than over others' - **Matthew 5:4** *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*
- Developing spiritual appetites - **Matthew 5:6** *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*
- Practicing showing mercy - **Matthew 5:7** *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*
- Asking God to make you holy - **Matthew 5:8** *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
- Giving your rights to God and leaving it to Him to defend them - **1 Peter 2:22-23** (Christ) did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

## Why Do So Many Men in Ministry Have Very Poor Christian Ethics?

Well, at last, I found the answer. Preachers with questionable ethical standards, who have a poor grasp of what is right and wrong, have a different agenda from those with Christian ethics.

So what do we mean by "agenda"? An agenda is a list of things to be done. We all have agendas. They are our objectives. They list both the large goals and the small goals that help us achieve the large goals. We all try to keep the large goals intact, if possible, and then we construct and deconstruct, dream up and demolish, shuffle and reshuffle, and build up and tear down the little goals that work toward accomplishing the large goals. Men have always had agendas, plans, goals, objectives. It is a part of our software. We are wired that way. Unethical preachers adjust their "game plan" day by day to agree with their overall agenda.

Old or New Testament, ancient or modern, modernists or "fundamentalists", Roman Catholics or Baptists, ministers without Christian ethics all have one thing in common. They all have "new" objectives.

### THE OLD, THE BIBLICAL AGENDA -

Christian ethics come from God Himself. They are God centered, not man centered. This is the agenda for biblical Christian faith and practice. My Preacher never had to tell me that he got his ethics from God. He never sent me a letter saying that his morality and his sense of what was right and wrong came out of the Bible. He just showed me by the way he lived and preached and pastored the flock God gave him to lead and feed.

Over and over we see the phrase in the Bible, "I am the LORD". Many times, in the same verse, it is connected to a godly, a biblical morality. It is the LORD's way of telling His people that "since I am the LORD, and you are my people, I expect you to make the moral and ethical choices that agree with my nature." God has given us the very highest morality in the universe. His ways and thoughts are higher, purer, and better than ours. No philosopher ever came close, no theologian, no writer of commentaries, no pastor, priest, or guru ever penned the equal of the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount. We poor sinners grovel in the dust, we wallow in the world's filth, while God sits enthroned in the heavens, transcendent, higher than the highest, thrice holy, He inhabits eternity.

Everything moral, virtuous, and ethical comes from God. The phrase, "I am the LORD" appears 162 times in the OT.

Many times the LORD says to Israel, "Remember who I am, and behave accordingly!"

#### BE HOLY BECAUSE I AM THE LORD -

**Leviticus 11:45** For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

**Leviticus 20:7** Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.

#### OBEY MY WORDS BECAUSE I AM THE LORD -

**Leviticus 18:4** Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 18:30** Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not *any one* of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 19:37** Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

**Leviticus 22:31** Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

#### RESPECT YOUR PARENTS AND THE ELDERLY BECAUSE I AM THE LORD -

**Leviticus 19:3** Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 19:32** Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

#### MAINTAIN THE PURE WORSHIP OF GOD -

**Leviticus 19:4** Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 18:21** And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

**Leviticus 19:28** Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD.

**Leviticus 19:31** Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Ezekiel 20:7** Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 19:12** And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

#### AVOID SEXUAL PERVERSIONS -

**Leviticus 18:6** None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedness: I *am* the LORD.

#### CARE FOR STRANGERS, FOR THOSE WHO ARE POOR OR HANDICAPPED -

**Leviticus 19:34** *But* the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 19:14** Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

**Leviticus 19:10** And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

#### AVOID TALEBEARING AND FALSE WITNESS -

**Leviticus 19:16** Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.

#### LOVE ONE ANOTHER AND TAKE NO REVENGE -

**Leviticus 19:18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

#### PRACTICE HONESTY IN ALL MATTERS -

**Leviticus 19:36** Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

These verses agree perfectly with **2 Peter 1:2-4** Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as **his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

God works godliness in us through our knowledge of Him to glory and virtue, revealing Himself through the very highest ethical standards. Virtue is moral excellence!

For millennia, the prophets and apostles of God had one agenda, to know, believe, preach, and strive for the morality of God. No man ever aimed higher than that.

That is no longer the agenda, or I am badly mistaken!!!!!!!!!!

#### THE NEW, THE UNBIBLICAL AGENDA -

We are seeing before our very eyes what is likely the last and greatest apostasy. God did not say we will see a great revival just prior to the return of Christ, but instead, a

“falling away”. One of the strongest evidences of this apostasy is the present erosion of Christian ethics in our pulpits and churches. Students of Scripture need only to read the book of Jude, or I John 4:1-5, or II Peter 2 and 3, or I Timothy 4, or II Timothy 3 and open their eyes to see that the apostasy of those chapters is now present in the churches, all kinds of churches, all over the world.

While it is my intention to write more on the subject of the vanishing Christian ethics, I will in this issue simply summarize the new unbiblical agenda by saying that it is a man-centered system of ethics. If we could gather up the values and moral standards of Cain, Nimrod, Jannes and Jambres, Ahab, Jezebel, all the Herods, Annas, Caiaphas, Nero, and Richard Dawkins and put them in a pot on the stove to simmer for a month or two, and then pour them out to feed today's crop of Emergent CEO/pastors, we would all be surprised how they would lick their chops, clean their plates, and come back for second helpings. It's not God-centered ethics they want, but man-centered. And if you want to know what man-centered ethics looks like, just read **Romans 3:9-19** “*What then? are we better than they? No, in*

*no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”*

In the next issue of Heads Up we will consider the ethical bankruptcy of modern evangelicalism, and especially that of Hillsong, under the leadership of Brian Houston.

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## POEMS THAT PREACH! –

### The Pruned Branch

It is the branch that bears the fruit,  
That feels the knife;  
To prune it for a larger growth,  
A fuller life,

Though every budding twig be lopped,  
And every grace  
Of swaying tendril, springing leaf  
Be lost a space.

O thou, whose life of joy seems reft,  
Of beauty shorn,  
Whose aspirations lie in dust,  
All bruised and torn,

Rejoice, though each desire, each dream,  
Each hope of thine,  
Shall fall and fade; it is the hand  
Of love divine,

That holds the knife, that cuts and breaks  
With tenderest touch,  
That thou, whose life has borne some fruit  
May now bear much.

