

# O Timothy

*“Keep that which is committed to thy trust...”*

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

Volume 34 - Issue 4 - April 2017



*“Desire is important, but this, in itself, is not enough. The individual’s life must also meet the requirements of the calling. Some people who desire to be pastors, deacons, or missionaries are deceived about God’s call. They feel strongly that God is calling them to that work, but it is obvious that He is not, because God would not give detailed standards for elders and deacons, then ignore His own standards and call unqualified people.”* **Page 4.**

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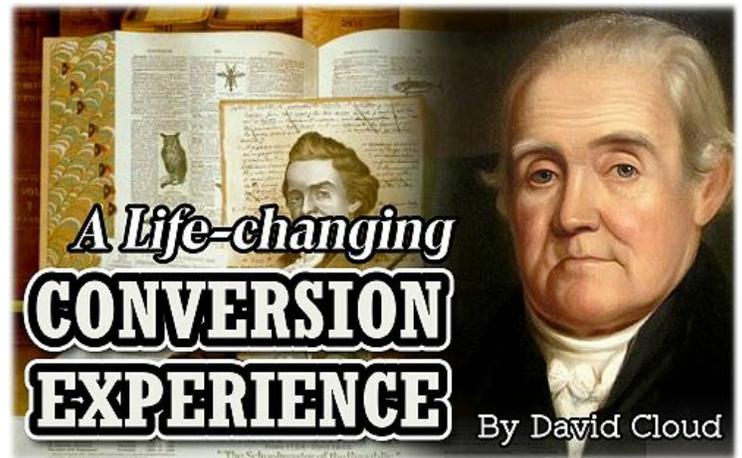
## A LIFE-CHANGING CONVERSION EXPERIENCE - By David Cloud

**B**iblical salvation is a conversion experience that changes the life (John 3:3; Mat. 18:3; 2 Cor. 5:17). Every salvation recorded in the New Testament involves a life-changing conversion experience (e.g., the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the Jews on day of Pentecost, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, the Philippian jailer).

An interesting example of a biblical conversion is that of Noah Webster, famous author of *The Blue-Back Speller* and the *American Dictionary of the English Language*.

His conversion occurred in 1808 during the Second Great Awakening. The revival began in Kentucky and soon spread to all parts of the young nation. In 1807, the revival came to Webster’s church, First Congregational Church of New Haven, Connecticut, pastored by Moses Stuart.

Webster made a public profession of faith in April 1808, together with his two oldest daughters.



It was life-changing conversion experience. Following is a description by Alan Snyder, Webster’s biographer:

*“Webster’s conversion was the intellectual and moral watershed of his life. As such, it provided him with a spiritual and intellectual framework which extended into every sphere of life, including perceptions of and judgments*

about man, morality, government, education, and the very purpose of being. ...

“Internal conversion results in a profound alteration of an individual’s conception of the nature of God, man, sin, and brings a transformation in both thought and action. ... conversion is a return t God, a restoration of the relationship God originally had intended to have with man, through a turning away from sin (i.e., rebellion against God’s commands) and a turning to the mercies of a forgiving Father. ...

“Having once read it [Webster’s testimony], one can have no doubt that Webster’s conversion was authentic and produced a basic reorganization of his entire life. In Webster’s world, God moved from the periphery to the center, providing him a new purpose and focus” (Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster: Mind and Morals in the Early Republic*, pp. 221, 222).

Consider some details of Webster’s life prior to his conversion:

- He was an active church member.
- From age 20 he had resolved “to pursue a course of virtue through life, and to perform all moral and social duties with scrupulous exactness.”
- He believed in God and was thankful to God. “... for some years past, I have rarely cast my eyes to heaven or plucked the fruit of my garden without feeling emotions of gratitude and adoration.”
- He believed that Christ died for man’s sins, but he also believed that good works are necessary for salvation.

- He doubted some doctrines of the Bible, being that religion should conform to man’s reason and if something wasn’t “reasonable,” it could be rejected.
- He believed that one should not be passionate about religion. When the Second Great Awakening first came to his town, he was opposed. “I felt some opposition to these meetings, being apprehensive that they would by affecting the passions too strongly, introduce an enthusiasm or fanaticism which might be considered as real religion.”

Following is Webster’s own fascinating account of his spiritual conversion, written in response to a letter from his brother-in-law, Judge Thomas Dawes of Boston, who had written to Noah in opposition of the revival:

“My wife [Rebecca], however, was friendly to these meetings and she was joined by my two eldest daughters [Emily and Frances] who were among the first subjects of serious impressions. I did not forbid but rather discouraged their attendance on conferences. Finding their feelings rather wounded by this opposition, and believing that I could not conscientiously unite with them in a profession of the Calvinistic faith, I made some attempts to persuade them to join me in attending the Episcopal service and ordinances. To this they were opposed. At some times I almost determined to separate from my family, leaving them with the Congregational Society and joining myself to the Episcopal. ...

“During this time, my mind continued to be more and more agitated, and in a manner wholly unusual and to me unaccountable. I had indeed short composure, but at all times of the day and in the midst of other occupations, I was suddenly seized with impressions, which called my mind irresistibly to religious concerns and to the awakening. These impressions induced a degree of remorse for my conduct, not of that distressing kind which often attends convictions, but something which appeared to be reproof.

“These impressions I attempted to remove by reasoning with myself, and endeavoring to quiet my mind, by a persuasion, that my opposition to my family, and the awakening was not a real opposition to a rational religion, but to enthusiasm or false religion. I continued some weeks in this situation, utterly unable to quiet my own mind, and without resorting to the only source of peace and consolation. The impressions grew ever stronger till at length I could not pursue my studies without frequent interruptions. My mind was suddenly arrested, without any previous circumstance of the time to draw it to this subject and as it were fastened to the awakening and upon my own conduct. I closed my books, yielded to the influence, which could not be resisted or mistaken and was led by a spontaneous impulse to repentance, prayer and entire submission and surrender of myself to my maker and redeemer. My submission appeared to be cheerful and was soon followed by that peace of mind which the world can neither give nor take away. ...

**O TIMOTHY Magazine**  
**Volume 34 Issue 4**  
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 Subscription information on  
 back page of the magazine

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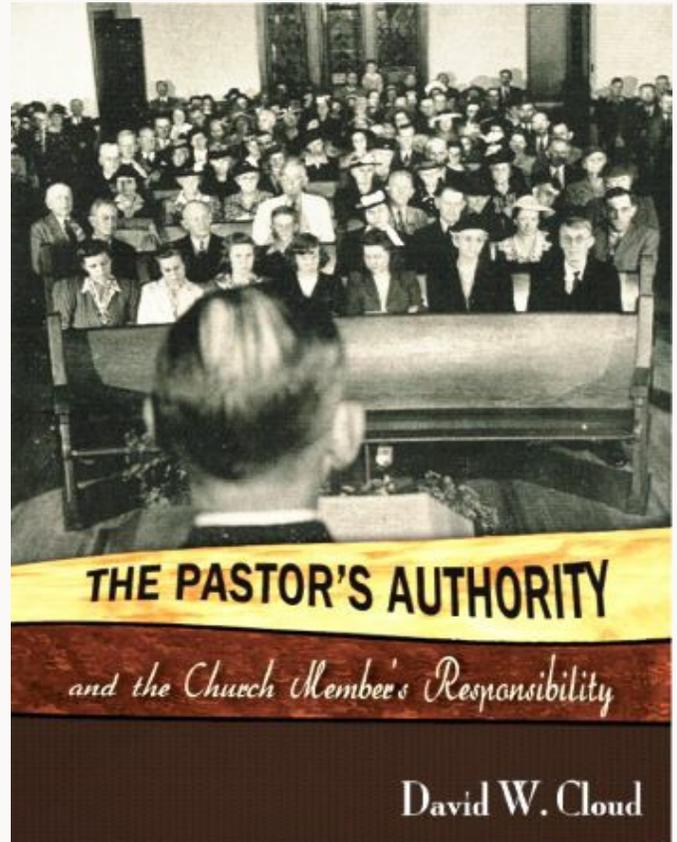
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"I now began to understand and relish many parts of the scriptures, which before appeared mysterious and unintelligible, or repugnant to my natural pride. ... In short my view of the scriptures, of religion, of the whole Christian scheme of salvation, and of God's moral government, are very much changed, and my heart yields with delight and confidence to the divine will. ...

"I am taught now the utter insufficiency of our own powers to effect a change of the heart and am persuaded that a reliance on our own talents or powers, is a fatal error, springing from natural pride and opposition to God, by which multitudes of men, especially of the more intelligent and moral part of society are deluded into ruin. I now look, my dear friend, with regret on the largest portion of the ordinary life of man, spent 'without hope, and without God in the world.' I am particularly affected by a sense of my ingratitude to that Being who made me, and without whose constant agency, I cannot draw a breath, who has showered upon me a profusion of temporal blessings and provided a Savior for my immortal soul. To have so long neglected the duties of piety to that Being on whom I am entirely dependent, to love whom supremely is the first duty, as well as the highest happiness of rational souls, proves a degree of baseness in my heart on which I cannot reflect without the deepest contrition and remorse. And I cannot think without trembling on what my condition would have been had God withdrawn the blessed influences of his Spirit, the moment I manifested opposition to it, as he justly might have done, and given me over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. I now see in full evidence, the enormous crime, the greatest, man can commit against his God, of resisting the influence of his holy Spirit. Every sting of conscience must be considered as a direct call from God to obey his commands; how much more then ought man to yield to those pungent and powerful convictions of sin which are unequivocally sent to chastize his disobedience and compel him to return to his Heavenly Father."

