



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

July 22nd, 2011

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Feature Article -

(The influence of Hollywood in our churches is doing great harm. Almost nothing is heard in our pulpits about the movies that are watched (on TV or on DVD's) by our families. I am old enough to remember when serious Christians did not go to the movies. Over the years, preaching against the immorality of movie stars and the sinful lifestyles they promote has all but disappeared. I have been

pondering this great omission for years, and have come to the conclusion that there are two reasons why Bible believing pastors are now silent on the subject of movie watching. The first is that they all own televisions and watch movies themselves, and the second is that churches love the religious movies that are shown in their churches. A. W. Tozer wrote the following and printed it as a booklet over 50 years ago. He was criticised severely for it, and Warren Wiersbe accused him of "leading a one man parade down a dead end street" on the subject. I disagree. There are at least two people in the parade, me and him. - Ed.)

The article is too long to send out in one issue of Heads Up so I will post a part over the next few weeks. If anyone wishes to read it sooner, go to:

<http://www.biblebb.com/files/tozermovie.htm>

The Menace Of The Religious Movie

by *A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)*

When God gave to Moses the blueprint of the Tabernacle He was careful to include every detail; then, lest Moses should get the notion that he could improve on the original plan, God warned him solemnly, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown thee in the mount." God, not Moses, was the architect. To decide the plan was the prerogative of the Deity. No one dare alter it so much as a hairbreadth.

The New Testament Church also is built after a pattern. Not the doctrines only but the methods are divinely given. The doctrines are expressly stated in so many words. Some of the methods followed by the early New Testament Church had been given by direct command; others were used by God's specific approval, having obviously been commanded the apostles by the Spirit. The point is that when the New Testament canon was closed the blueprint for the age was complete. God has added nothing since that time.

From God's revealed plan we depart at our peril. Every departure has two consequences, the immediate and the remote. The immediate touches the individual and those close to him; the remote extends into the future to unknown times, and may expand so far as to influence for evil the whole Church of God on earth.

The temptation to introduce "new" things into the work of God has always been too strong for some people to resist. The Church has suffered untold injury at the hands of well intentioned but misguided persons who have felt that they know more about running God's work than Christ and His apostles did. A solid train of box cars would not suffice to haul away the religious rubbish which has been brought into the service of the Church with the hope of improving on the original pattern. These things have been, one and all, positive hindrances to the progress of the Truth, and have so altered the divinely-planned structure that the apostles, were they to return to earth today, would scarcely recognize the misshapen thing which has resulted.

Our Lord while on earth cleansed the Temple, and periodic cleansings have been necessary in the Church of God throughout the centuries. Every generation is sure to have its ambitious amateur to come up with some shiny gadget which he proceeds to urge upon the priests before the altar. That the Scriptures do not justify its existence does not seem to bother him at all. It is brought in anyway

and presented in the very name of Orthodoxy. Soon it is identified in the minds of the Christian public with all that is good and holy. Then, of course, to attack the gadget is to attack the Truth itself. This is an old familiar technique so often and so long practiced by the devotees of error that I marvel how the children of God can be taken in by it.

We of the evangelical faith are in the rather awkward position of criticizing Roman Catholicism for its weight of unscriptural impedimenta and at the same time tolerating in our own churches a world of religious fribble as bad as holy water or the elevated host. Heresy of method may be as deadly as heresy of message. Old-line Protestantism has long ago been smothered to death by extra-scriptural rubbish. Unless we of the gospel churches wake up soon we shall most surely die by the same means.

Within the last few years a new method has been invented for imparting spiritual knowledge; or, to be more accurate, it is not new at all, but is an adaptation of a gadget of some years standing, one which by its origin and background belongs not to the Church but to the world. Some within the fold of the Church have thrown their mantle over it, have "blessed it with a text" and are now trying to show that it is the very gift of God for our day. But, however eloquent the sales talk, it is an unauthorized addition nevertheless, and was never a part of the pattern shown us on the mount.

I refer, of course, to the religious movie.

For the motion picture as such I have no irrational allergy. It is a mechanical invention merely and is in its essence amoral; that is, it is neither good nor bad, but neutral. With any physical object or any creature lacking the power of choice it could not be otherwise. Whether such an object is useful or harmful depends altogether upon who uses it and what he uses it for. No moral quality attaches where there is no free choice. Sin and righteousness lie in the will. The motion picture is in the same class as the automobile, the typewriter, or the radio: a powerful instrument for good or evil, depending upon how it is applied.