*Annie Johnson Flint*

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## NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- “Actions have consequences...first rule of life. And the second rule is this: You are the only one responsible for your own actions.”  
~ Holly Lisle
- It's easy to be brave from a distance.
- Everyone has a photographic memory, some just don't have film.
- F.J.A. Hort (of Westcott and Hort fame) called the substitutionary atonement “immoral”?
- Westcott did not believe that Genesis one and two were historical?
- "I have come to reckon that nothing is worth seeking after but that which will survive the tomb." ~ Spurgeon
- In Mesopotamia there were about 65,000 distinct pagan gods, **each one represented by a physical idol?**

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Old Bro. Jackson, the preacher at the First Ethiopian Baptist Church down by the river bought me a cup of coffee last Monday. We'd bumped into each other at the courthouse paying our city taxes.

I asked him about the Revival meetings at his church last month. "How did the meetin's go?"

He took a long time answerin', "Fair to middlin'. Reasonable enough crowds, and a few folks got some things right, stuff like stealin' chickens, and payin' debts what was overdue..."

"You don't sound real excited about it."

He chuckled and said, "You listen too good, Deke. Ol' Uncle Tom, that pastors in Bastrop County, recommended this here 'vangelist to us, so we took a chance on him. He was loud, and pretty sharp, and knew lots of stories, but....."

"But what?"

"But he's pretty 'careless wif de troof', if you know what I mean."

"Did he stick to the Book? Did he preach straight?"

"Yeah, he didn't tell no lies about the dear Lord Jesus. But he was pretty shady when it come to where he's preached and what jobs he's held down."

"Hmhmhm, that don't sound too good, does it?"

"Nosiree, it don't sound good a-tall! Both of our deacons found out they knowed his pedigree before he wheeled up in that Cadillac of his. But he was using a different name twenty years ago when they heard him preach down at Caney Flats,

and they didn't recognize him to start with. He was skinny and had more hair in them days, and an older wife."

"So how long did it take your deacons to figure out he was flyin' a different flag?"

"That's the bad part. They didn't know till the night he left and they got to comparin' notes. Ol' Charley said it was the way he tried to 'fleece the sheep' that gave him away. And Sammy said he kept trying to figure out who the 'vangelist reminded him of when he looked sideways out of the corner of his eyes at the ladies. Charley and Sammy was pretty sheepish, I'll tell you, when they came around to the parsonage to tell me about him a day or two later."

"What are you gonna do about it?"

"Charley says we oughta cancel the check we gave him, and we may just do that. And then I decided I'm gonna preach on Jer. 48:10 this Sunday."

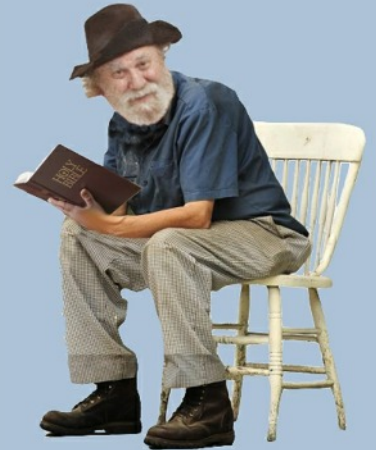
"What's that verse say?"

"It says, 'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.' First half of the verse is for him, and second half is for me."

"You gonna name names?"

"Yep, and this is one time when the old Baptist grapevine is gonna come in handy, I reckon."

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# Modern Comedy LAUGHING OUR WAY TO HELL

By Brian Snider

You can never take things seriously once you begin to laugh about them and put them in a comedic light, and we have seen an explosion of comedy in this country in the last several decades.

It really got underway in the 70s with Steve Martin, who was the first comedian to sell out large concert venues, then *Saturday Night Live* came along, which just celebrated 40 years. Now we have the Comedy Channel, comedy clubs, etc. comedy on YouTube and on Facebook.

There is nothing sacred in this laughing society. We mock the president on the late night shows. We mock sin. We mock death. We mock everything.

Well-known funny guys from the 40s, 50s and 60s probably numbered in the dozens. Today, any person on the street would probably recognize comedians in the hundreds if not higher.

I will never forget an interviewer asking Steve Martin in the late 70s if comedy was going to be the next rock and roll in popularity, and it's really not too far behind.

Now, we get our news from comedians like Jon Stewart. Wise guys like Stephen Colbert skewer traditional values and have played a huge role in making traditionalists look like idiots. The looniest character on any sitcom is always the religious nut (e.g., *The Simpsons*). We have cartoons that laugh at Jesus (*South Park*); comedians who are

openly gay (Ellen Degeneres); comedians who mock Jesus on the cross (Sam Kinison).

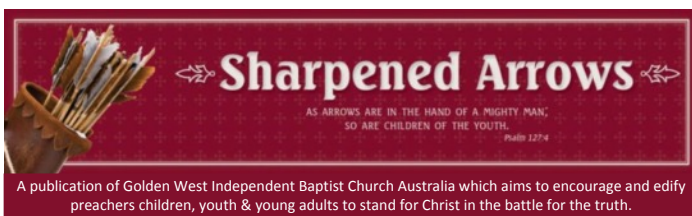
We have comedians who mock the very idea of faith, like George Carlin: "Religion easily has the best ##### story of all time. Think about it. Religion has convinced people that there's an invisible man . . . living in the sky. Who watches everything you do every minute of every day. And the invisible man has a list of 10 specific things he doesn't want you to do. And if you do any of these things, he will send you to a special place, of burning and fire and smoke and torture and anguish for you to live forever, and suffer, and burn, and scream, until the end of time. But he loves you. He loves you. He loves you and he needs money."

We are laughing our way to hell.

I'm sure a significant volume of traffic on Facebook is simply people forwarding funny videos and stuff that wastes our time and causes us to laugh at things we should be taking seriously.

Now, as you point out, emergents are in the comedy business. And the people who read that tripe will never take those subjects seriously if they are laughing at his blasphemy. They have turned the whole Bible into one big joke.

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# Gold From Ophir

## "A Diamond from the Big Hole"

*By Jerry Wilhite - South Africa*



South Africa has nine provinces, one of which is the Northern Cape. The capital city of this sparsely populated province is named Kimberly, so named after a British governmental figure in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Brits controlled the area. And why did they control the area?

Around 1870 some children were playing near a river and picked up a glistening stone. Taking it to their mother, she too thought it beautiful but passed it on to a passer-by who passed it along, and eventually a gemologist graded the stone finding it to be a genuine diamond. The diamond rush was on, and eventually 50,000 miners scrambled to New Rush (later renamed Kimberly).