We don't look for a certain type of conversion experience. The details of conversion can differ dramatically from person to person. Some experience feelings of elation; some don't. Some conversions are more instant and dramatic than others. In some cases, the conversion might seem to happen over a brief period of time, from the standpoint of the one being converted and those observing the conversion, and it might be difficult or impossible to pinpoint the exact time.

## The Pastors Authority And The Church Members Responsibility



This book examines each major New Testament passage dealing with the relationship between pastors and church members. It looks at the extent of the pastor's authority and the spiritual characteristics of his authority, as well as the responsibilities of church members.

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*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;  
and he that winneth souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30)*

We find a number of tests of a pastor's calling in Scripture. These can help a man determine if God is calling him to be a pastor, and these can enable churches to examine men before ordination.

### 1. *The test of desire* (1 Timothy 3:1)

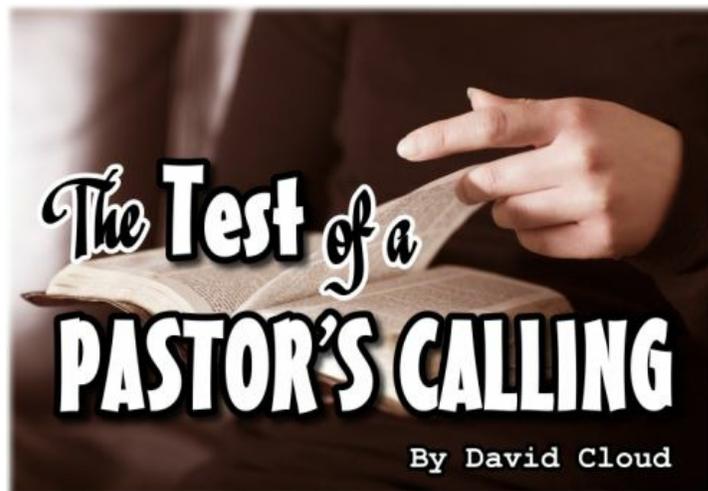
This speaks of a strong, compelling desire; a passion; a zeal. This verse could also be translated "if a man *reach out to grasp* the office of a bishop" (John Economidis).

Paul speaks of such compulsion in 1 Cor. 9:16 when he says, "... for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"

Those in Israel who did the work of building the Tabernacle were men "whose hearts stirred them up, to come unto the work to do it" (Ex. 36:2). Likewise, men who lead the churches must be men whose hearts have been divinely stirred for this great task. There must be a divine call. This desire must be more than a mere interest; it must be a passion, a powerful, divine summons to the ministry. It has been said, and rightly so, that if a man can refrain easily from preaching and from church leadership, he should refrain, because God's call to such ministry is attended by a powerful, unmistakable summons. A man might say no to God's call, as Jonah temporarily did, but he will not mistake the call or lightly ignore it!

Charles Spurgeon, in addressing the men in his Pastor's College, warned, "If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way ... If on the other hand, you can say that for all the wealth of both the Indies you could not and dare not espouse any other calling so as to be put aside from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, then, depend upon it, if other things be equally satisfactory, you have the signs of this apostleship."

This is the type of calling I experienced after I was saved in the summer of 1973. I was consumed with the desire to study the Bible and to pursue God's will. That's all I wanted to do. Immediately I started witnessing to my old friends. Within the first year I started printing my testimony and little booklets containing the spiritual truths I was learning. I was working as a printer at the Florida Citrus Commission in Lakeland, Florida, and I



did my work well and had a good testimony on the job, but I wasn't satisfied. I was consumed with the desire to study the Bible and teach and pursue God's calling, and the Lord soon gave me the freedom to do that.

Consider Psalm 37:4 - "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

We see that God's guidance is for those who delight in Him. The verse does not say that whatever an individual desires he will have. Desire itself is not evidence of God's leading and calling, because there are many wrong desires in a man's heart. The promise is for those who delight in the Lord, those who love the Lord walk with Him in sweet fellowship and love His Word and are pursuing His holy will.

To those who love Him, God imparts the right desires. He imparts His will into that individual's life in the form of right desires, then He fulfills those desires.

To delight in the Lord is a passionate thing. It is not a casual, half-hearted thing. Lukewarm is not delight. Delight is first love passion (Rev. 2). I

Delight in the Lord is fed by God's Word. Through Scripture the mind is renewed (Rom. 12:1-2) so that we find the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:15-16). We see this in Psalm 1. Delight in the Lord is the man who separates from evil and error because he meditates in God's Word day and night.

### 2. *The test of life* (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)

Desire is important, but this, in itself, is not enough. The individual's life must also meet the requirements of the

calling. Some people who desire to be pastors, deacons, or missionaries are deceived about God's call. They feel strongly that God is calling them to that work, but it is obvious that He is not, because God would not give detailed standards for elders and deacons, then ignore His own standards and call unqualified people.

Consider some examples of how the test of life restricts the calling:

If a woman, for example, feels God is calling her to be a pastor or deacon, she is wrong, because the Bible says plainly that this is a man's work.

If a man has a poor reputation in his community, or is given to wine, or has an angry, combative spirit, or loves money, or does not have faithful children and a good home life, or has more than one wife, etc.--he can be certain that God does not want him in the pastorate.

In 1980, I was invited to teach a group of pastors in Nepal in an all-day Bible conference, and I chose the book of Titus as my text. After we had gone through the standards for pastors in chapter one, I was informed that one of the men had three wives. He maintained three different families on three different properties that he owned and he visited them on a sort of circuit. I told the national pastors that this man could not be a pastor because of his marital status. He spoke up and said that he knew that God had called him to pastor because he had a vision.

The entire group of men chose to ignore the clear teaching of the Bible in favor of the man's alleged "vision"!

We would note here that the call to preach is not necessarily the same as the call to pastor. A man can preach in many ways without being a pastor: in the highways and byways, in the jails and nursing homes, on the street corners and from house to house, in a bus ministry, etc. Men who are not qualified to be a pastor or deacon can still preach the Word of God in many ways if they are faithful to Jesus Christ.

### **3. *The test of ability*** (Titus 1:9-11)

When God calls, He equips. He will never call someone to do something without giving that person the ability to do it. When the Lord wanted the tabernacle built in the time of Moses, He prepared men for this work.

"See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:2-3).

We see here the main aspects of God's call for special service. First, it was an individual call. God called Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur. Second, it was a call to a particular work. Third, the call was accompanied by the ability to perform that work.

It is true that God loves to use the weak things of this world for His service. In this way Jesus Christ receives the glory. God often calls men to preach who seem unlikely candidates by man's natural standards. He will not, though, call a man to be a pastor who cannot do the work of a pastor.

No man without such ability is qualified to be a pastor, even if he has a strong desire and a good Christian life and testimony. Such a man should heed 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."

Consider some of the things the pastor must be able to do:

- The pastor must be able to feed and shepherd the Lord's sheep (1 Peter 5:1-2). He must be apt to teach God's Word (1 Tim. 3:2). He must be able to preach God's Word effectively (2 Tim. 4:2). He must be able to teach all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27). The man called to be a pastor must, therefore, be able to read and study well enough to do this work. The qualified pastor is a studious man, a man who "labours in the word of God and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17). He must be a serious student of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15).
- The pastor must be able to make disciples by teaching the believers "to observe all things" (Mat. 28:20). This involves more than teaching facts. It involves teaching how to walk with Christ, how to live the Christian life, how to do the work of the ministry.
- The pastor must be able to take oversight of the church. He must have the ability to lead and oversee and supervise all areas of church life and ministry (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2; Hebrews 13:17). The

qualified pastor is a leader, a manager, an overseer, a supervisor. He must have leading ability and planning ability. He should be a man of ideas. He has to lead the church in accomplishing everything Christ has commanded. He has to take God's commands and apply them to his cultural setting and figure out the best way to do God's work in that particular situation. He isn't a man who blindly follows tradition. That is not a leader. Yet many pastors don't ever rethink things. They don't analyze the services and programs to see if things could be done better.

- The pastor must be able to protect Christians from error (Titus 1:9-13; Acts 20:28-30). This includes rebuking when necessary (Titus 1:13). It requires the exercise of discipline (Titus 3:9-11). It requires the courage to confront sin and error. It requires spiritual discernment to know true believers from false (Titus 1:16). The qualified pastor is the opposite of the simple man who "believeth every word" (Prov. 14:15). The pastor must have keen doctrinal and spiritual discernment and a shepherd's heart for protecting and watching over the sheep. He must be informed about any danger that his church faces, such as New Evangelicalism, charismaticism, ecumenism, contemplative prayer, and contemporary music, and he must be able to protect the church from such things.
- The pastor must be able to train Christian workers (2 Tim. 2:2). A qualified pastor is a serious educator.

The man who lacks the ability to do the work of a pastor is not qualified to be a pastor, even if he has a good Christian life and testimony and even if he has the ability to do *some* of the work of a pastor.

There are many good Christian men who can even preach and teach, but they don't have the full gifting to be pastors. They might not be strong enough to exercise discipline as they should. They might not have the spiritual wisdom to deal with people effectually in a pastoral way. They might not be good leaders.

#### 4. *The test of recognition* (Acts 13:1-3)

When God called Paul and Barnabas to a particular missionary work, their church recognized that call. This is an important test. The normal Bible pattern is for an individual's call to be recognized by the church that

knows him best. The same was true when Timothy was called to accompany Paul on his journeys (Acts 16:1-3).

There will be occasions when a church is controlled by unsaved or carnal men and that church's judgment might be wrong.