For teaching the facts of physical science the motion picture has been useful. The public schools have used it successfully to teach health habits to children. The army employed it to speed up instruction during war. That it has been of real service within its limited field is freely acknowledged here.

Over against this is the fact that the motion picture in evil hands has been a source of moral corruption to millions. No one who values his reputation as a responsible adult will deny that the sex movie and the crime movie have done untold injury to the lives of countless young people in our generation. The harm lies not in the instrument itself, but in the evil will of those who use it for their own selfish ends.

These pictures are produced by acting a religious story before the camera. Take for example the famous and beautiful story of the Prodigal Son. This would be made into a movie by treating the narrative as a scenario. Stage scenery would be set up, actors would take the roles of Father, Prodigal Son, Elder Brother, etc. There would be plot, sequence and dramatic denouement as in the ordinary tear jerker shown at the Bijou movie house on Main Street in any one of a thousand American towns. The story would be acted out, photographed, run onto reels and shipped around the country to be shown for a few wherever desired.

The "service" where such a movie would be shown might seem much like any other service until time for the message from the Word of God. Then the lights would be put out and the picture turned

on. The "message" would consist of this movie. What followed the picture would, of course, vary with the circumstances, but often an invitation song is sung and a tender appeal is made for erring sinners to return to God.

Now, what is wrong with all this? Why should any man object to this or go out of his way to oppose its use in the house of God? Here is my answer:

1. It violates the scriptural law of hearing.

The power of speech is a noble gift of God. In his ability to open his mouth and by means of words make his fellows know what is going on inside his mind, a man shares one of the prerogatives of the Creator. In its ability to understand the spoken word the human mind rises unique above all the lower creation. The gift which enables a man to translate abstract ideas into sounds is a badge of his honor as made in the image of God.

Written or printed words are sound symbols and are translated by the mind into hearing. Hieroglyphics and ideograms were the first symbols used to represent ideas. These ideograms were, in effect, not pictures but letters, and the letters were agreed-upon ideas. Thus words, whether spoken or written, are a medium for the communication of ideas. This is basic in human nature and stems from our divine origin.

It is significant that when God gave to mankind His great redemptive revelation He couched it in words. "And God spake all these words" very well sums up the Bible's own account of how it got here. "Thus saith the Lord" is the constant refrain of the prophets. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," said our Lord to His hearers. Again He said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." Paul made words and faith to be inseparable: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." And he also said, "How shall they hear without a preacher?"

Surely it requires no genius to see that the Bible rules out pictures and dramatics as media for bringing faith and life to the human soul.

The plain fact is that no vital spiritual truth can be expressed by a picture. Actually all any picture can do is to recall to mind some truth already learned through the familiar medium of the spoken or written word. Religious instruction and words are bound together by a living cord and cannot be separated without fatal loss. The Spirit Himself, teaching soundlessly within the heart, makes use of ideas previously received into the mind by means of words.

If I am reminded that modern religious movies are "sound" pictures, making use of the human voice to augment the dramatic action, the answer is easy. Just as far as the movie depends upon spoken words it makes pictures unnecessary; the picture is the very thing that differentiates between the movie and the sermon. The movie addresses its message primarily to the eye, and the ear only incidentally. Were the message addressed to the ear as in the Scriptures, the picture would have no meaning and could be omitted without loss to the intended effect. Words can say all that God intends them to say, and this they can do without the aid of pictures.

According to one popular theory the mind receives through the eye five times as much information as the ear. As far as the external shell of physical facts is concerned this may hold good, but when we come to spiritual truth we are in another world entirely. In that world the outer eye is not too important. God addresses His message to the hearing ear. "We look," says Paul, "not at the things

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." This agrees with the whole burden of the Bible, which teaches us that we should withdraw our eyes from beholding visible things, and fasten the eyes of our hearts upon God while we reverently listen to His uttered words.

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Here, and not somewhere else, is the New Testament pattern, and no human being, and no angel from heaven has any right to alter that pattern.

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Links in the Media Chain -

Harry Potter is Here to Stay

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/july/harryherestay.html>

Have you ever wondered how bad conditions in the Gaza Strip really are?