The English magnate, Rhodes, led the way beginning the DeBeers Mining Company, so named after the brothers who owned the farm where the Big Hole was being quarried. In 1872, one year after digging started, the population of the camp of diggers grew to around 50,000. "As digging progressed, many men met their deaths in mining accidents. The unsanitary conditions, scarcity of water and fresh vegetables as well as the intense heat in the summer, also took their toll." (Wikipedia)

The Big Hole, as it is justifiably called, is thought by many to be the largest hand-dug hole in the world. For 43 years men dug deep and deeper to extract the precious diamonds. To procure a diamond of value, enough soil to fill a house had to be sifted. Eventually 14,504,566 carats of diamonds equivalent to 2722 metric tonnes (6000 lbs) were mined from the hole that is 215 meters deep including 41 meters of water. It has a surface area of 17 hectares (42 acres), is 463 meters wide (1519 feet) and is 1.5 kilometers in circumference (1 mile) at the brim.

Recently, our family visited Kimberly, and we didn't have a problem locating the Big Hole due to signage the size of the hole. The monstrous cavity is situated in the hub of 200,000 people where tourism, other nearby mines,

educational institutions and supporting industry seem to thrive.

Near the entrance to the visitors' center at The Big Hole were some small shops, one of which was a small used book shop. Like metal to a magnet our family and the friends with us were drawn to the book nook outside of which were a few boxes of relatively cheap volumes.

As my wife browsed through one box, she found a "diamond," but in actuality it was a "diamond full of diamonds," and it was the only "rare gem" we found in the cardboard cartons outside or even inside the entire shop.

In good condition was a 1965 printing of Fox's Book of Martyrs on sale for a mere 20 Rands (\$1.5 USD). What a



steal of a deal, especially when you consider the contents! Later as we began to read this sacred volume we learned that John Fox himself (born 1517) was the object of persecution and often on the run.

Later when there was a respite of persecution this volume, along with the Bible, could be found chained to pulpits throughout England for the access of the people.

Science says that diamonds are the result of carbon under pressure. That's like saying, a diamond was once a piece of coal, but due to pressure, time and heat a worthless lump of carbon became a brilliant and valuable gem. Now the native folks have their folklore of how these diamonds came into being with a Spirit being caught in a tree and accidentally spilling the diamonds onto the earth. More than likely, the world-wide flood of Noah's day had something to do with the formation, sedimentation and accumulation of these rare and costly stones.

Diamonds are pressurized and thus precious. Believers are persecuted and thus precious.

First, when it comes to persecution, Jesus promised it. *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me (see Jn 5:16), they will also persecute you... (Jn 15:20). They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service (Jn 16:2).*

Second, before they are saved, some unbelievers perform it. Paul testifies, *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God (1Co 15:9). And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities (Ac 26:11).* Furthermore it is recorded, *Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem...(Ac 8:1). And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter (Greek, "to slay") against the disciples of the Lord... (Ac 9:1).* The religious did it. *But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts (Ac 13:50).*

Third, believers profited from it. When believers were expelled, they evangelized. *Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word (Ac 8:4).* When they were beaten, they were blessed and did bless. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you...(Mt 5:11). Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not (Ro 12:14).*

When they were persecuted, they prayed. *Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you (Mt 5:44).* When they lived godly, they were loathed. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2Ti 3:12).* When they suffered with horrors, they set their sights on heaven. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your*

*reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Mt 5:10,12).* In his book, God recounts the martyrdoms of Abel (Mt 23:35), the prophets of the Lord (1Kg 18:4), Zachariah (2Ch 24:21), Urijah (Jer 26:23), John the Baptist (Mt 4:3-12), Stephen (Ac 7:58), James (Ac 12:2), and others. The sufferings of the godly also are often recorded.

In his book, Fox remembers the martyrdom of many over the centuries. Philip was scourged, thrown into prison and afterwards crucified. Matthew was slain with a broad axe. Matthias was stoned and then beheaded. Mark was dragged to pieces. Peter was crucified upside down. Jude was crucified. Bartholomew was cruelly beaten and then crucified. Thomas was thrust through with a spear. Luke is supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree. Julian was put into a leather bag, together with a number of serpents and scorpions, and in that condition thrown into the sea. Another young man named Peter was stretched upon a wheel, by which all his bones were broken, and then he was sent to be beheaded. Alexander and Epimachus were beaten with staves, torn with hooks and then burnt in the fire. On and on the list goes.

All the above, is to say this. Today's brand of "Christianity" promotes entertainment, promises health, permits a variety of lifestyles, practices worldliness, prohibits standards, posits a successful career and pleads for unity with idolatrous religions. That is NOT the Christianity of the Scriptures, the Savior or the early saints.

In yesteryear when people were saved; they didn't get a job, they lost their job. When they received Christ; they didn't love the world, the world hated them. When folks repented and believed the gospel; the only health they got was from running from their persecutors. The early brand of genuine Christianity was not entertained; they provided the entertainment for the world in the center of coliseums filled with ravaging dogs, bulls and wild animals. They didn't live for the world; they died for the Word. There wasn't affiliation with the ungodly; there was association with the godly. They didn't bow or bend; but they did burn. *They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth (Heb 11:36-38).*

Child of God, by God's grace may we be counted with these diamonds!

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**Isaiah 5:24** *Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.*

**Malachi 4:1** *For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*

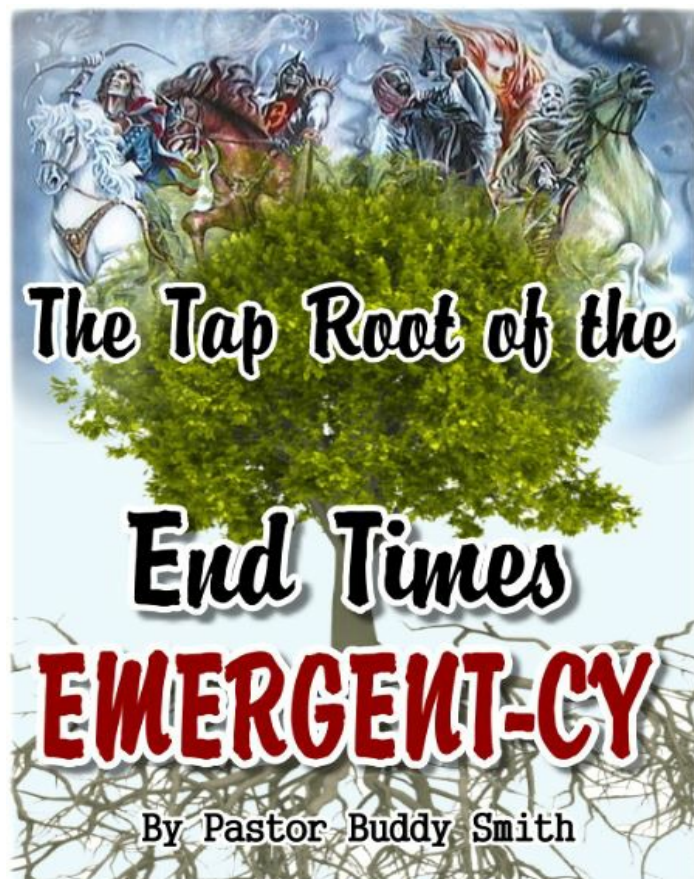
#### THE TAP ROOT, HOW DEEP? -

A wise man once said, "In order to understand a religious movement, there are three questions we must ask. First, what are its roots? Second, what is its true nature now? And third, what does it ultimately become?"