Consider this statement by Charles Spurgeon to the preachers in his Bible college:

"Considerable weight is to be given to the judgment of men and women who live near to God, and in most instances their verdict will not be a mistaken one. *Yet this appeal is not final nor infallible, and is only to be estimated in proportion to the intelligence and piety of those consulted.* I remember well how that a godly Christian woman tried to dissuade me from preaching, but her opinion was outweighed by the judgment of persons of wider experience ... I have noted that you students, as a body, in your judgment of one another, are seldom if ever wrong. There has hardly ever been a case when the general opinion of the entire college concerning a brother has been wrong. Meeting as you do in class, in prayer, in conversation, and in various religious engagements, you gauge each other. And a wise man will be slow to set aside the verdict of the house" (C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*).

As Spurgeon noted, there are exceptions to this rule. When a church is controlled by unsaved or carnal men, the church's judgment will be wrong. There have been instances when God called a man or woman to a certain work, but the church refused to recognize the call or support the ministry. In fact, there are examples of this in the Bible.

- Jesus was rejected by His own people (Jn. 1:11).
- Paul was rejected by the Galatians and by some in the Corinthian church (Ga. 4:15-17; 1 Co. 9:1; 2 Co. 6:11-12; 3:1).
- John and other men of God were rejected by the proud Diotrephes (3 Jn. 9-10).

#### 5. *The test of proving* (1 Timothy 3:10; 2 Corinthians 8:22)

The Scriptures show that churches must be careful in ordination. Men must demonstrate their zeal and faithfulness *before* ordination, not *by* ordination.

This is true for every position of service in the church. The believer should show by his godly manner of life that he is qualified for a special place of service, regardless of how "lowly." A man will show by his life

and zeal whether he is called. The man who is called of God will serve the Lord in that capacity, or at least prepare for serving, without pay and without having a “position.”

The Scriptures warn about hasty ordinations (1 Tim. 5:22). Timothy was warned to be cautious about ordaining men to positions of leadership. The context of 1 Timothy 5:17-25 concerns leaders in the church. By laying on of hands, those performing the ordination are testifying publicly that they believe God has called the person being ordained. Ordination is a recognition of divine call. Those performing the ordination are identifying themselves with the one being ordained. If the church makes a mistake because of hastiness and failure to prove the person by God’s standards, they become partaker of the sins of the man wrongly ordained.

### 6. *The test of fruit*

The Bible emphasizes the importance of fruit (Psalm 1:1-3).

Note that the fruit is personal and individual (“his fruit”). Fruit is different for different people. We have different gifts and callings, but there will be fruit.

If you are called to a certain ministry, you should have some fruit, some success, some evidence. The blessing of God should be evident in some tangible way. “... make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:5).

There are pastors who are never successful in the ministry. In fact, there are pastors who only kill churches. They always have an excuse for their failures, and the excuse might sound reasonable, but there should be some evident blessing and fruit if a man is called of God.

Many men simply don’t have the ability to do the work of the pastorate. They are good Christian men. They have a good testimony and a good family, and they love Christ and love the Word of God, but they simply don’t have the gifting and wisdom and ability and discernment to lead a church.

One fruit of a pastor should be more pastors. Many pastors never reproduce themselves, never raise up and train more preachers, never start any new churches. After 20 years, there are no more preachers in the church than when his ministry started. We don’t see this type of thing

in Scripture. The great missionary church that is put before us in Scripture is Antioch. Paul and Barnabas worked for two years to establish the foundation of that church, and by the time God called them to go out as foreign missionaries, there were many other preachers in the church (Acts 13:1).

Fruit is an important test in all areas of ministry. There are missionaries who never start sound, self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating churches. There are Sunday School teachers who do not grow their classes either spiritually or numerically. There are song leaders who do not raise the standard and blessing of the church’s song service.

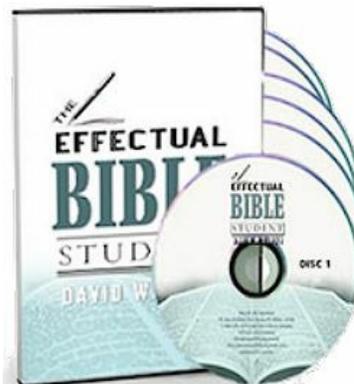
A God-called pastor will show evidences of his calling in all of the aforementioned ways: by the test of desire, the test of life, the test of ability, the test of recognition, the test of proving, and the test of fruit.

A man who does not have the biblical evidence of God’s calling should be content with doing something other than pastoring. There are many ways to preach without being a pastor.

Churches must be very careful in ordaining men. They must measure men by God’s standards, not by human standards. By ordaining the wrong men, they are doing both those men and the churches a disservice, and this business will doubtless be addressed at the judgment seat of Christ.

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# Tight Clothing and MODESTY

By David Cloud

The following is excerpted from [\*DRESSING FOR THE LORD\*](#). ISBN 978-1-58318-106-5. New edition December 2016. To our knowledge, this is the most extensive study on the Christian's dress in print. If ever there ever were a time when preachers need to instruct their people about clothing issues, it is today. Modern society is drenched with indecency. A Vogue fashion show would make ancient Corinth blush. To lay a solid Bible foundation for modesty, we exegete about 25 key Bible passages and develop principles that can be applied to any nation or culture. In fact, the book has been translated into German and Nepali. Chapter titles include "The Origin of Clothing," "Clothing Is a Language," "The Captains of the Fashion Industry," "Isn't This Basically the Man's Problem?" "Bible Guidelines for Clothing," "A Study on Biblical Modesty," "Worldliness and the Christian's Dress," "Pants and the Christian Woman," "Pushing the Edge on Dress Standards," Questions Answered on the Issue of Christian Dress," "Testimonies from Christian Women on the Issue of Modest Dress," "Survey of Men's Thinking on the Subject of Women's Dress," and "Plain Clothing." The "QUESTIONS ANSWERED" section deals with things such as the following: "Since God looks on the heart, why be concerned about appearance?" "Shouldn't we just teach the Bible and let the Holy Spirit deal with this issue?" "I believe dress standards just produce pride and hypocrisy." "The issue of the heart is more important than dress." "I wear pants because there are many things I can't do in a dress." "In Bible times both men and women wore robes." "I only wear feminine pants." "Wearing dresses is old-fashioned and we should not be weird." "Those who preach against pants on women are legalistic." "What about tattoos and piercings?" 206 pages.



Tight, clinging attire is as immodest as skimpy attire because the woman's figure is emphasized and accented, and the man's attention is directed to that which is forbidden outside of marriage. Men are strongly influenced sexually by the eye-gate and are attracted to the woman's curves. The immodest clothing industry understands these things and strives to dress women seductively rather than modestly.

It is important to understand that tight, form-fitting clothes can be just as sexually disturbing to a man as skimpy clothes.

In the book *For Women Only: What You Need to Know about the Inner Lives of Men*, Shaunti Feldhahn describes the following situation:

"Another husband with a happy twenty-year marriage described another typical scenario: 'My wife and I recently went out to dinner at a nice restaurant with some friends. The hostess was extremely attractive and was WEARING FORM-FITTING CLOTHES THAT SHOWED OFF A GREAT FIGURE. For the rest of the night, it was impossible not to be aware that she was across the restaurant, walking around. Our group had a great time with our lovely wives, but I guarantee you that our wives didn't know that every man at that table was acutely aware of that woman's presence and was doing his utmost not to look in that direction' (p. 114).

In our survey of Christian men on the issue of women's dress we found that tight clothing is at least as much of a potential problem for men as skimpy clothing. Most of the men indicated that tight skirts and tight blouses and form-fitting jeans hold a "VERY great potential" for lust.

Consider the following statements:

"I would say the number one problem is any garment that is form fitting, be it jeans, pants, skirt, dress, shirt, whatever. Anything that is tight, no matter how long it is, leaves nothing to the imagination, and that defeats the whole purpose of covering the skin in the first place!"

"You don't even need to see skin; they provide all the curves." Another man said: "I would say the Number One problem is any garment that is form fitting, be it jeans, pants, skirt, dress, shirt, whatever. Anything that is tight, no matter how long it is, leaves nothing to the imagination, and that defeats the whole purpose of covering the skin in the first place!"

"One thing I see in my church is tight clothing. Oh, it may very well be covering but it is revealing the shape in a woman. This can be even more tantalizing to a man."

"The point is that it is not merely the type of clothing that can trip a man up; rather it is the amount and the level of cling to the body."

Tight pants were designed by Calvin Klein, a bisexual fashion designer. When his super tight pants appeared in 1978, they sold 200,000 pairs in the first week.

Tights worn as pants were designed by Gianni Versace, a homosexual fashion designer who was murdered by a homosexual in 1997.

Godly women who understand what a temptation tight clothing is for men will be careful to avoid this type of attire.



The swan, a waterfowl closely related to ducks and geese, is among the largest and most majestic of the flying birds. The mute swan and trumpeter swan can weigh 30 pounds with a wingspan of eight feet.

The plumage of the male and female are alike, but the males are generally bigger and heavier.

Unlike most birds, swans have small jagged “teeth” as part of their beaks which they use for catching and eating fish, though their diet is largely vegetarian.

The adult male is called a cob, and the female, a pen. The baby swan is a signet or cygnet, and a group of cygnets or eggs is a clutch. A group of swans is called a bevy or lamentation or herd, and a group in flight is called a wedge.

Most species of swans are migratory.

Swans mate for life or at least for many years and build on the same nest each season. During the mating ritual, the male and female touch bill-to-bill and breast-to-breast to form a heart shape, as well as gently intertwining their long necks.