<http://www.thefrontpageonline.com/articles1-8034/AWouldYouBelieveMomentfromaFormerMayor>

Is there anyone else that loves classical guitar music played on a banjo?

<http://www.dump.com/?s=Bela+Fleck+banjo>

Craftsmanship from the 1800's - Outstanding!

<http://wimp.com/birdpistols/>

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Biographical Sketches -

I once stayed with a dear old couple who knew Billy Bray and they told me this story about him.

"His clothes were getting very shabby at one period, and he had no money to buy more. Everybody who knew him thought he wore "beautiful garments," because they loved him. He was a poem, a sonnet, dedicated to His Lord.

One day when he was preaching in Cornwall a strange lady, a widow, saw and heard him. She remembered that she possessed a wardrobe full of her late husband's clothes, and at the close of the service she said, "Billy, I should like to give you a suit of clothes, yours are shabby!"

"Yes," replied Billy. "They are because I have worn them out."

"I should like you to have them," said the lady doubtfully, "but I am not certain they would fit you."

"Did the Lord tell you to offer them to me?" asked Billy.

"I am sure He did," the lady replied.

"Then I am sure they will fit, because He knows my measure exactly," was Billy's prompt reply. - *Gypsy Smith*

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Quotable Notes and Notable Quotes -

* "We do not need the Devil's help in doing God's work." –*Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen, Sr*

* If you put garbage in a computer nothing comes out but garbage. But this garbage, having passed through a very expensive machine, is somehow ennobled and none dare criticize it. *Unknown*

* The man who wakes up and finds himself famous hasn't been asleep. *Unknown*

* Said one man to another: 'When I have my liquor I feel strong enough to knock a house down.' 'Through my leaving off my liquor, I have been able to put two houses up,' came the disquieting reply. *Unknown*

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Poetry for Your Sweetheart -

A Hundred Thousand Welcomes

A hundred thousand welcomes! How my heart is gushing o'er
With the love and joy and wonder thus to see your face once more.
And there's nothing but the gladness and the love within my heart,
And the hope so sweet and certain that again we'll never part.
You'll never part me, darling, there's a promise in your eye;
I may tend you while I'm living, you may watch me when I die;
And if death but kindly lead me to the blessed Home on high,
What a hundred thousand welcomes will await you in the sky!

Mrs. David Livingstone

(Written by after a separation from her husband for five years.)

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Chewing the Cud With A.W. Tozer -

(Years ago I heard a tape of A.W. Tozer's in which he listed things the Lord had taught him. They stirred my heart deeply. - Ed.)

"Christianity has left the land of promise and is in Babylonian captivity. Through prayer, study, and firsthand observation, with some measure of walking with the Holy Spirit, and consultation with the brethren I have reached these deep convictions as to what is wrong with us.

- 1) The whole life of the faithful should be one of repentance.
- 2) Repentance is void if it does not produce mortification of the flesh (outward, visible repentance).
- 3) We must begin to preach again, "No salvation without discipleship!"
- 4) To be forgiven, sin must be forsaken.
- 5) There is no Saviourhood without Lordship.
- 6) The way of the cross is hard.
- 7) The methods of the Spirit and the methods of men are diametrically opposed. Churches are using men's methods.
- 8) Christ saved us to make us worshippers, not workers. Worship first, then work.
- 9) Christians violate the Scriptures in relation to their neighbours, the world, and the flesh without compunction or repentance. We have become careless of the commandments of Christ and the simple truths of God's Word. Obey the Bible!
- 10) Meekness, modesty, and humility endear a man to God.
- 11) We cannot by prayer justify non-obedience.
- 12) We can't cure our spiritual malady by more activity. When a diseased Christianity becomes evangelistic it merely enlarges the area of infection.
- 13) Our critical need in this hour is not so much "revival (a big boom in religion) as "reformation." (Not an increase of what we've already got.)

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Science Falsely So Called -

The story behind the letter below is that there is this nutball who digs things out of his back yard and sends the stuff he finds to the Smithsonian Institute, labelling them with scientific names, insisting that they are actual archaeological finds. This guy really exists and does this in his spare time! Anyway... here's the actual response from the Smithsonian Institution.

