

O Timothy

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

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

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“New Reformed Calvinism, unlike old Reformed Calvinism, is ecumenical. There are no strict boundaries. The Gettys associate in ministry with almost anybody: Pentecostal, Charismatic, Roman Catholic, deniers of the blood atonement (C.S. Lewis), theistic evolutionists (John Lennox). Keith Getty favorably quotes all sorts of unsound men.” Page 4.

Digging in the Walls: *A month's worth of news items, republished from Friday Church News Notes.* **Page 14.**

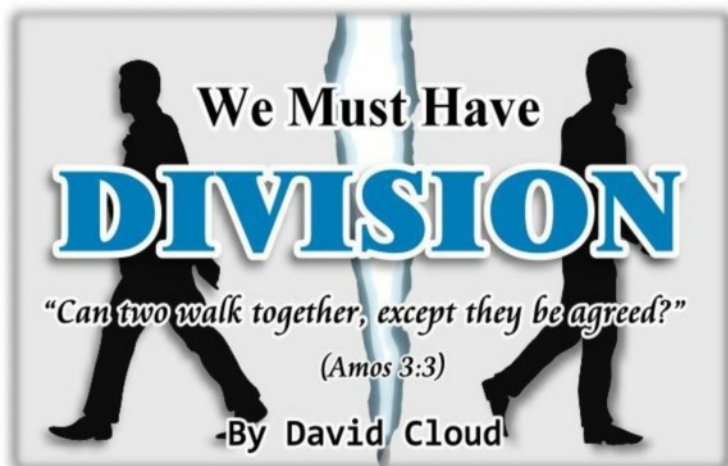


WE MUST HAVE DIVISION ~ By David Cloud

One of the preachers attending the Northside Baptist Church conference this month in Adelaide, Australia, where I preached 22 times on “Understanding Bible Prophecy,” recounted how he met me for the first time twenty something years ago when I was teaching a mini-course at Sydney Baptist Bible College. **At that time, he asked what my goal was, and I shocked him by replying, “My goal is to bring division.”**

What I meant was that I want to help divide the sound from the unsound. I was talking about biblical separation. I was not talking about carnal division. I was talking about biblical division.

That is my goal today more passionately than ever, because I know so much more about the deep compromise that is permeating Ind. Baptists and the compromise grows larger and deeper with each passing decade. If ever there was a time for sound Ind. Baptists to put on their separation hat and fly the separation flag, it is today!



If there is no clear division between the remnant who are obeying God’s Word and the compromisers who aren’t, between the spiritual and the worldly, between the obedient and the disobedient, between the true disciples of Christ and the pretenders, all will go down the same drain that feeds into “evangelicalism” and from there to the “broader church” with all of its gross sins and heresies.

When churches get together in conferences such as the annual National Baptist Fellowship in Australia, blessings can happen but the potential for the furtherance of sin and error is greater than the potential for blessing because of the mixed multitude aspect. God's people can be stirred by the right preaching of God's Word in a mixed multitude, but if they go back to wishy washy, lukewarm, worldly, compromising churches, whatever revival was experienced will be quashed.

Some have boasted that the NBF meeting in 2023 was attended by 600. That's the same old pragmatic "big numbers" junk thinking that has been a major error among Ind. Baptists since J. Frank Norris and Jack Hyles. Let's forget numbers and consider quality. It would be a good education to somehow take *an effectual* survey of the 600-member crowd, beginning with the pastors, to see where things really stand doctrinally, spiritually, and morally. We know that Ind. Baptists today are a pretty sorry mixed multitude *overall*. I have discussed this with a great many preachers. From my perspective, a big majority of them are extremely weak (not a small minority) and should not be considered New Testament churches. They would not be considered New Testament churches by the Baptists of old (we only have to go back to the 19th century). They don't *stand* for anything; they are moving rapidly toward an evangelical position; they are playing with contemporary music; they are frightfully shallow in Bible knowledge; they aren't careful enough about baptism and church membership; they are largely uneducated in the major issues facing God's people

today; they are weak in separation; the pastors are more sports minded, etc., than Bible minded. These churches know little to nothing about true pilgrim Christianity. They are not building strong Christian families that can raise up a godly seed. (A church's real character is reflected in the families and the youth; it is a biblical test.) In these churches, a young person sold out to Jesus Christ is either a rarity or non-existent. In a great many of them, the youth are largely gone. Typically the men are not the spiritual heads of the homes and the women are not keepers of the home. These churches are lukewarm at best, and lukewarm is no small thing; Christ hates it. They don't warn; they don't like warnings; and they criticize warners. The words "earnestly contend for the faith" might as well be a foreign language. A pastor that is a warrior for the truth of God's Word is *extremely* rare.