It is not always easy to inspect a movement's roots when they are buried deep in dry, dull, dusty history books. There are two exceptions to that fact. The first is that God is a revealer of the secrets of men. He brings about their downfall and exposes their deep, dark origins, just as tree roots are exposed when a storm uproots the tree. The second is if the movement is proud, boastful of its roots that it puts them on display for all to see.

In its early days, fifty years ago, when Post-Modernism first poked its head above ground hardly anyone outside the philosophy departments in a few universities even noticed. But the tap root was already in place and growing fast. What, or who, was the tap root? Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher (1813 – 1855), was the known as the "father of existentialism", and the grandfather of Post-Modernism. He lived only forty two years and died 160 years ago, but consider what changes he has made in the churches of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Existentialism may be a hard term to get our heads around, but it is much simpler to grasp if we hear someone say, "**If it feels good, do it!**", or "**Carpe Diem! (Seize the day!)**". Both of these are existential mottos. They say what Kierkegaard was thinking. He devised the system of "wisdom" that lets men say, "Life is all about ME!" or "There are NO absolutes! What I want, and what I experience, and what I enjoy is all that counts!" Two of his best known quotes are, "**Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced.**" and "**Don't forget to love yourself.**" Do those sound reasonable? They ought to. They are part and parcel of our existentialist, post-modern world view. Very few Christians see that the entire social media empire is built around these mottos.



It is unlikely that Kierkegaard guessed what dreadful fruits would spring from existentialism. Very few worldly wise men ever know the vile follies their philosophies will produce for generations to come. Whole nations are poisoned for centuries. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) devised a philosophy called Nihilism, which means simply, "nothing-ism." He taught that "nothing has any meaning." He also predicted that the 20<sup>th</sup> century would be the bloodiest century ever recorded in history. What he didn't realise is that much of this bloodshed was the result of his Nihilism.

We who believe the Bible interpret history and philosophy in the light of revealed truth, so we see in Darwin, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse riding nearer and nearer. These men and their devious, subtle ideas were sowed by our Enemy as tares in God's world. The bitter, poisonous dandelion is just about to be gathered in to the judgment of God.

#### HOW DID KIERKEGAARD EVER COME TO RESHAPE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES? -

The tap root of Kierkegaard's philosophy produced a shoot that soon appeared above ground. That shoot had a name, Peter Drucker. He may be the most important person in 20<sup>th</sup> century church history. Peter, born of Jewish parents who converted to Lutheranism in 1905,



lived in Austria until they emigrated to Germany. When he was 19 years old he discovered the writings of Soren Kierkegaard, and was so impressed with his ideas that he learned to read Danish. You see, some of his writings had not yet been translated into German. So he read them in Danish.

From Vienna to Hamburg to London to New York, Peter Drucker read and learned more of Kierkegaard's existentialism. Before long he began training the managers of big businesses, businesses like GM, Sears, and IBM. He read Kierkegaard and wrote books, 39 of them.

His books grew out of the tap root, and soon he was planning how to make a paradigm shift in the way businesses are run.

"Postmodernism" was first mentioned in the 1870's, but Drucker popularized the term. He conceived the concept of churches of being run by CEO pastors along the same lines as religious empires, call them "megachurches" if you like. He became convinced that religion, not business, was the way to change the world for the better.

There are little clues in print all along the way from Vienna to the postmodern churches of our day. For instance, one of the synonyms in the dictionary for "existential" is the word "emerge." A century ago,

someone connected the two words, not knowing that Drucker would do the same, as he conceived a new postmodern religion.

There was one element missing, he needed some teachable, energetic young men to train to lead the postmodern, emergent church.

He found them, with the help of a millionaire cable TV businessman named Bob Buford. They became his first "Druckerites."

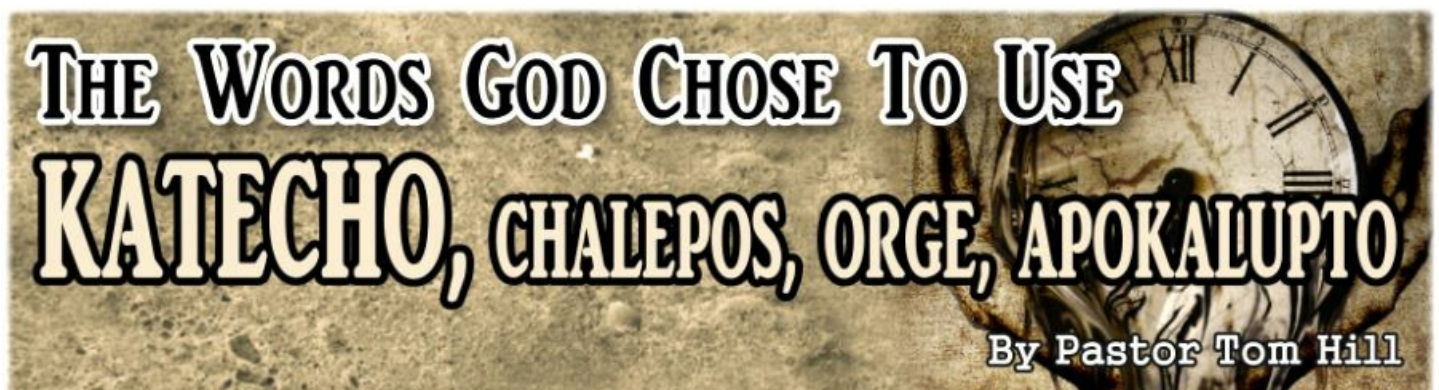
Their names? Bill Hybels and Rick Warren. They became the branches that grew out of the existentialist tap root and the postmodern shoot.

They became the successful, high profile megachurch CEO's to build Peter Drucker's Emergent Church. Among evangelical Christians it is the most influential, fastest growing movement we see at present.

It is an Emergent-cy, an apostate religious movement which glorifies man, not God. Those are its origins.

In the next issue we will examine the input of Rick Warren and Bill Hybels to the explosive growth of the Emergent-cy.