The nest is about three feet across and is built on the ground near water. Unlike most ducks and geese, the male swan helps build the nest as well as assists in incubating the eggs. The baby swan hatches in just over a month and swims with its mother within a couple of days. Gray at birth, it becomes white in about a year.

Both the female and the male swan with eggs or chicks are fierce opponents of any perceived threat and can inflict serious injuries with their strong wings. The male will try to drown another swan that comes into its territory during this time.

Most of the six or seven species of swans are white, but the Australian black swan is black with white on the wings and has a red bill, and the South American black-necked swan is white with a black neck and head.

The black swan swims with one leg, the other being tucked above it’s tail. “This helps it to change direction more smoothly when the swan is swimming on the surface of the water.”

Mute swans on the River Thames are caught, marked, and released each July. This dates from the 12th century, when the Crown claimed ownership of all unmarked mute swans. The first pair had been given to Richard the Lion-Hearted for his part in the Crusades. During the era of the Tudor kings (e.g., Henry VIII), swan meat was regarded as a delicacy and was featured in royal banquets.

The mute swan is a tourist attraction in Lake Morton in Lakeland, Florida. Not native to the area, some were brought in as pets in the 1920s but the small population had died out by 1954. Responding to a plea for help, Queen Elizabeth II donated two royal swans to the city, and the birds made a dramatic come back from that original pair. Each year the city rounds up its 80 or so swans for a health check and vaccinations.

## DIGGING IN THE WALLS

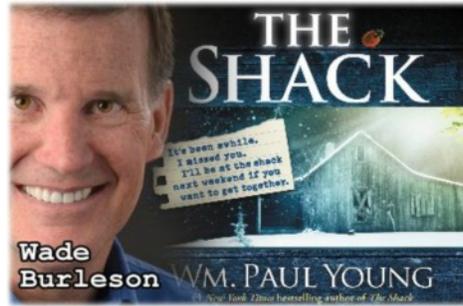
God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to dig in the walls of Israel's temple and observe the evils being done in secret by apostate religious leaders of that day. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall ... And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw. ..." (Ezek. 8:7-10).

Ezekiel was then instructed to preach against the errors of the leaders and to tell the people the things he had witnessed.

"Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. ... Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the Lord had shewed me" (Ezek. 11:4,25).

The hour in which we live is very similar to that of Ezekiel's day. Many of those who profess to be the people of God are apostate. It was prophesied in the New Testament Scriptures that such would be the case in the closing hours of our age. This will culminate in the brief worldwide rule of an utterly apostate Harlot "church" (2 Tim. 3-4; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Pet. 2-3; Jude; Rev. 17).

As in Ezekiel's day much of the apostasy of our hour is hidden from the view of the average Christian. We intend by God's grace to "dig in the walls" of modern ecumenism and to expose and cry out against the things we find. In this section we also report on secular events which are relevant to Christians. May God give us ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to obey. Is the truth of God not worthy of defense?



**SOUTHERN BAPTIST PASTOR PRAISES THE SHACK** (Friday Church News Notes, March 3, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143)

- Last week we described the "back to the Southern Baptist Convention" movement among Independent Baptists in "Prominent BBFI Church Joins the Southern Baptist Convention," Friday News, Feb. 17, 2017. Shortly after writing that piece, we were reminded of the heresies that are countenanced within the SBC. Wade Burleson, pastor of the Southern Baptist Emmanuel Baptist Church of Enid, Oklahoma, published a blog report a few days ago praising Paul Young and his heresy-filled book *The Shack*. Young has actually preached to this Southern Baptist congregation, though he doesn't even claim to be a Christian. Young told Burleson that he is "a hopeful universalist." Young "believes that our loving God sent His Son to die for every single sinner without exception. One day God will effectually reconcile every sinner to Himself. He uses the term 'hopeful' universalism because he understands that the Scriptures speak of judgment, but He is 'hopeful' that even in judgment, the love of God will eventually bring the sinner being judged to love for Jesus Christ. Paul Young is 'hopeful' that the fire of God's love will eventually and effectually persuade every sinner of God's love in Christ" (Burleson, "*The Shack and Universal Reconciliation*,"

February 2017, <http://wmpaulyoung.com/universal-reconciliation>). Like Young, many others who hold the heresy of universal salvation like to couch the issue in terms of a possibility. They pretend that the Bible does not settle this issue, but that is nonsense. When the Bible has spoken clearly on an issue, as it has on eternal redemption and eternal judgment, there is zero possibility that anything else will happen. The fire of eternal hell is not the fire of God's love; it is the fire of God's holy wrath, and Young doesn't believe in this God. Young's "hopeful universalism" is a blind "hope" of his own vain imagination, because the Bible plainly refutes it. The Bible says that those who believe on Jesus Christ savingly have eternal life, and those who reject Him have eternal judgment. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Joh. 3:36). Being unable to prove that Scripture itself teaches a "universal hope," Pastor Burleson justified Young's heresies by noting that evangelical hero C.S. Lewis held the same belief. But we would say to Pastor Burleson, "C.S. Lewis has zero authority. He was a rank heretic, and the fact that he is widely loved by Southern Baptist pastors is evidence of their apostasy, not of Lewis's theological soundness." Burleson concluded his report with these foolish words: "[G]o and enjoy *The Shack*. It is not heresy." What true Bible believer would want to join hands in denominational fellowship with such heretics?

**AMERICA'S LARGEST CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE CHAIN CLOSING** (Friday Church News Notes, March 3, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org),



[fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - Family Christian Stores, America's largest Christian bookstore chain, is closing after 85 years ("Family Christian Stores," ReligionNews.com, Feb. 23, 2017). The chain's 240 stores in 36 states will close. Several factors contributed to the collapse, including an overload of debt which the chain's owners could have avoided had they obeyed the precepts of the Bibles they sell. Chiefly, though, bookstores in general are being overtaken by the changing of the times. The explosion of the availability of eBooks and eVideos and the convenience of online shopping is hammering most traditional "brick and mortar" retailers. From a spiritual viewpoint, Family Christian Stores were as much a danger as a blessing. They were filled with corrupt Bible versions, worldly music, and the writings of a vast number of heretics (e.g., C.S. Lewis, Paul Young, Robert Schuller, Bruce Metzger, Dallas Willard, Norman Vincent Peale, Max Lucado, Brennan Manning, G.K. Chesterton, Larry Crabb, Robert Webber, Brian McLaren, Donald Miller, Erwin McManus, Chris Seay, Donald McCulough, Philip Yancey, Rob Bell, John Michael Talbot, Tony Campolo, and an assortment of Roman Catholic mystics). Forty-three years ago, the man who led me to Christ took me into a Christian bookstore to buy me a King James Bible and a Strong's Concordance, and as we were walking through the store he commented, "There is a lot of spiritual danger in

this store. Beware of false teachers." He taught me to be wary of false teaching and to test everything by God's Word. The word "beware" is found 16 times in the New Testament. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). (For more on this see "[Dangers in Christian Bookstores](#)" at [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), using the search engine.)

**NASCAR CHRISTIANITY** (Friday Church News Notes, March 3, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - This year, the prayers at the Daytona 500 and Daytona 300 automobile races were given by Southern Baptist Ronnie Barton (First Baptist of South Daytona) and Seventh-day Adventist chaplain Art Bakewell. Opening the Daytona 500 race with a prayer for blessing and protection is a tradition that goes back to 1959. The prayer has been part of the televised program since 1979. From 1959 to 2005, the prayer was given by Hal Marchman of Central Baptist Church (Southern Baptist) in Daytona Beach ("Prayer at the Start," *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, Feb. 24, 2017). Barton said he depends on his "heavenly thoughts" to guide his prayer. The Christianity of NASCAR is exceedingly shallow and worldly. The night before the race, hundreds



of people party in the infield. In 1968, in my "bad old days," I got so drunk during the infield party that I passed out and missed the race. It would be impossible to pray a legitimate prayer of blessing on this worldly mess. Many of the NASCAR drivers claim to be Christians, but at the same time they are the "lords" of this drunken, drugged up, half-naked debacle. Not only do the NASCAR drivers themselves routinely neglect the Lord's assembly in disobedience to Hebrews 10:25, but they encourage their followers to do the same. The prayers aren't even offered in Jesus name. Marchman ended his prayers with "Shalom and Amen." "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

**TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ROLLS BACK FEDERAL TRANSGENDER BATHROOM RULE** (Friday Church News Notes, March 3, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - U.S. President Donald Trump has rescinded the guidelines instigated by Barack Obama to give transgender students the right to use whichever public restrooms they are most comfortable with ("Trump administration orders U.S. schools to ignore Obama transgender bathroom efforts," UPI, Feb. 23, 2017). The Trump administration said, "This is an issue best solved at the state and local level." As it turns out, Obama reached a little too far, too fast with his bathroom policy, but we would not be surprised if the "right" of transsexuals to use the bathroom of their choice will be discovered in the Constitution by the nation's judges. However that turns out, the bathroom issue is actually a red herring. The more fundamental issue is that homosexuality and its related entities



(lesbian, bisexual, transsexual) have become morally acceptable to a large and rapidly growing percentage of the nation's citizens, and they are already legally protected from "discrimination" under some federal, state, and local laws. Betsy DeVos, U.S. Education Secretary under Trump, immediately came out with a statement that her department's Office for Civil Rights "remains committed to investigating all claims of discrimination, bullying, and harassment" against LGBT students. It is this reality that is bringing increasing persecution against Bible-believing Christians, as we have documented in "What Rights Others Lose When Homosexuals Gain their Rights," and absolutely nothing has happened in the recent political upheaval to change this reality.