I know Buddy Smith, one of the speakers at the Australian conference this year, pretty well. He ignored Pastor Simeon Western's well-documented, gracious warning about the 2024 NBF. Pastor Smith used to promote my ministry. In fact, he used to warn about the NBF meetings. Pastor Smith is considered a strong man with a sound church, but it is a facade. When I preached a youth conference in Sydney in 2016, I first preached at a youth meeting jointly hosted by Pastor Smith's church and another one. I was shocked! His youth leader was a wishy-washy new evangelical in thinking; the youth leader's wife was dressed *extremely* immodestly as a terrible example for the youth; my preaching was not well received by that worldly crew. They were not serious Bible students and don't love separation; they were there for fun and games; *but they were the product of those churches*. When I confronted the pastor, he broke friendship with me. He claims that I don't understand the battle in Australia and how difficult it is for a church to find workers and how they must do the best they can with weak people, but as a pioneer missionary in a place much harder than Australia I understand all of that. Further, what I understand or don't understand is not the issue. The church is Christ's, not mans, and the Word of God is the Word of God, and we have no right to modify and soften and compromise God's standards for pragmatic reasons.

Pastor Simeon Western's carefully documented, gracious warning about the 2024 National Baptist Fellowship can be found at the following link - <https://baptistexpositor.com/2024/07/16/a-letter-of-warning-re-nbf-2024/>

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In over 50 years of ministry, I have learned very well, and to my distress, that the majority of Ind. Baptists are pragmatists and traditionalists, not Biblicists; they are man-centered rather than Christ-centered. At least, that is what I have observed from my own experience and reading.

For some reason, some preachers want to *appear to be* strong; they put on a strong facade at times; but it is not what they really are, and when they have an opportunity to speak out on an important issue, they either keep silent or they take the weak side of things and tend to attack the messenger rather than the error he is exposing.

Further, preachers who were once warriors for the truth have given up the battle.

Pastor Smith is an example. In his former *Heads Up!* magazine, Jan. 6, 2012, he wrote the following:

“In Australia, forty years ago, pastors gathered together to comfort, encourage and deepen one another's walk with the Lord. The gatherings became addictive and grew and acquired a life of their own. The spirit of the age imparted an inertia, a momentum of pragmatism. No longer did the fellowship confront its culture.

“Instead, the new leaders gave it a new watchword. Conform. Conform to win them. The gates were opened wider and wider. Anyone and everyone was welcomed in. Textual critics, Hillsong music and theology, Augustine and all his deformed offspring, Ruckman and Co., Riplinger and all her husbands (!), Mighty Men (?), Purpose Drivelled pastors, Schaap and his books, and Sexton's IBFI. All are welcome!

“Pastor Charles Keen recently wrote, ‘We need to develop some *ecumenicalism within the parameters of fundamentalism*.’ He was only verbalising what had been going on in pastors fellowships for years. I have observed the same trend in the Baptist Union, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Bible Fellowship, The World Baptist Fellowship, The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, The General Association of Regular Baptists, Southwide, the IBFI, and the IBFA here in Australia. The National Baptist Fellowship (Australia) is moving in the same direction.

“All pastors fellowships become ecumenical as they drift away from their founding principles” (*Heads Up!*, Jan. 6, 2012).

Twelve years later, Pastor Smith is preaching at the NBF.

The battle hasn't changed; preachers have changed. God's truth is under attack as never before. Who will stand up and be counted? Who is on the Lord's side?

We need warriors for the truth. Where are the young preacher warriors that the old timers have trained to take their place in the battle? There should be a large cadre of them.

In the early 1980s, I wrote to Warren Wiersbe and asked how he could be associated as an editor with *Christianity Today* in light of all of its great compromise and heresies, and he replied that we need to take off the gloves and pick up a towel. I rejected that counsel as a young missionary, and I reject it even more emphatically today. It is time to put on the gloves for fighting *and* pick up a towel of service; it is time to build up *and* to fight. Like Nehemiah. we need to wield the sword *and* the trowel (Ne. 4:17-18).

Warren Wiersbe was a New Evangelical through and through, and since his thinking reflects that of a large number of Ind. Baptists, they must also be New Evangelicals.

At about the same time, I corresponded over a period of a couple of years with David Otis Fuller, defender of the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible, and he concluded each communication with, “The battle is getting hotter and hotter, and I like it better and better”! Dr. Fuller's fight cost him many preacher friends and brought slanders upon his head, but he was not afraid of the battle for truth.

As laborers together with God, may He help us raise up warriors for the faith, both men and women, in these evil times.