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God warns us that evil will continue to increase, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."* (**2 Timothy 3:1**) The word used here for PERILOUS is the word CHALEPOS which speaks of that which is "fierce, harsh, severe, or savage." It is only used in one other place in the Bible and that is in Matthew 8:28 where the Scriptures deal with the two demoniacs in Gadarene. It is not hard to see that those fierce times are here. There is a good possibility that Paul was pointing to the kinds of people that would be in churches. We have seen a proliferation of the sins that follow the announcement of those times described in **2 Timothy 3:2-9** *"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

*Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was."* In particular, as this issue of Heads Up is dealing with the issue of ethics

among God's men in the ministry, we will consider what these men are doing in light of the untold amount of unrighteousness around us.

In his great treatise on salvation, Paul writes in **Romans 1:18**, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."* Essentially, the first three chapters of Romans is God's proof that all people are equally guilty of sin. Both Jew and Gentile are worthy of God's wrath that abides upon all at least at one time in their lives. Men are without excuse concerning God and His righteousness. The knowledge of the existence of God is something that is put into a person, along with a sense of right and wrong.

In verse 18, we read that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. God's wrath is something from which the world recoils. The word WRATH is the word ORGE in the Greek. This came from a word that meant "to teem, to swell." It later came to mean "anger, the natural disposition, temper, character, movement or agitation of the soul, impulse, desire, any violent emotion, but especially anger." This is the temper of God toward sin. Brethren, God is angry with sin and sinners. For instance, when Christ was upon the earth, He exhibited His wrath twice when He cleansed the Temple of the money changers and sellers. When the consummation of the ages begins, the Revelation of Jesus Christ tells us that His wrath will be made known to all people - **Revelation 6:16**, *"And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."* That is future, but what about now?

Paul says it is revealed from heaven against all (every kind of) ungodliness (which is irreverence) and unrighteousness (which is the violation of God's laws) of men. The word "revealed" (APOKALUPTO) is from the word we get for REVELATION, which means that it is being unveiled, uncovered, made known. The way that he uses "revealed" tells us that His wrath is constantly being shown to all men.

God's wrath is God's displeasure against sin. It is through His perfect moral order and through His own intervention that we see that wrath. Whenever men sin, there is always a consequence to that sin. At times God directly intervenes, such as was seen in the lives of Gehazi, Uzziah, and Ananias and Sapphira. Both lost people and saved people can and do "hold the truth in unrighteousness." How can someone hold the truth in unrighteousness? The key is to consider the word HOLD. The word HOLD is used nineteen times in the New Testament. It is the word KATECHO. This is a compound

word made up of the word KATA which means "according to, down from" and the word ECHO which is the word that means "to have." As a compound word, it takes on the meaning "to hold down, to restrain, to hinder, to suppress." By the wickedness of and in the lives of men, they hold down and suppress the revealed truth of God. We have no difficulty finding examples of lost people to which this applies. For instance, Jezebel knew that it was wrong to have Naboth murdered, but she suppressed the truth and of her own will had him murdered anyway. Can this same truth not also apply to those who know the Lord? Can a believer suppress the truth? Consider David. Did David not suppress the truth when he chose of his own will to commit adultery with Bathsheba and then murder her husband? He knew the truth, but for a time, he rejected it as he literally held truth down, that is, he suppressed it.

The truth of God is revealed to all people everywhere. His wrath is revealed against every kind of irreverence and every kind of unrighteousness of mankind. That goes for God's men set aside for special service, to preach the gospel. A website (that I will not name) was established for married people who wished to commit adultery (who would have even thought that something like that would have ever been constructed?). Since that site was hacked many preachers' names have appeared on the data base as clients.

Those who are called to preach should well and truly know what the Scriptures say about adultery and sins of immorality. These preachers may well preach the truth on Sundays, but at the same time, they daily suppress the truth by their actions. Their hypocrisy is as abominable to the Lord as it was when David committed adultery and murder, and then tried to cover it up. The consequences of their suppression of truth will last a lifetime as it did with David. According to news outlets here in America, some have taken their own lives as a result.

Brethren, if we are sincere about the work God has called us to, truth must become an intrinsic part of our lives before we dare to preach it. We must not be continually suppressing the truth, but as God commanded in **James 1:22** we must be *"... doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* If we fail, forget what we saw, we will reap horrible dividends that last the rest of our lives. Ask David. Ask Gehazi, Uzziah, or Ananias and Sapphira. May we never suppress the truth. May we, the people of God, welcome the truth, make biblical truth a living part of our very person, so when a sinful situation comes we will do what Joseph did, and if we must, run from temptation as Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife.

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## QUERYING THE KORAN - *Abul Taher*

Orthodox Muslims believe that this ancient Islamic text is the unchanging Word of God. One scholar is daring to question it

A German academic fears a violent backlash from orthodox Muslims because of his "blasphemous" theory that the Koran has been changed and revised. Such a backlash is not to be taken lightly; the Salman Rushdie affair is a solemn reminder of the power of an angry Muslim community.

After the author wrote his novel *Satanic Verses*, which was considered by Muslims to be blasphemous, a fatwa, or religious decree, was pronounced against him in 1989 that left him fearing for his life. Rushdie has only recently reappeared in public after nearly 10 years in hiding.

According to Muslim belief, the Koran is the eternal, unaltered Word of God, which has remained the same for 14 centuries.

But Dr Gerd R Puin, a renowned Islamicist at Saarland University, Germany, says it is not one single work that has survived unchanged through the centuries. It may include stories that were written before the prophet Mohammed began his ministry and which have subsequently been rewritten.

Puin's conclusions have sparked angry reactions from orthodox Muslims. "They've said I'm not really the scholar to make any remarks on these manuscripts," he said.

The semitic philologist, who specialises in Arabic calligraphy and Koranic palaeography, has been studying Sa'na manuscripts, ancient versions of the Koran discovered in Sa'na, the capital of Yemen.

So controversial are his findings that the Yemeni authorities have denied him further access to the manuscripts.

He says they shed new light on the early development of the Koran as a book with a "textual history", which

contradicts the fundamental Muslim belief that it is the unchanging Word of God.

Khalidi fears Muslims will not accept Puin's work on the Sa'na manuscripts as having been done with academic objectivity, but see it as a deliberate "attack on the integrity of the Koranic text".

The manuscripts, thought to be the oldest surviving copies of the Koran, were discovered in the ancient Great Mosque of Sa'na in 1972, when the building was being restored after heavy rainfall, hidden in the loft in a bundle of old parchment and paper documents. They were nearly thrown away by the builders, but were spotted by Qadhi Isma'il al-Akwa, then president of the Yemeni Antiquities Authority, who saw their importance and sought international assistance to preserve and examine them.