Smithsonian Institute
207 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20078

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your latest submission to the Institute, labelled "93211-D, layer seven, next to the clothesline lost...Hominid skull." We have given this specimen a careful and detailed examination, and regret to inform you that we disagree with your theory that it represents conclusive proof of the presence of Early Man in Charleston County two million years ago. Rather, it appears that what you have found is the head of a Barbie doll, of the variety one of our staff, who has small children, believes to be "Malibu Barbie."

It is evident that you have given a great deal of thought to the analysis of this specimen, and you may be quite certain that those of us who are familiar with your prior work in the field were loath to come to contradiction with your findings. However, we do feel that there are a number of physical attributes of the specimen which might have tipped you off to its modern origin:

1. The material is moulded plastic. Ancient hominid remains are typically fossilised bone.
2. The cranial capacity of the specimen is approximately 9 cubic centimetres, well below the threshold of even the earliest identified proto-hominids.
3. The dentition pattern evident on the skull is more consistent with the common domesticated dog than it is with the ravenous man-eating Pliocene clams you speculate roamed the wetlands during that time. This latter finding is certainly one of the most intriguing hypotheses you have submitted in your history with this institution, but the evidence seems to weigh rather heavily against it. Without going into too much detail, let us say that:

A. The specimen looks like the head of a Barbie doll that a dog has chewed on.

B. Clams don't have teeth.

It is with feelings tinged with melancholy that we must deny your request to have the specimen carbon dated. This is partially due to the heavy load our lab must bear in its normal operation, and partly due to carbon dating's notorious inaccuracy in fossils of recent geologic record. To the best of our knowledge, no Barbie dolls were produced prior to 1956 AD, and carbon dating is likely to produce wildly inaccurate results.

Sadly, we must also deny your request that we approach the National Science Foundation Phylogeny Department with the concept of assigning your specimen the scientific name *Australopithecus spiff-arino*.

Speaking personally, I, for one, fought tenaciously for the acceptance of your proposed taxonomy, but was ultimately voted down because the species name you selected was hyphenated, and didn't really sound like it might be Latin.

However, we gladly accept your generous donation of this fascinating specimen to the museum. While it is undoubtedly not a Hominid fossil, it is, nonetheless, yet another riveting example of the great body of work you seem to accumulate here so effortlessly. You should know that our Director has reserved a special shelf in his own office for the display of the specimens you have previously submitted to the Institution, and the entire staff speculates daily on what you will happen upon next in your digs at the site you have discovered in your back yard. We eagerly anticipate your trip to our nation's capital that you proposed in your last letter, and several of us are pressing the Director to pay for it. We are particularly interested in hearing you expand on your theories surrounding the trans-positating fillifitation of ferrous ions in a structural matrix that makes the excellent juvenile Tyrannosaurus rex femur you recently discovered take on the deceptive appearance of a rusty 9-mm Sears Craftsman automotive crescent wrench.

Yours in Science,
Harvey Rowe
Curator, Antiquities

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Therapy For The Funny Bone -

Amazingly Simple Home Remedies:

1. Avoid cutting yourself when slicing vegetables by getting someone else to hold the vegetables while you chop.
2. For high blood pressure sufferers...simply cut yourself and bleed for a few minutes, thus reducing the pressure on your veins. remember to use a timer.
3. A mouse trap placed on top of your alarm clock will prevent you from rolling over and going back to sleep after you hit the snooze button.
4. If you have a bad cough, take a large dose of laxatives. then you'll be afraid to cough.
5. You only need two tools in life - WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and should, use the WD-40. If it shouldn't move and does, use the duct tape.
6. If you can't fix it with a hammer, you've got an electrical problem.

Agriculture Subsidy -

Honorable Secretary of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

My friend, Ed Peterson, over at Wells, Iowa, received a check for \$1,000 from the government for not raising hogs. So, I want to go into the "not raising hogs" business next year.

What I want to know is, in your opinion, what is the best kind of farm not to raise hogs on, and what is the best breed of hogs not to raise? I want to be sure that I approach this endeavor in keeping with all governmental policies. I would prefer not to raise razorbacks, but if that is not a good breed not to raise, then I will just as gladly not raise Yorkshires or Durocs.

As I see it, the hardest part of this program will be in keeping an accurate inventory of how many hogs I haven't raised.

My friend, Peterson, is very joyful about the future of the business. He has been raising hogs for twenty years or so, and the best he ever made on them was \$422 in 1968, until this year when he got your check for \$1,000 for not raising hogs.