**DENMARK ENFORCING MUSLIM SHARIA LAW** (Friday Church News Notes, March 3, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - In an act right out of the Muslim Sharia law playbook, a 42-year-old man in Denmark has been charged with "blasphemy" for burning the



Quran. The defendant's lawyer "said his client burned the Quran in self-defense, asserting that the Islamic holy book 'contains passages on how Mohammed's followers must kill the infidel, i.e. the Danes'" ("Danish man who set fire to Quran," Breitbart, Feb. 24, 2017). At the same time, it is legal to burn a Bible in Denmark, where the state church is "Lutheran." A man who burned a Bible on state television in 1997 was not charged. Islam has been a judgment on apostate Christianity since its inception.

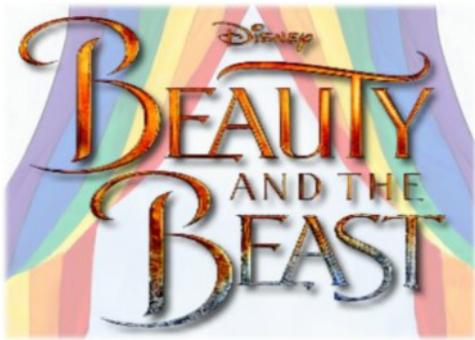
**DISNEY CONTINUES TO ACT AS A SOCIAL CHANGE AGENT** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org),

[fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - Disney continues to act as a major social change agent by its attempt to normalize and glorify homosexuality. Its new remake of *Beauty and the Beast* features a homosexual relationship. Movie directory Bill Condon says, "LeFou [a companion of Gaston] is somebody who on one day wants to be Gaston [a muscular hunter who wants to marry Belle, the 'beauty'] and on another day wants to kiss Gaston. He's confused about what he wants. It's somebody who's just realizing that he has these feelings. And Josh makes something really subtle and delicious out of it. ... at the end ... it is a nice, exclusively gay moment in a disney movie" ("*Beauty and the Beast* Remake,"

**LACEWING MAGIC** (Friday Church News Notes, March 3, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, Nov. 17, 2014: "The relationship between the beaded lacewing larvae and the California termite poses a real problem for those who believe there is no Creator. The lacewing larvae enter termite nests in order to finish their growth cycle. Later, they leave as adults. The problem is, termites are often still at home when the larvae enter the nest. The termites, 30 times the size of the larvae, pose a serious threat to the larvae. But if you watch the larvae enter the nest, they wave their abdomen to an approaching termite, and the targeted termite immediately falls over. Upon further study, scientists have learned that the tiny larva releases a chemical that totally paralyzes the termite. Studies have also shown that the chemical works



only on this particular species of termite. The evolutionary explanation is that for millions of years lacewing larvae crawled up to every sort of insect, madly waving their abdomens at them--and were promptly eaten! One wonders how the larvae survived at all and why it was that their chemical protection just happened to work on those termites that made nice safe tunnels for them to grow in. To believe that the lacewing's defense developed just by chance is nothing more than blind faith. It's not science. And it is a very opposite kind of faith from those who believe in a Creator!"



*Christian Headlines*, Mar. 2, 2017). Fallen human nature has many “feelings” that are powerful and “natural” but unlawful before God, but modern society denies God and seeks to legitimize all human feelings through a relativistic morality. Few men have had more influence on American society and the modern global culture than Walt Disney. He pioneered the American animation industry and captivated children’s hearts with cartoon characters such as Micky Mouse and Donald Duck. He took Hollywood fantasy to a new level of influence with the building of Disneyland in California and Disney World in Florida. Disney’s animated classics are filled with pagan and occultic imagery such as witches and demons, sorcerers and spells, genies and goblins, which is strongly denounced by Scripture. Like *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*, Disney cartoons present the false and damnable concept that there is good and bad magic. Disney did not attend church, and there are no churches on Main Street in Disneyland or Disney World, even though there were churches on practically every main street in America when Disneyland opened in 1955. Multitudes of Christian parents have unwisely allowed Disney’s cartoons and movies to influence their children. When Disneyland opened, *Time* magazine featured Walt Disney on its cover and called him “the poet of the new American humanism.” Indeed. The

acceptance of Hollywood’s “entertainment” by American churches over the past half century helped paved the way for the wholesale apostasy that we witness today and the destruction of morality in society at large.

**ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCE PUSHES GAY AGENDA** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Air Force promotes gay ‘marriage,’” *Arutz Sheva*, Feb. 27, 2017: “Now, the Israel Air Force, too, has been recruited to the task of reeducating the Israel public to the wonders of the non-traditional lifestyles. The IAF Facebook page featured short portraits of four IAF households, in honor of Family Day, which was marked on Sunday. Two of these portraits were of traditional mom and dad families: one featured a seemingly secular couple with one young daughter, and another showed a haredi couple with five children. The third was a homosexual couple, and the fourth--a single mother with an eight-year-old daughter. Next to the smiling portrait of Captain Adir Gabbai and his partner Dean, the post informs us that the two served in the same unit in the IAF, and that eight years later, they are now ‘newlyweds.’ Whoever manages the IAF’s Facebook page appears to be oblivious to the fact that Israel has never recognized gay marriage. ...



The IDF’s official website, too, has been intensively promoting gay and transsexual soldiers in recent years, alongside the never-ending campaign promoting combat service by women, which involves lowering the standards for acceptance into combat units. *Arutz Sheva* has learned that the military’s adoption of the anti-family, gender-blurring ideology is backed up by a document propagated by the Chief-of-Staff’s Advisor on Matters of Gender (known by the acronym ‘Yohalam’) in late 2015. The document presents as scientific fact the unproven beliefs held by Gender Studies programs worldwide, according to which there is no innate difference between men and women, and that gender is a social construct. ‘The perception of humanity as being split up into two groups (men and women) is inaccurate; it casts people into ill-fitting molds, and is a false and inefficient basis for managing the human resource to its full potential,’ states the official IDF document. In case it requires restating--we note that the above beliefs are completely unsupported by scientific observation and research, as well as by common sense.”

**CHURCH DISTRIBUTES “THE SHACK’S COOL GOD”** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - We received the following in the week: “Just letting you know that we made A4-fold booklets of your article ‘The Shack’s Cool God’ and distributed them among our youth yesterday. I also made enough copies to put some on our foyer table, and they all disappeared. People who missed out were asking for them in the PM service, so I’ll print some more for next Sunday. The movie doesn’t get released in Australia for a few



weeks yet, so plenty of time to educate the people here. Thanks for your diligence in making this information available to those who want to be informed.”

**MAINSTREAM TELEVISION REPORTER SAYS CONTROLLING WHAT PEOPLE THINK “IS OUR JOB”** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143)

- On the February 22 edition of MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” co-host Mika Brzezinski warned that President Donald Trump is “trying to undermine the media” and is “undermining the messaging” so effectively that “he can actually control exactly what people think.” Brzezinski said, “[T]hat is our job,” referring to the news media. This is a telling remark. She actually thinks that her job is to control people’s thinking, whereas the proper job of the news media is to report news without bias filtering. But in this lying world, the only place you are going to the truth entirely unfiltered is the Word of God. By its unvarnished



truth, the child of God has the ability to prove all things so that he is protected from the devil’s lies. “(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

**DIVINITY SCHOOLS URGE PROFESSORS TO USE G E N D E R - N E U T R A L LANGUAGE FOR GOD** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from “Vanderbilt, Duke Divinity Schools,” TruthRevolt.org, Jan. 17, 2017: “Two of the nation’s top divinity schools are urging professors to strip away the male pronouns when referring to God and aim for more of an ‘exploration of fresh language for God.’ HeatStreet discovered that in the 2016-2017 Vanderbilt catalog, the divinity school has decided to ‘continuously and explicitly’ use ‘inclusive language, especially in relation to the Divine’ as a means ‘to mitigate sexism.’ This isn’t necessarily a new concept as these guidelines surfaced in 1999, according to divinity school Dean Melissa Snarr. The older document stressed that every name for God wasn’t always gendered and stated ‘masculine titles, pronouns, and imagery for God have served as a cornerstone for the patriarchy.’ It’s reported that Vanderbilt isn’t making this change a requirement and Snarr says, ‘It is up to the individual professor’s interpretation for their classes and is suggestive rather than mandatory.’ Duke’s divinity school



guidelines are similar, calling for ‘developing a more inclusive language about God’ and avoiding masculine pronouns. ‘God’ or ‘Godself’ will suffice. Instead of saying ‘God the father,’ a professor at Duke is encouraged to say, ‘God the parent.’ Another example: ‘God is the father who welcomes his son, but she is also the woman searching for the lost coin.’”

**POPE URGES “FAITHFUL” TO CONSULT BIBLES AS MUCH AS TEXT MESSAGES** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143)

- Speaking from his apartment balcony at Vatican Square this week, Pope Francis called on the “faithful” to consult the Bible as much as text messages. “What would happen if we turned back when we forget it, if we opened it more times a day, if we read the message of God contained in the Bible the way we read messages on our cellphones” (“Pope Urges Faithful,” Newsmax, Mar. 5, 2017). That’s good advice even if it does come from an unlikely source. In fact,



frequent consultation of the Bible is the reason why I don't believe in the pope. In the pages of Holy Scripture, I have never found a pope, a pontiff, a prelate, a papal blessing, a papal chair, a papal palace, the primacy of Peter, the primacy of Rome, a cardinal, an archbishop, a mass, prayers to a host, the baptism of an infant, the annunciation of Mary, the enthronement of Mary, prayers to Mary, prayers to dead "saints," confession of sins to a priest, purgatory, holy pilgrimages, a rosary, a scapular, veneration of relics, or really anything uniquely pertaining to the Roman Catholic Church.