Al-Akwa managed to interest Puin, who was visiting Yemen for research purposes in 1979. Puin in turn persuaded the German government to organise and fund a restoration project. The restoration revealed that some of the parchment pages dated from the seventh and eighth centuries, the crucial first two centuries of Islam, from which very few manuscripts have survived.

Until now, there were three ancient copies of the Koran. One copy in the Library of Tashkent in Uzbekistan, and another in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Turkey, date from the eighth century. A copy preserved in the British Library in London, known as the Ma'il manuscript, dates from the late seventh century. But the Sa'na manuscripts are even older. Moreover, the Sa'na manuscripts are written in a script that originates from the Hijaz - the region of Arabia where the prophet Mohammed lived, which makes them not only the oldest to have survived, but one of the earliest copies of the Koran ever.

Puin noticed minor textual variations, unconventional ordering of the chapters (surahs), as well as rare styles of orthography. Then he noticed that the sheets were palimpsests - manuscripts with versions written even earlier that had been washed off or erased.

These findings led Dr Puin to assert that the Koran had undergone a textual evolution. In other words, the copy



of the Koran that we have is not the one believed to have been revealed to the prophet.

This is something that Muslims would find offensive. The idea that the Koran is the literal Word of God, unchanging and permanent, is crucial to Islam. The traditional Muslim view holds that the Koran was revealed to Mohammed by God in fragments between 610 and 632 AD. The revealed verses were "recorded on palm leaves and flat stones and in the hearts of men [meaning memorised]," and remained in this state during the prophet's lifetime.

About 29 years after Mohammed's death during the rule of the third Muslim caliph, Uthman, a standard copy of the Koran in a book form, was made, because already divergent readings and copies were circulating in the growing Islamic empire. This Uthmanic recension, according to the Muslim view, was produced with meticulous care, based on earlier copies of the Koran made according to the instructions of the prophet.

Orthodox Muslims insist that no changes have occurred to the Koran since the Uthmanic recension. But this view

is challenged by the Sa'na manuscripts, which date from shortly after the Uthmanic recension.

"There are dialectal and phonetical variations that don't make any sense in the text", says Puin. "The Arabic script is very defective - even more so in the early stages of its literature."

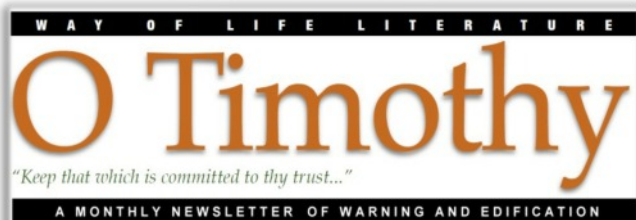
Like other early Arabic literature, the Sa'na Koran was written without any diacritical marks, vowel symbols or any guide to how it should be read, says Puin. "The text was written so defectively that it can be read in a perfect way only if you have a strong oral tradition."

The Sa'na text, just like other early Korans, was a guide to those who knew it already by memory, he says. Those that were unfamiliar with the Koran would read it differently because there were no diacritical and vowel symbols.

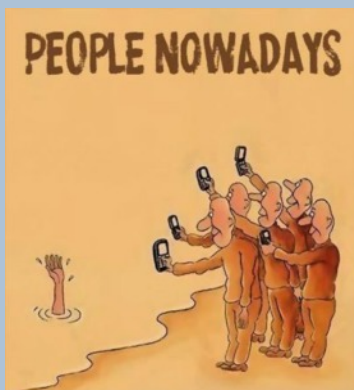
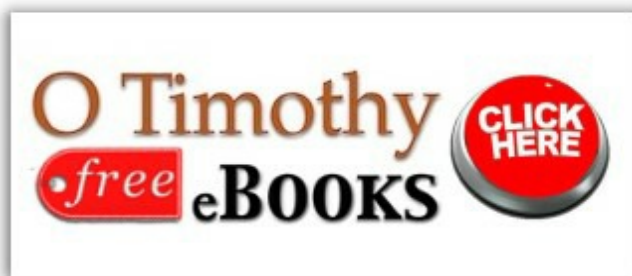
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## THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE -

Five blokes in an Audi Quattro arrived at the ferry checkpoint. Customs agent Tracey, in her brand new uniform, stops them and tells them: "I can't let you on the ferry. It is illegal to have 5 people in a Quattro. Quattro means four. One of you will have to get out and stay behind."

"Quattro is just the name of the car," the driver replies disbelievingly. "Look at the papers: this car is designed to carry five persons."

"You can't pull that one on me. This is Tracey you're talking to here," she replies with a smile. "Quattro means four. You have five people in your car and you are therefore breaking the law. So I can't let you onto the ferry. It's more than my job's worth to let you all on."

The driver is now very cross and replies angrily, "I've had enough of you. Call your supervisor over. I want to speak to someone with more intelligence!"

"Sorry," responds Tracey, "but Sharon is busy with those two blokes in the Fiat Uno."

I was in my car one day listening to a guy on the radio helping callers with their home problems. One woman called up hysterical after finding a skunk in her basement.

"Leave a trail of bread crumbs or cat food from your basement to your backyard," suggested the show's host. "That'll get rid of it."

An hour later the woman called back, even more upset. "Now I have TWO skunks in my basement!"

My friend was visiting his daughter last week and asked her if he could borrow a newspaper.

"This is the 21st century" she told him. "We don't waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad."

He cut short his visit because she was mad at him, but he told me "I can tell you this... that fly never knew what hit him."