If I get \$1,000 for not raising 50 hogs, will I get \$2,000 for not raising 100 hogs? I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself down to about 4,000 hogs not raised, which will mean about \$80,000 the first year. Then I can afford an airplane.

Now another thing, these hogs I will not raise will not eat 100,000 bushels of corn. I understand that you also pay farmers for not raising corn and wheat. Will I qualify for payments for not raising wheat and corn not to feed the 4,000 hogs I am not going to raise?

Also, I am considering the "not milking cows" business, so send me any information you have on that too.

In view of these circumstances, you understand that I will be totally unemployed and plan to file for unemployment and food stamps.

Be assured you will have my vote in the coming election.

Patriotically Yours,

Fred Jackson,

PS: Would you please notify me when you plan to distribute more free cheese.

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Sermon Fodder -

Hide Thyself by the Brook

Hide thyself by the brook. 1 Kings 13:3. Not by the river, but by the brook. The river would always contain an abundant supply, but the brook might dry up at any moment.

What does this teach us? God does not place His people in luxuriance here. The World's abundance might withdraw their affections from Him. He gives them not the river, but the brook. The brook may be running to-day, to-morrow it may be dried up.

And wherefore does God act thus? To teach us that we are not to rest in His gifts and blessings, but in Himself. This is what our hearts are always doing — resting in the gift, instead of the Giver. Therefore God cannot trust us by the river, for it unconsciously takes up His place in the heart. It is said of Israel that when they were full they forgot God. - *F. Whitfield*

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Ecumania –

Rome Considers Buying Schuller's Crystal Cathedral

Orange, Calif., July 8 (CNA) .- The Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange says it is potentially interested in buying a 3,000-seat glass church in Southern California that faces bankruptcy. The diocese announced on July 7 that it's currently looking for a building to meet the needs of the 1.2 million Roman Catholics in Orange County, the 11th largest diocese in the nation. Although it's been planning for over 10 years to build a new, 2,500-seat cathedral in Santa Ana, the diocese has only hired an architect for the project and is now considering converting the bankrupt church in Garden Grove into a Roman Catholic cathedral. "While we continue to develop plans for a cathedral in Santa Ana, it is prudent to evaluate the opportunity to engage in the pending auction of this property and to mitigate the chance that it cease to function as a place of worship, if acquired by others," Bishop Tod D. Brown said on Tuesday.

The Crystal Cathedral – an architectural landmark made with over 10,000 panes of glass and designed by the late Philip Johnson – would be an instant solution to the diocese's building needs and would cost roughly half the \$100 million price tag for the planned cathedral.

"I have authorised our advisors to contact the appropriate parties in the proceedings to determine a possible course of action," Bishop Brown said. "If the Diocese of Orange can prevent the loss of this important Christian Ministry and what the Crystal Cathedral has represented to so many for so long – and meet its own priorities for a new cathedral, we have a duty to at least review the options." At the same time, Bishop Brown cautioned that no official plans have been made. "This is solely an exploratory consideration, not binding upon any party involved in the proceedings," he said. "There is no change of course concerning development of the existing Cathedral site or other parishes in the community."

Bishop Tod D. Brown; "If the Diocese of Orange can prevent the loss of this important Christian Ministry and what the Crystal Cathedral has represented to so many for so long – and meet its own priorities for a new cathedral, we have a duty to at least review the options."

The Crystal Cathedral, founded by pastor Robert H. Schuller, filed for bankruptcy last October. The church decided to file for Chapter 11 after some of its creditors sued for payment, according to

church officials. Documents from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Santa Ana show that hundreds of creditors could be owed between \$50 million and \$100 million, the Los Angeles Times reports. The Diocese of Orange said that Bishop Brown has followed the news of the Crystal Cathedral bankruptcy proceedings with "concern" and is interested in the "landmark church remaining a functional part of the liturgical landscape for the region." Construction on the Crystal Cathedral began in 1977, after Schuller flew to Rome to have the pope approve of his plans - and was completed in 1980 at a cost of \$18 million.