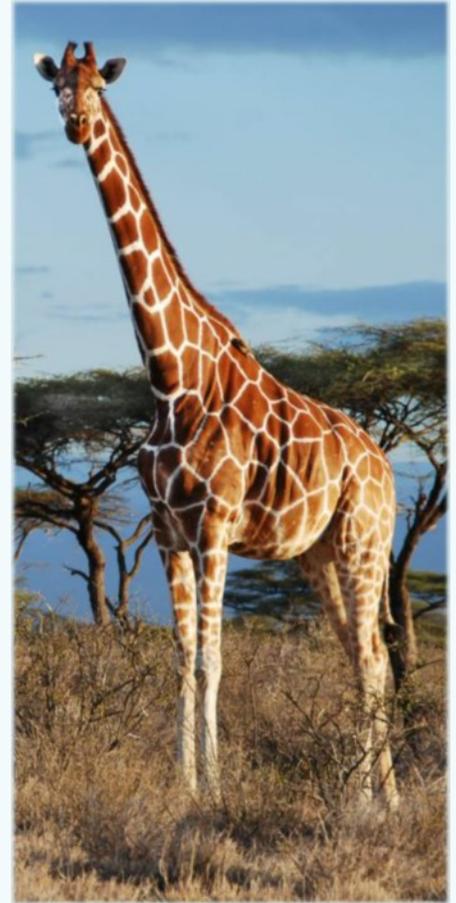
### **ADDICTION EXPERT CALLS EXCESSIVE SCREEN EXPOSURE "DIGITAL HEROIN"**

(Friday Church News Notes, March 17, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Doc claims too much screen time," CBSMiami, Mar. 3, 2017: "Smart screens are everywhere these days and it seems like everyone has them including young kids. The debate over 'how much screen time is too much' is nothing new but there's one doctor who says the problem is so severe, he's dubbed it 'digital heroin.' In his book *Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction is Hijacking Our Kids and How to Break the Trance*, author Dr. Nicholas Kardaras likens the effects of excessive screen exposure to the neurological damage caused by drug



### **THE GIRAFFE'S WONDER**

**NET** (Friday Church News Notes, March 10, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, February 9, 2017: "The giraffe's heart and the rest of his cardiovascular system are very different from ours – and from most other creatures. If it weren't different, there wouldn't be any giraffes! In order to get his blood all the way from his heart up that long neck to his brain, the giraffe's heart must produce twice as much blood pressure as would be expected in an animal his height. But the giraffe's brain is very sensitive to high blood pressure. So giraffes have been given a special structure that's been called the 'wonder net,' where the blood supply enters his brain. This wonder net keeps the blood pressure in the giraffe's brain just where it should be. Even if the giraffe drops his head quickly--say, from nibbling a treetop to take a drink of water--the blood pressure in his head remains safe. The wonder net can quickly control such rapid changes. And to prevent used blood from draining back into his brain when he lowers



his head, the giraffe has a special set of one way check valves in his neck. When we talk about our Creator, we need not be afraid that some people will think we are talking about worthless things. Truly, the wonders the Creator has made are great and worthy to be told to people far and wide!"

addiction. 'Obviously I'm not implying that screen addiction is as fatal as the opiate epidemic we are experiencing nationally, but it is, it is, as addictive as a lot of the other substance addiction we treat,' said Dr. Kardaras. ... How do parents feel? Leci Valdes is a busy Miami mom of three daughters. A 3-year-old, and 10-month-old twins. 'A normal day in the Valdes household is pretty crazy, but I'm getting my groove,' said Valdes who explained it's all

about balance. That means limiting her daughter Mila's screen time, specifically time spent on smart phones and tablets. 'She would lay right next to me, she would be on my phone or my iPad for 25 to 30 minutes and I would get a break,' explained Valdes. 'I was noticing however with my child a pattern. And the pattern was, when I asked to have the iPad given back or the phone to be given back to me, the reaction was mind-blowing to be frank.' She says

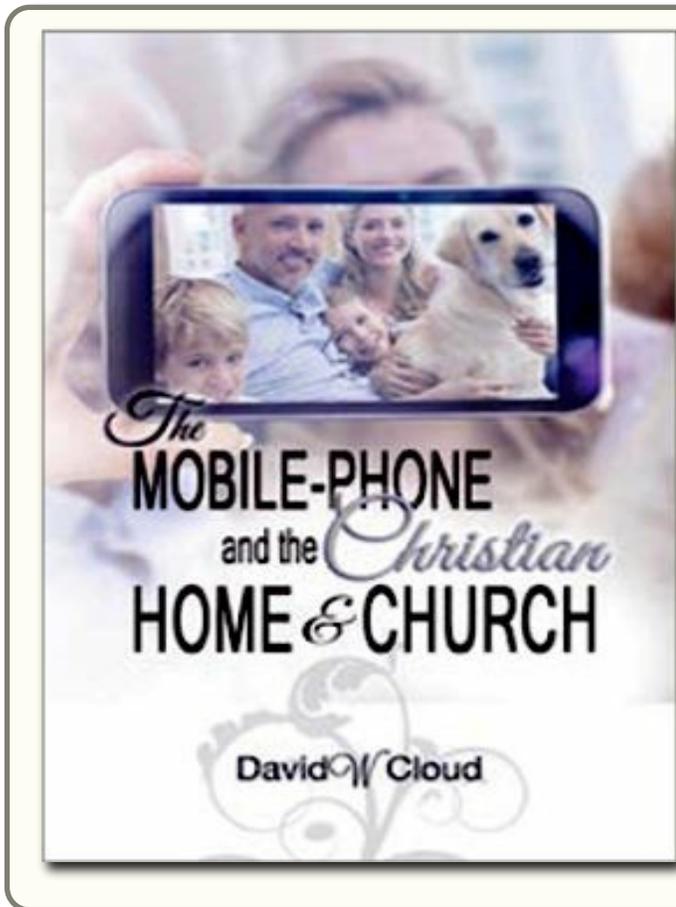
the tantrums lasted longer than the screen time itself. Reactions like that are part of the reason Dr. Kardaras has dubbed smart-screens ‘digital heroin.’ ‘When I call screen technology digital heroin, I really don’t make that comparison lightly,’ said Dr. Kardaras.” (Our book [The Mobile Phone and Christian Home and Church](#) gives many practical tips for parents and youth about the safe use of electronic media.)

**COMMUNIST CHINA CONTINUES WAR AGAINST UNREGISTERED CHURCHES** (Friday Church News Notes, March 17, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is from “China Cracks Down,” Radio Free Asia, Feb. 23, 2017: “Chinese authorities in the restive northwestern region of Xinjiang have banned all Christian

activities not linked to state-approved churches, launching a nationwide crackdown on unofficial worship in the name of "anti-terrorism" measures, RFA has learned. Underground Catholic churches and Protestant house churches have been warned to halt all activity throughout the region, a religious affairs official confirmed on Thursday. ‘Yes, that’s right,’ said the official, who answered the phone at the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government’s religious and ethnic minority affairs bureau. ‘They all have to worship in [an officially approved] church,’ the official said, indicating that both Catholics and Protestants are affected by the new measures. China is home to an estimated 68 million Protestants, of whom 23 million worship in state-affiliated churches, and some nine million Catholics, 5.7 million of



whom belong to state-sponsored organizations. But the ruling Chinese Communist Party, which embraces atheism, has stepped up controls over any form of religious practice among its citizens in recent years, putting increasing pressure on faith groups to join the Protestant Three Self Patriotic Association or the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which has no ties with the Vatican. The administration of President Xi Jinping regards Christianity as a dangerous foreign import, with officials warning last year against the ‘infiltration of



## The Mobile Phone and the Christian Home and Church

A Youth Discipleship Course

by David W. Cloud

Many Christian homes and churches are losing a frightful percentage of their young people to the world.

This practical and far-reaching youth discipleship course deals with the parent’s part, the church’s part, and the youth’s part in winning and discipling young people. It covers salvation, child discipline, the Christian home environment that produces disciples, reaching the child’s heart, Bible study techniques, how to protect young people from dangers associated with the Internet and smartphones, how to use apologetics, and many other things.

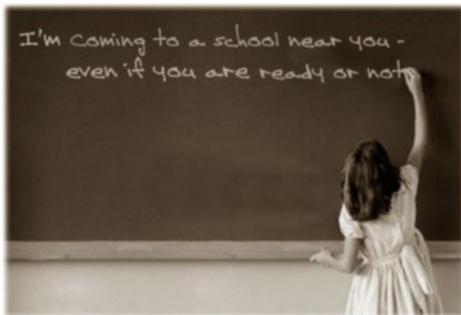
It deals with how to train young people to be effective Bible students and how to involve them in the church’s ministry. The course deals with eleven biblical principles of spiritual protection that young people must build into their own lives.

[Available From Way of Life Website](#)

Western hostile forces' in the form of religion. ... Authorities at the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps 31st agricultural regiment, part of a regional military-backed organization known as the bingtuan, on Feb. 19 ordered two house churches to close, local sources told RFA. Both churches were raided by local police and by dozens of officials from the local religious affairs bureau, with 21 members taken to the police station for questioning, they said. A member of a Protestant house church in the Ili (Yili) Kazakh prefecture told RFA on Thursday that local police had already handed down short-term administrative jail sentences to church members in the prefecture. 'We don't dare gather for worship now,' the church member said. 'The police are saying it's part of terrorism prevention in Xinjiang, and that they won't allow gatherings of even a few people.'"