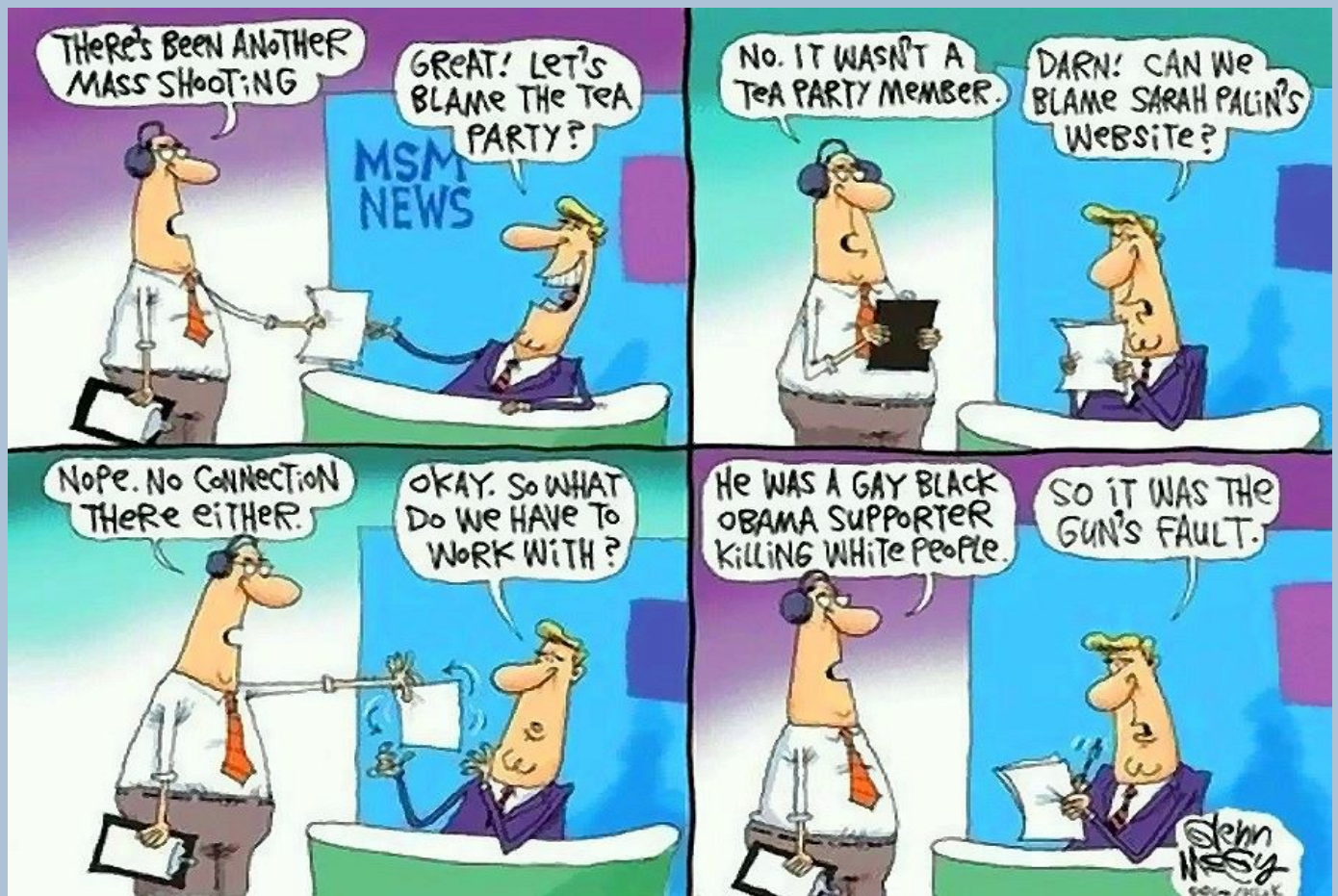
A police officer called the station on his radio.

"I have an interesting case here. An old lady shot her husband for stepping on the floor after she just mopped."

"Have you arrested the woman?"

"Not yet. The floor's still wet."

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(Surveys are never totally accurate. The sample audience often is not representative. Those surveyed are not always truthful, and do not report activities that might affect their reputation negatively. But, that said, access to pornography via the internet is a snare to most men. Even news sites, sports sites, photography sites, and numberless (non-pornography) websites become moral minefields for slothful minds and hearts.

Men know quite a bit about the depravity of men's hearts, but it comes as a surprise to me to read that women view pornography!!! At least it was a surprise until I re-read Romans 1:26 and 27, which list women before men in the progression of moral decay.

Knowing that the battle for the eyegate is, and probably always was one of the fiercest of all battles, we who know Christ must, more than ever (and more often than ever!) present our bodies as living sacrifices to God. It will do us good to present each member of our bodies to Him, one by one. The only question is whether we present our tongues or our eyes to Him first? - Ed)

<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/penny-starr/pornography-use-among-self-identified-christians-largely-mirrors-national> ~ By Penny Starr



SIXTY-FOUR PERCENT OF U.S. MEN VIEW PORNOGRAPHY "AT LEAST MONTHLY," A NEW SURVEY HAS FOUND.

(CNSNews.com) – Addiction to pornography affects millions of men and women in the United States, and many of those people identify themselves as Christians, according to a 2014 survey produced by a Christian organization dedicated to fighting pornography and sexual addiction.

Sixty-four percent of men view pornography "at least monthly," according to the survey conducted by the Barna Group for Rockville, Md.-based Proven Men Ministries.

The proportion is even higher for men between the ages of 18 and 30 where 79 percent – eight in ten – men view pornography monthly. Based on a sample of 1,000 adults nationwide, the survey revealed that viewing pornography on a regular basis is widespread in the U.S. It also found that the number of men identifying themselves as Christians and viewing pornography virtually mirrors the national average.



More of the findings from the survey:

- Two-thirds (67 percent) of men between the ages of 31 and 49 view pornography monthly.
- One-half (49 percent) of men between the ages of 50 and 68 view pornography monthly.
- Christian men are watching pornography at work at the same rate as the national average.
- In some instances, Christian pornography use is higher than non-Christian. For example, while 18 percent of Christians say they watch it "several times a week" compared to 29 percent of non-Christians who do, when it comes to "at least once daily" the rates are 12 percent Christian and 10 percent non-Christian.
- 18 percent of men of all ages either think that they are addicted, or are unsure if they are addicted to pornography. That equates to 21 million men (based on U.S. Census Bureau data that show there are 119 million adult men and 123 million adult women in the United States.)
- Broken down, 19 percent of single men, 17 percent of married men, and 33 percent of men aged 18-30 either think that they are addicted, or are not sure if they are addicted, to pornography.

As for pornography use among women:

- 28 percent of women aged 18-30 view pornography "a few times a year."
- 18 percent of self-identifying Christian women view pornography "a few times a year" – a rate that is higher than non-Christian women (15 percent).

Proven Men states its goal is: "Restoring families one man at a time by helping people embrace a proven way of life that produces lasting victory from strongholds of pornography and sexual addiction."

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Just a word or two of congratulations to the IB pastors who are experiencing amazing conversions.

Being converted is spoken of eleven times in the King James Bible. The word consistently describes someone "being turned about". Eight times our English Bible uses the word to describe the salvation of the lost, three times it describes "the return, or the turning about of a believer" from an error he previously held.

The Lord Jesus spoke to Peter about such a conversion in **Luke 22:32** *"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* Peter's belligerent self confidence was at that very moment leading him into great temptation, a Satanic sifting that resulted in Peter denying Christ and weeping bitter tears of remorse. His repentance and return to fellowship with Christ is called conversion. In the salty epistle of James, we are instructed to appreciate and accept the efforts of our brethren as they seek to convert us when we go astray. **James 5:19-20** *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* Occasionally, I like to preach a sermon titled, "Have You Been Converted Lately?" Occasionally we see a true conversion, even among the converted. I suspect that's what is needed in order for us to have revival again in our churches, the converting of the converted! Now wouldn't that frustrate the local Sanhedrin?