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We Owe It To Our Grandkids! -

I get worried sometimes that Grandpas have become too tame. They seem to have forgotten that they owe it to their grandkids to say and do outrageous things that the kids will never forget. My Grandpa Denton was that sort of grandpa. He not only did this to us kids, he did it to everybody. Like the time he told the owner of an antique shop that his wall clock at home was older than the dealer's. When asked how he knew that, he told him that the shadow of the pendulum "had wore a hole in the wallpaper!" I will never forget him pointing out to me an old coot and telling me he went to the same school, and that that old man was the dumbest boy in the school. Why? Because "he was in the third grade all four years I was in the second grade." It was never dull at grandpa's house.

So I decided that it is my everlasting duty to uphold the family honour by doing things with my 18 grandkids that they will never forget. Like what? Well, once in a while when their mothers are not looking, we have jelly bean sandwiches for breakfast. We could use peanut butter under the jelly beans, but that chocolate hazelnut spread is better. Or the times I proved (on back roads only!) that I have a wobble license that authorises me to wobble from one side of the road to the other. The kids still ask if I have my License.

The most fun we've had in a long while was when we made a jet propelled bicycle using a leaf blower. I took the little 2 stroke leaf blower I use downstairs and tied it to Joey's bike's handlebars (with the nozzle pointing backward under his arm) and started it up and gave him a push to see if he could get enough thrust to propel him down the road. It was a roaring success, with all the other boys flying chase for him and yelling. The parents all came out to see what madness the local pastor had come up with now. Joey made several low speed, low level passes before we started looking for something that would go faster. So we hit on attaching the leaf blower to a skateboard with bungy cords and tying the throttle on full blast and letting it go down the street. It was really the best, what with it roaring along and the boys chasing it and yelling and it going faster and faster and then doing a hard left turn into somebody's driveway, and having to be corralled before it cleaned up their chooks or sump'n.

I am a bit worried about one of my daughters, who tells her friends that she'd better go home and save the kids from their grandpa. Will have to speak to her about that.

If we don't watch out life can get tedious.

I vote for doing things that the grandkids will never forget. Or the neighborhood kids either. After all, they are going to be grandpas someday.

Bro. Buddy

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The Treasures of the Snow -

by *Joye Binstead*

Job 38:22 "*Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?*"

Unlike the seasons of the terrestrial year, the seasons of our spiritual life are not governed by days and months, each preceding the next, or definable boundaries marked out prosaically on our calendars. Spiritual 'seasons' are brought about by God, to bring forward His own wondrous plans and purposes. Oftentimes we cling to the season we are in, we know its possibilities but we fear what the next 'season' may bring. Our faith is small, and we neglect to see that God is moving us forward, on to a new stage of trusting and growth in our lives.

We all enjoy a favourite season of the year. Summer for its heat, or Spring for its new life, Autumn for its crispness or Winter for its cold clarity. There is also a spiritual analogy here. So many times our daily lives take on the colours and rhythms of a season. We eagerly watch the blossoming of a new life in Christ. We feel the strain of weary labourers eyeing the harvest yet to reap. We watch as the 'leaves' on the parent tree are called away, or even drop or drift away, and the tree begins to look barren and vulnerable. Spring. Summer. Autumn. Winter - when all that is good and alive seems to lie dormant and still. In the relentless march of days, all remains quiet, even untouchable. Ah, but here is hope, for truly all that is good and living is waiting on God's time, gathering strength, concentrating its forces for that moment when God heralds the beginning of Spring once more. And then, the bursting forth! But first - we must endure the winter.

Reflect on God's Words to Job in Job 38:22 "*Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?*"

There are treasures for those who will seek them in the winter of the soul. Small but exquisite delicacies from God's hand - an encouraging word, prayers heard and answered, God's continuing, perpetual love and His tender mercies. Miracles of endurance - those who stand beside you during your winter, who weather the same frosts and storms, those faithful followers of God and faithful friends. Faith that clings and waits - how many wonderful verses implore us to wait patiently? We must trust, so fully, so completely, that our waiting is filled with a hope so fresh and alive, we are almost breathless with wonder at what God will do.

Winter is also a time for planning. Does God bring us winter for clarity? Is there not a quality in the light that allows the eye to travel great distances? Look to the Spring, and prepare the seed.

Hold on to Galatians 6:9 "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

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Cartoons for the Wise - (Have you ever noticed the difference between kids who watch television and those who don't? It has a lot to do with tv stealing their ability to think. -Ed.)