**NEW YORK DROPPING LITERACY EXAM FOR TEACHERS** (Friday Church News Notes, March 17, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from "NY dropping teacher literacy test," *Fox News*, Mar. 13, 2017: "At a time when the United States has plummeted in the global rankings of education standards, one of the country's largest states is poised to scrap a test designed to measure the



reading and writing skills of people trying to become teachers. Citing the fact that an outsized percentage of black and Hispanic candidates were failing the test, members of the New York state Board of Regents plans to adopt a task force's recommendation to eliminate the literacy exam, known as the Academic Literacy Skills Test, given to prospective teachers. The literacy test was among four assessments introduced in the 2013-2014 school year as part of an effort to raise the level of elementary and secondary school teaching in the state. It came after years of complaints from education reformers about the caliber of students entering education schools and the quality of the instruction they received there. A December 2016 study by the National Council on Teacher Quality found that 44 percent of the teacher-preparation programs it surveyed across the country accepted students from the bottom half of their high school classes. Education reformers believe that tests like New York's Academic Literacy Skills Test can weed out potentially lousy teachers. The tests, however, came under intense scrutiny for their alleged racial bias, after just 46 percent of Hispanic test-takers and 41 percent of black test-takers passed it on the first try, compared with 64 percent of white candidates. ... Ian Rosenblum, the executive director of the New York office of the Education Trust, a nonprofit that advocates for high achievement for all students, called the literacy test 'a 12th grade-level assessment'--something a high school senior should be able to pass."

**CHRISTIAN MAN SHOT DEAD AND SON BURNED ALIVE BY ISIS IN EGYPT** (Friday Church News Notes, March 17, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org),



[fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "ISIS Terror Grows in Egypt," *Christian Today*, Feb. 23, 2017: "A Christian man has been shot dead and his son burned alive in Egypt, according to reports from the region. Saad Hana, 65 and his son Medhat, 45 were murdered in El-Arish, North Sinai in the latest wave of violence against Christians. Father Youssef Sobhy, of the Mar Girgis Coptic Orthodox Church in El-Arish, said three masked men assaulted the father and son at their home. 'The men knocked at the door of the home of the Christians and Medhat opened the door,' Sobhy told International Christian Concern. 'The men shot his old father, Saad Hanna, in the head and then they burned the home.' More Christians are expected to be targeted as the persecution grows, according to terror group statements. A few days ago, terror groups in Egypt aligned with Islamic State said Christian believers were their 'favorite prey.'" FINAL NOTE: The Coptic Orthodox Church has a false sacramental gospel, but the fact remains that these people are being targeted as Christians by jihadist Muslims.

**THE STATE OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS** (Friday Church News Notes, March 17, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Planet Nebraska," *National Review*,



Feb. 22, 2017: “The United States exports far more farm produce than any other country, nearly twice the amount of big agricultural powers such as Brazil, France, and Germany. ... It is not as though the rest of the world doesn’t know how to farm or doesn’t have arable land and water. And it is not as though Nebraska soybeans enjoy some sort of special cachet, like French wine--soybeans are pretty much soybeans. American farmers are just better at producing them. Which is why, while all those unhappy 26-year-olds with MFAs in creative writing are moaning about the state of the world, American farmers are getting rich. According to the USDA, 97 percent of U.S. farm households are both high-wealth and high-income, meaning that they score above the national median on both counts. ... if you focus on ... families operating commercial agricultural operations, you have an average household wealth of \$2.5 million. ... [and] the average debt of a farm family is only about \$72,000.”

**BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT** (Friday Church News Notes, March 17, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - Valerian Trifa, a Nazi war crimes criminal from Romania, entered the United States in 1950 under the Displaced Persons Immigration Law and was granted citizenship. He became an Orthodox priest and rose

to the position of bishop by 1955, the year he delivered the opening prayer before the United States Senate. In 1970 he was made archbishop. As early as the 1950s he was recognized by Jewish refugees as a prominent member of the Iron Guard, an anti-Semitic organization that was involved in the persecution and murder of Jews, and was reported to United States Department of Justice. But the evidence against him was weak. An investigation was opened in 1975, and a search of West German archives amazingly found a 1942 postcard from “Viorel Trifa” to Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler. When examined by a handwriting expert, the postcard was determined to have



been written by Valerian, but this was not considered sufficient evidence to convict him. While examining the photocopy of the postcard, the expert believed that he could detect an extremely faint fingerprint, but the West German authorities would not release the original for analysis because it would have been damaged by the traditional powder method of trying to raise the print. A few years later, through newly invented, non-destructive laser technology, the FBI was able to isolate and photograph the fingerprint, and it turned out to be a match for Valerian Trifa. He subsequently gave up his U.S. citizenship and moved to Portugal until his death in 1987. “... be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23).

**2,500-YEAR-OLD SHIP SAILS AGAIN** (Friday Church News Notes, March 24, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “2,500-year-old ship,” *The Times of Israel*, Mar. 17, 2017: “A replica of a 2,500-year-old trading ship found off the coast of Israel was christened in Haifa Friday morning, ahead of its first voyage out of the shelter of the bay later this month. The keel of the ‘Ma’agan Michael II,’ named after the kibbutz where its ancient forerunner was found in 1985, was laid in July 2014 as part of a joint project by the University of Haifa’s Department of Maritime Civilizations and the Israel Antiquities Authority. On Friday morning, the university and IAA poured a libation of wine to Poseidon and cast off for a quick jaunt around the bay. Later this month, however, the ship will make its maiden voyage down the coast to Herzliya, a three-day sail. The archaeologists involved in the project seek to learn how ancient mariners sailed against the winds and currents with the technology existing at the time, a quandary that historians still don’t understand despite vast evidence that Mediterranean seafaring existed



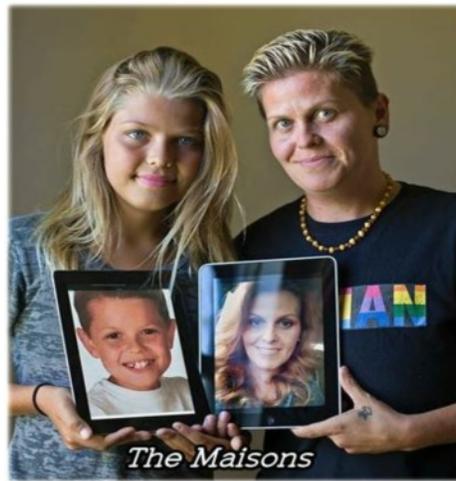
for centuries before the Ma'agan Michael ship sank. ... Archaeologists from the University of Haifa dug out the remains of the ancient vessel over the course of three seasons in 1988 and 1989. The ship, a standard sort of cargo vessel at the time, was around 37-feet long and 13-feet wide and was believed to hail from Greece. ... Once the Ma'agan Michael's crew gains enough experience, they will try to sail to Cyprus, but that project is still on the horizon."

**79% OF AMERICANS COMFORTABLE WITH WOMEN PASTORS** (Friday Church News Notes, March 24, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org),



[fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - According to a new Barna Poll, 79% of Americans are comfortable with women serving as spiritual leaders in churches. Even among "evangelical" Christians, 39% are in favor. The survey is called "What Americans Think about Women in Power." The results reflect many decades of feminist brainwashing.

**MOTHER AND SON BECOMING "FATHER AND DAUGHTER"** (Friday Church News Notes, March 24, 2017,



[www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Mother and son," *Fox News*, Mar. 15 2017: "A transgender dad and daughter from Detroit are revealing their incredible journeys as they transition from mom and son. Corey Maison, 15, first told her parents she identified as a girl four years ago, but it was not until last year she learned that her mother also struggled with her gender identity. The pair are now leaning on each other as they transition together. The teen has chronicled their transitions on her Instagram account, and the two sat down for an interview with Australia's '60 Minutes' to talk about the experience. 'I wanted to make my parents proud of who I am, but I thought that they would not like me,' Corey said about coming out as transgender. Eric Maison, who used to go by Erica, said that he was emboldened by his daughter's decision. He wrestled with different emotions while deciding whether to transition. 'The first feeling was relief, the second was terror,' he said. 'Fear for what my

future would hold, fear for how my family and children would, fear for what the rest of my life was going to look like.' ... Eric said he plans to stay together with his husband, Les, who supports his transition."

**SWEDEN'S FATUOUS FEMINISTS** (Friday Church News Notes, March 24, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from *Frontpagemag.com*, Feb. 17, 2017: "So here's twenty-first-century Western feminism in a nutshell. Earlier this month, after the White House released a photograph of Donald Trump signing a presidential order in the presence of several male appointees, Isabella Lovin, the Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, put out a picture of herself signing a climate-change law in the company of other top female officials. Plainly, the photo was meant as a defiant statement of proud womanhood in the face of the world's leading threat to female equality and dignity--the new man in the Oval Office. Indeed, the current Swedish government, in which the cabinet consists of twelve men and twelve



women, has proclaimed itself to be ‘the world’s first feminist government.’ *Buzzfeed’s* article about this triumphant moment carried the headline: ‘Did The Swedish Government Just Epically Troll Donald Trump With This All-Woman Photo?’ But what a difference a couple of weeks can make. The other day a four-man, eleven-woman Swedish delegation traveled to Tehran to ink a trade deal with the mullahs. Throughout the visit, the women, led by Trade Minister Ann Linde, wore hijabs, plus long, shapeless coats obviously selected for maximum ‘modesty.’ One photograph, which shows the female members of the Swedish delegation striding past Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, is wonderfully illuminating: in their postures, in their facial expressions, these women’s defiance in response to big, bad, evil Trump is nowhere in evidence. They’re all wearing dark pants. The woman whose face we can see the best is the very picture of meekness and obeisance. The look on her face might well be that of a humble, pious, provincial nun about to be introduced to the Pope. Her right hand is on her chest, a signal that Rouhani need not worry that she might try to shake his hand. Another picture shows Linde herself clearly bowing to an Iranian official. The ‘world’s first feminist government,’ which ‘epically troll[ed]’ Trump, thus effectively communicated to Iran--and the entire Muslim world--a message of submission that could hardly have been improved upon.”