So I rejoice with the pastors who are "being converted". I never thought I would see it happen in my lifetime!

It is truly wonderful!



Oh, you want to know the particulars of the conversions I am seeing? Well, since the converts are so outspoken about the changes in their thinking, it is surely acceptable for me to share them with our readers.

- I am impressed with the turnaround I am seeing in those who are preaching repentance now. A short time

ago you mocked anyone who made a distinction between faith and repentance, and now you are beginning to delve into the Spirit's use of the word, and its applications to saints and sinners. Congratulations!

- What an encouragement it is to see you preaching the preservation of God's Word! Some of you are actually weaning yourselves off the Westcott and Hort diet you were fed in Bible college! You are to be commended for loving your Bibles more than the writings of modern textual critics! Amen!

- But the conversion that impresses me the most is the conversion of preachers who are beginning to reprove preachers again. It has been years and years since we have seen and heard reproof given for errant doctrine or conduct. It is ever so refreshing to again be receiving reproofs from my brethren! I never thought I would see it happen! I actually thought **1 Timothy 5:19-20** *(Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.)* and **2 Timothy 4:2** *(Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.)*, I actually thought you had deleted them from all Bibles. The apostle Paul's rebuke of Peter in Antioch, I presumed, had been proven to be apocryphal, and completely excised from even the KJV (**Galatians 2:11-20** *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by*

*Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.)* It almost made me wonder if you new converts have been studying **Revelation 3:19**, where the Lord Jesus tells the Laodicean church, "**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.**"

(Say, while we are talking about the subject of reproofs, have you men given any thought to how biblical reproofs ever came to be jettisoned from pastoral practice? There are at least two reasons why they disappeared from our vocabulary.

- **First**, there was the influence of New Evangelicalism's (NE's) non-confrontational approach to ministry. When Harold Ockenga spoke at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1948 and proclaimed the founding of this new religious movement, he made it clear that it was built on the repudiation of the doctrine of separation. No longer would it be acceptable in evangelical churches for pastors to expose and oppose infidels residing in the seminaries. Modernists in pulpits were no longer to be driven out, now they were to be treated as equals in hopes they could be won for Christ.

Pastors who saw through the New Evangelical modus operandi continued to rebuke the ungodly and separate from them, as we are commanded in Scripture. But their days were numbered. The Bible colleges they sent their preacher boys to began to hire professors who were graduates from NE and liberal seminaries, and before long the young pastors were quoting from NE authors. The Bible conferences they attended exposed them to erudite and eloquent orators, subtle men, cunning expositors of doctrines of devils (I Tim 4:1), and soon we began to hear that it was unspiritual and unloving to reprove or rebuke a brother. Of course, this carried over to a complete avoidance of reproofing sinners.

The NE-indoctrinated wimps in our pulpits tell us today that poor old John the Baptist lost the plot entirely when he rebuked Herod, saying, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." (His brother Philip's wife, Herodias). How long does it take for a new tradition, like avoidance of all reproofs of others, to become deeply embedded in pastoral practice? Oh, about ten seconds or so (on a slow day). Bill Rice told about visiting St. Peter's cathedral in Rome. He saw the crowds lined up to view the enormous statue of Peter, so he got in line as well. When he got to

the front of the line, he noticed that the big toe on old Pete's right foot was almost worn away, but the big toe on his left foot was full length. So of course, he took out his ballpoint pen and measured them both for comparison. And then when he stepped away he looked back and saw that every person behind him was taking out his pen and measuring the toes just as he had. He later commented that he had the distinction of being the only Baptist evangelist that ever invented and established a brand new Roman Catholic tradition, and did it in less than a minute! Well, we IB's inherited a new tradition from the NE authors and speakers, absorbed it in a moment of time, and now you hear it everywhere you go.

R.B. Oullette, Cary Schmidt, and the myriads of IB pastors worldwide can supply you with 365 theological arguments for never rebuking or reproofing a brother preacher. Of course, there ARE exceptions to that rule, mainly that is acceptable to reprove anyone who reproves a member of the Old Boys Club. And I read last week that you only have to listen to reproof if it doesn't deal with any serious issues or if it comes from those who didn't mean it anyway. Hmmmmm, that bears some thinking.

- **Second**, reproofs have all but vanished from the pastoral landscape because they conflict with the basic principle of pragmatism. Pragmatism is the philosophy that something is only ever "good" or "godly" if it is visibly successful, either numerically, financially, or in the renown it brings to its advocates. In other words, if your preaching draws a crowd, and the crowd likes what you are saying, and they are parting with plenty of shekels, and you are renowned in the accepted circles, then obviously you are a good man and a godly man.

In case it hasn't dawned on the reader yet, that description fits Joseph Smith, Pope Francis, Benny Hinn, and Brian Houston, as well as the Beatles. But there are many biblical truths that clash with pragmatism, and one of them is that unpleasant truth that we are to reprove each other as the need arises. No pragmatist will ever have that arrow in his quiver when he ascends to the pulpit, UNLESS it is already programmed to pierce the armour of someone who is reproofing his errant doctrines and practices. )



So I am blest and impressed that more and more preachers are being converted from the error of never giving reproofs to the biblical practice of reproofing and rebuking. Oh, you may not have sorted out all the verses that teach the rightness of reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting, and your motive may be only to defend your heroes, but at least you've made a start, and we rejoice

for the day of small beginnings! You will be surprised at what the Lord will show you as you read His Word. There is much to learn in the book of Proverbs on the blessings and wisdom of giving and receiving reproofs. While you are at it, see if you can find the word used for the one who refuses reproofs. It may surprise you.

May I encourage you to speak up? Never fear the faces of men! Be bold! Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Be courageous! Take on the "GIANTS"! Hew to the line! Tell them what God says about what they say and do! They need to hear it! If they are so bold in the errors that they preach them publicly, then rebuke them publicly. They didn't meet with you in private to seek your counsel before they preached their idiosyncratic fantasies, so you need not seek a private audience with

his royal highness before you expose his deviant doctrines.

I seem to remember reading about a brave little boy that risked his neck to point out the king's wardrobe malfunction. These days, it seems to be the little boy who loses his head, not the king's tailors. Nevertheless, it is and always has been right and good to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

I congratulate you on your conversion! May your tribe increase as your conversion takes hold and others follow your example!


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# Lifting Up The STANDARD

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

An Outreach Ministry of FairHavens Baptist Church  
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CHALLENGING AND ENCOURAGING GOD'S REMNANT TO REMAIN FAITHFUL



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