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Eddy-Torial –

Will It Fly At Huffman's Prairie?

Wilbur and Orville Wright's names are not much heard in our day. A hundred and ten years ago they invented the Wright Flyer, the first aeroplane to fly under its own power. Prior to that powered flight at Kill Devil Hill in North Carolina, they made more than 700 flights in gliders they built in their bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio. Their research into the secret of flight opened the way for all who came after them. At first they had no wind tunnel, so they attached a bracket to the handlebars of a bicycle, and tested the airfoil shapes as they pedalled down the road. Later, they built a windtunnel and tested each wing, as well as the design for the propellers for their powered Flyer. Amazing innovators, they were! They designed and built their own engine, a 12 horsepower horizontal four cylinder, and made a primitive carburetor for it. One of the mechanics put it together and tinkered with it until it ran reliably. They solved the problem of low speed stalls by attaching pulleys and cables to a movable cradle the pilot lay in so he could warp the wings and bank the Flyer in a turn. They built a catapult to launch the Flyer, and it flew! They flew that rattling, clattering, vibrating contraption of spruce and cloth and wire, and motor and sprockets and bicycle chains and handmade propellers, they flew it over a hundred feet that day in 1903. Almost the length of a modern airliner's wingspan.

The Wright brothers were impressive characters. The sons of a Congregational minister, they held some surprisingly strong beliefs. No matter what stage of testing they were at, they dressed up in suits and ties and refused to do any work on Sundays. Photos abound of them setting aside the Lord's day, no matter where they were or what they were doing. They were also brilliant aeronautical engineers before the title even existed. They often disagreed, and would debate for hours the complexities of their flimsy fledgling aircraft. They were so persuasive that they even convinced each other and traded viewpoints and started the debate all over again.

Many interesting historical highlights of those primitive flights are written down. Years ago, someone built an exact replica of the Flyer, I mean, an exact copy. And they couldn't get it to fly, at

all. Someone else built one and got it into the air, only to find that it was terribly unstable and came very close to crashing every time they flew it.

There is one incident, or series of incidents, that deserves special mention. You see, once they'd flown the Wright Flyer off Kill Devil Hill a few times and gained a tiny bit of experience, they disassembled it, packed it up and sent it back to Dayton. They were offered an empty cow pasture on the edge of town for the first flying field in the world. It was called Huffman's Prairie. It lacked several advantages the windy, sea level beach at Kill Devil Hill had. The higher elevation made the air pressure lower so the lift of the wings was less, and the little engine's power dropped as well. At Kill Devil Hill, the wind blew at more than 40 miles per hour, here the wind was almost non-existent, so they lost airspeed for takeoff. The summer air was much hotter and thinner, so the catapult rails had to be lengthened to increase the takeoff speed. But it just wouldn't fly. Local newspaper reporters came out to see it fly, and it didn't, and they laughed and went home.

Orville and Wilbur went back to the bicycle shop and to the windtunnel they'd made, and they argued it out, until they solved the problems, one after the other. The design was good. The airfoil was tweaked, and the wings and tail lengthened. Having the horizontal tail in front to prevent stalls was a good idea, and the wing warping concept was sound. The propellor design was optimal (as computer studies would prove, years later). The center of gravity was right. The catapult was improved, but the Flyer just wouldn't fly. The major problem was the little motor. More power was needed to push the Flyer along fast enough to take off. Twelve horsepower was just barely enough to fly in the conditions at Kill Devil Hill, but not in those at Huffman's Prairie. They designed a new, more powerful engine, and the Flyer flew. Soon, they were flying, sitting upright, and even carrying a passenger. And flying five hours at a time, non-stop.

It flew at Huffman's Prairie

The last fifty years have seen some strange designs come and go. Most of them won't fly at Huffman's Prairie.

No, I don't mean aircraft designs. I mean church designs. In the 50's we saw "bus-churches" springing up everywhere. In the 60's it was "contest-churches" and "southern-gospel-music-churches", in the 70's we had "big-name-preacher-churches", (and they are still with us today), in the 80's and 90's there appeared the "seeker-sensitive-megachurches", and over the past ten years or so the "emergent/emerging-churches" have spread all over the world. Each of these designs seems to fly impressively for a little while, as long as the winds of culture are blowing just right, and the temperature of society is just right, and the peer pressure is high enough. Some of them need blue collared converts in order to get off the ground, others need cashed up yuppies to take off. Some can only flourish in the sun belt or the deep south, or near Hollywood or Nashville or Disneyland. Large cities are required for some designs to fly, and it seems that they all need Hillsong and YouTube. Most of them would crash and burn without a website, a rockband, and televised church services.