**66-YEAR-OLD SENTENCED FOR DISTRIBUTING ANTI-MIGRANT LEAFLETS** (Friday Church News Notes, March 24, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbs@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbs@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from *Breitbart*, Jan. 18, 2017: “A 66-year-old German man has been given a suspended three-month prison sentence for hate speech after he distributed leaflets in his town calling migrants ‘parasites.’ The pensioner, referred to as Wilfried M. in local media, admitted to the crime and claimed he regretted his actions. According to prosecutors, on July 31, 2016 Wilfried handed out laminated leaflets that said, ‘Refugees go home’ and ‘You are parasites’ in the town of Werther, North Rhine-Westphalia, reports local paper *Westfalen-Blatt*. ... The pensioner said he had put up the leaflets in response to the way new asylum seekers behaved in the small town, which is home to around eleven and a half thousand people. According to Wilfried, the asylum seekers he saw in Werther were ‘disrespectful, demanding, and ungrateful.’ The lawyer for the defendant, Kerstin Koch, attempted to get the proceedings terminated by explaining the man

had recently lost his wife to a failed operation and was barely managing to scrape by on the small allowance he was receiving from the government. But both the prosecutor and the judge did not see his situation as valid extenuating circumstances and the judge prioritised the defence of the ‘human dignity’ of migrants who had been insulted. The judge also handed down a €300 fine to the cash-strapped pensioner to be paid in €15-a-month installments. Hate speech laws in Germany and the prosecution of people for anti-mass migration or anti-migrant opinions has skyrocketed over the course of the migrant crisis. In some cases, men and women have been arrested and taken to court for migrant-critical social media posts and others have even had their homes raided by police for hate speech.”

**HYPNOSIS DANGER** (Friday Church News Notes, March 24, 2017, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org), [fbs@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbs@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - One of the many occult practices that have invaded the healthcare field is hypnosis. This is “an induced altered state of consciousness in which the subject becomes passive and is responsive to suggestion” (*Harper’s*



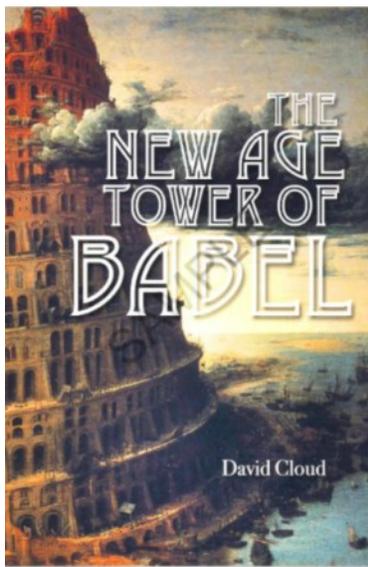
*Encyclopedia of Mystical and Paranormal Experience*). The term *hypnosis*, from *hypnos*, the Greek god of sleep, was coined by James Braid, a 19th-century British mesmerist. Courses on hypnosis are taught in many medical schools and an estimated 20,000 medical and psychological specialists use it (“Hypnosis,” *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*). Hypnosis is used in pain relief, anesthesiology, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, weight control, birth control, sleep therapy, physical healing, psychological healing, self-improvement, human potential, recovery of memories, regression therapy (healing the present through recovering the past), and other ways. When used in the field of modern health care, the idea is that the practice of hypnotism itself is innocent and useful and can be divorced from its occultic associations, but this is impossible. The *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs* observes: “Historically, hypnotism is typically associated with the occultist or psychic, the one who exercises power over things or persons, such as the shaman, magician, witch doctor, medium, witch, guru, or yogi.” Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), an astrologer and occultist, proposed a healing technique through hypnosis and the flow of “animal magnetism” from the practitioner to the patient. Mesmerization or hypnosis produced two occultic movements in the 19th century. One was the New Thought or Mind Science movement. Phineas Quimby (1802-66), a student of

Mesmer, called his “mind healing” theories the Science of Health and had a powerful influence on Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science. The other movement was spiritism. Another Mesmer student, Andrew Jackson Davis, published a book in 1847 which he said was dictated to him by spirits while he was in a mesmeric trance. *The Encyclopedia of Psychic Science* says, “The conquest by spiritualism soon began and the leading Mesmerists were absorbed into the rank of the spiritualists.” The danger of hypnotism is evident from the fact that it can produce a wide variety of occult phenomena, including past life experiences, multiple personalities, speaking in unknown languages, automatic

writing, clairvoyance, telepathy, seizures, spirit possession, astral projection, and psychic diagnosis (*Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*). The fact that hypnosis is so intimately associated with the occult and communication with spiritual realms forbidden in Scripture is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear (Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The wise Christian will stay far away from anything savoring of the occult! The Bible exhorts the believer to be sober (1 Peter 5:8). This means to be in control of one’s mind, to be spiritually and mentally alert. It means to be on guard against danger. It is the very opposite of allowing oneself to be put into a trance.

## The New Age Tower Of Babel

By David Cloud



**Available From:**  
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This 505-page book documents the explosive growth of the New Age movement in our day. God’s people need to be able to identify the New Age and refute it with Scripture so that they can protect themselves, their churches, their loved ones, and their neighbors in these dark last days. Far too many are unequipped for this task.

The New Age is on the move! The New Age philosophy has permeated the self-help, personal transformation field; it has leavened education (from lowest to highest levels) and reached deeply into business, health care, psychological counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, politics and government, athletics and sports, even the military.



*“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:18-20).*

Prayer is an essential part of our spiritual armor. It is a covering protection, and it is an assault weapon that goes against the enemy’s territory.

Believers who want to walk in spiritual revival, blessing, power, and fruit must make much of prayer. There must be a daily “prayer closet.” There must be a daily walk in continual prayer. There must be prayer partners. There must be corporate prayer, and the more the better.

One of the reasons why America is so vile and the churches are so weak and powerless and ineffectual at the community and national level is the gross lack of prayer.

I attended a mid-week prayer meeting recently at an independent Baptist church that is all too typical. It consisted of about four minutes of silent prayer closed by a brother who prayed for about 30 seconds. That, plus the prayers at the beginning and end of the services and the prayers before the preaching, forms pretty much the sum total of that church’s corporate prayer effort.

A few churches are doing a little better. A few have short prayer meetings before the services for the

members who will attend. Some have a more serious mid-week prayer meeting in which the members break up into twos and threes to spend some time in intercessory prayer. The problem is that such prayer meetings are usually not well attended and the prayer time is rushed.

It used to be common for churches to have a series of “cottage prayer meetings” preceding Bible conferences and “revivals,” but that type of thing is exceedingly rare today. Too many churches are trusting the power of the speaker rather than beseeching the power of God.



Following are some of the elements of effectual prayer from Ephesians 6:18-20:

1. **We must pray *always*.** This means to pray throughout the day. It means to walk in communion with God and talk to Him about everything.
2. **We must pray *in the Spirit*.** This does not refer to shouting, shaking, falling, or laughing. It does not refer to “tongues speaking.” It means to be under the Spirit’s control, to seek His wisdom (1 John 2:27), to follow His guidance, to not grieve Him by sin and stubbornness (Ephesians 4:30).
3. **We must pray *with supplication*.** To supplicate is to make request, to plead. The Greek word “deesis” has the sense of earnestness. See Hebrews 5:7 and James 5:16. In both verses, “deesis” is translated “prayer.”

4. **We must pray *with watching*.** This refers to watching over the saints in intercessory prayer. It is an assault on the enemy and his territory. It is spiritual warfare, which is why intercessory prayer is often difficult, and we are tempted to stop engaging in it.
5. **We must pray *perseveringly*,** without growing faint and quitting. This is one of the most important principles of effectual prayer (Luke 18:1-5).
6. **We must pray *with plain requests*** (Ephesians 6:19-20). Effectual intercessory prayer asks for

specific things. It is not, “Lord, bless all of the missionaries,” but, “Lord, the Jones’s in Uganda need protection and blessing for their new outreach.....”

7. **We must seek *prayer partners*** (Ephesians 6:19). Paul frequently asked for prayer, and he specified exactly what he needed.

See also Romans 15:30-32; Philippians 1:19; Colossians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Philemon 22; Hebrews 13:18-19.



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- Exalting the Lord Jesus Christ; His eternal perfect, and preserved Word; and the Gospel of his Grace. (2 Peter 3:1-2, 18)
- Standing for the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27; Jude 3)
- Challenging Christian workers to uphold the truth and resist the apostasy of our times. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)
- Exposing the spirit of error and compromise within Christendom (Hosea 4:6a; 2 Tim. 3)
- Upholding the New Testament Church (1 Tim. 6:13-14). O Timothy is a ministry of Bethel Baptist Church of London, Ontario.
- Challenging churches to fulfill the Great Commission of world evangelism (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13-14)
- Standing for the Received Text of the Holy Scriptures, the Authorized Version in the English Language, and sound translations of the TR in the languages of the world. (Ps. 12:6-7)



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Way of Life Literature  
 P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368  
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