That's the difference between megachurches and the biblical churches the apostles planted. Peter and Paul did no market research or surveys of lost men's preferences in order to start an enculturated church. They did not seek a favourable environment for an anemic message. They didn't test the wind, or sample the market. They preached the Word of God and followed the leading of the Spirit of God. They preached the gospel of Christ in the most hostile cultures imaginable. The synagogues erupted, and the silversmiths chanted their threats, and Nero schemed, and lions devoured them. And those little apostolic churches overcame the gravitational pull of the

world, and rose above the crosswinds of pagan religions. When all the world was against them, they flew. You know, that is the real test of a preacher or a church. Does it only survive if it is planted in a favourable cultural climate? Will it only fly if society smiles upon it? Or will it fly at Huffman's Prairie?

Everywhere we look today, Egochurches and Ecochurches are flapping their wings and staggering off the ground in front of TV cameras. But they can only do it if they are supported by their cultures. Their only hope of flying is if they gain the assistance of the world they love. CEO/pastors study the methods of billionaire businessmen to learn how to point their church into the wind. And of course, the business methods they adopt completely eclipse any truth they ever possessed.

One lesson from history they never learn is that culture changes with the passing of time. The favourable breeze that lifts Joel Osteen's Jumbochurch to great altitude this year inevitably becomes a thunderstorm just when he hopes for a gentle landing. They forget Oral Roberts and Ted Haggard and Truman Dollar and Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker. Woe betide the modern CEO/pastor who is the pilot when the wind shifts or dies. Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral is crashing and burning at this moment. Why? Because the economic winds shifted, and his New Age doctrines caught up with him and his church stalled. The Roman Catholics are circling like vultures to pick up the pieces. Within twenty minutes of our church is a Baptist church that tried Rick Warren's Purpose Driven design a few years ago. But the ambitious pastor found that the culture here could not and would not support "purposeless drivel" and it crashed and burned. I fear it will never recover.

I keep wanting to ask these pastors, "Will your church fly at Huffman's Prairie? Can you get it off the ground when the cultural winds refuse to blow like you've been told they will? What will you do if there are no yuppies to fork over megabucks to fuel your Juggernaut and pay the crew? What if your town has no rednecks (with longnecks?) to pay for Bill Gaither's visit? Can you plant a church in the jungle village never heard of GenX, or Y, or Z? How will you ever get an emergent church off the ground there? What if the winds shift? What if you attempt a takeoff in the middle of a societal tornado, or a cultural hailstorm? And when your church won't fly, have you thought about why it won't?"

I know, Rick Warren boasts that he has hundreds of thousands of pastors and churches enlisted in his Saddleback Association. And he tells all the attendees at his conferences that fundamentalists are his biggest problem. I also know that churches have outlived their pallbearers for almost 2000 years. I predict (without inspiration) that the Megachurch window has begun to close. Its explosive growth depended on cultural influences that are dying. Somebody should write a book titled, "How The GFC Killed The Seeker Sensitive Church." The same could be said of the Emergent/Emerging church, which is the new face of gnosticism. We cannot help noticing how its gurus and their adherents see themselves to be the intelligentsia, the elite. Have they stopped to think that their culture is dying, that the dumbing down of the minds of students all over the world will bring their airspeed to zero. It all points to a simple truth. Churches which are built to soar on the winds of culture will disappear in the first big storm.

There are lots of little churches around the world whose pastors understand that the gospel of Christ is still the power of God unto salvation. They understand that the Holy Spirit is the only "wind" a church needs to be concerned about. I know pastors that coax their tiny congregations off the ground every week and they do it with a tailwind, in a hailstorm, with a cyclone blowing, in heavy rain, and sometimes when the passengers don't want to fly! They do it with the power of gospel preaching and the help of the Spirit of God.

These little churches do God's work week after week, year after year, and never have to rely on a godless culture.

They fly from Huffman's Prairie International Airport, with God's help.

Otherwise, sooner or later, they crash and burn.