“I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith” (2 Ti. 4:7).

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Co. 15:33).

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).



The following is excerpted from “The Gettys: The Pied Pipers of Contemporary Worship Music,” https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/the_gettys_pied_pipers.html

The Gettys represent new Reformed Calvinism. For four years, Keith led worship at Parkside Church, Cleveland, Ohio, pastored by Alistair Begg. This is the world of John Piper, David Platt, R.C. Sproul, Al Mohler, Jr., John MacArthur.

Reformed Calvinism itself is not biblically sound. It is a path to the world of Augustine, the church fathers, John Calvin, Protestantism, the Puritans, infant baptism. It is a path to Replacement Theology (the church is Israel). It is a path to Amillennialism and the rejection of the imminency of Christ’s return and the loss of all of the spiritual benefits of that essential doctrine.

New Reformed Calvinism, unlike old Reformed Calvinism, is ecumenical. There are no strict boundaries. The Gettys associate in ministry with almost anybody: Pentecostal, Charismatic, Roman Catholic, deniers of the blood atonement (C.S. Lewis), theistic evolutionists (John Lennox). Keith Getty favorably quotes all sorts of unsound men. For example, in his 2017 book *Sing!* he quotes the Roman Catholic mystic J.R.R. Tolkien, Augustin, C.S. Lewis, and Sting.

New Reformed Calvinism is sympathetic toward Rome. The old Reformed men believed that Rome is the great whore of Revelation 17, drunken with the blood of the martyrs. But the new Reformed have ecumenical relationships with Rome. Consider The Gospel Coalition. The Getty’s former pastor, Alistair Begg was once the head of this organization. The web site promotes ecumenical unity. One report was entitled “The Urgency of Evangelical Ecumenism.” The report “Should Christians Be Ecumenical?” said, “Can evangelicals and Catholics truly be together? ... Jesus’ prayer for unity in the Body obligates me to see the ecumenical task as

important for Christianity.” This is false. Jesus’ prayer has nothing to do ecumenism. In fact, Christ emphasized obedience to God’s Word and the importance of truth (Joh. 17:6, 8, 14, 17, 19), which are *incompatible* with ecumenism. Yet this article was written by Trevin Wax, a Southern Baptist Wheaton College professor who associates closely with the Gettys.

And New Reformed Calvinism (also called neo-Puritan), unlike old Reformed Calvinism, is not separated from the world. In July 2019, longhaired rocker Alice Cooper gave his testimony at Parkside. They should rather have reproved him for his association with the vile world of rock & roll. Mark Driscoll, one of the most influential new Reformed Calvinists, said, “We are theologically conservative and CULTURALLY LIBERAL.” His church in Seattle, Mars Hill, had New Year’s Eve champagne dance parties.

Consider the issue of dress, which most churches today consider of little consequence, but it is a clear biblical issue. Kristyn Getty is one of the few contemporary worship artists that wears a dress of any kind in her performances, but she also wears skin-tight pants and low-cut tops and other types of immodest attire, so there is no consistency. There are no boundaries. And some of the other female musicians in the Getty performances are even less modest. An advertisement for the Getty’s *Sing! 2019* conference featured a young woman dancing an Irish dance in extremely tight pants. That type of thing is very sensual and has no place in Christian worship. A few years ago, when we asked for feedback from Christian men about how various types of female dress affect them morally, many made the observation that tight clothing is as seductive as slight clothing. One man wrote, “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!” Another wrote, “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.” (See [“Tight Clothing and Modesty”](http://www.wayoflife.org) at www.wayoflife.org.)

The Gettys represent the “cool New Calvinism” that is sweeping through evangelicalism and the Southern Baptist Convention and that is capturing large numbers of “young fundamentalists.”

It is influencing Bob Jones University graduates, which is probably why the school is being drawn to the Gettys.

The following is excerpted from **"The Merger of Calvinism with Worldliness"** by Peter Masters, Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, <https://metropolitantabernacle.org/articles/new-calvinism-the-merger-of-calvinism-with-worldliness/>

A new form of Calvinism took the shape of a movement from about 2005, but it differed from the original in its acceptance of ‘the world’. This critique written in 2009 was sharply attacked by new Calvinistic preachers but strongly endorsed by conservative preachers worldwide.

When I was a youngster and newly saved, it seemed as if the chief goal of all zealous Christians, whether Calvinistic or Arminian, was consecration. Sermons, books and conferences stressed this in the spirit of Romans 12.1-2, where the beseeching apostle calls believers to present their bodies a living sacrifice, and not to be conformed to this world. The heart was challenged and stirred. Christ was to be Lord of one’s life, and self must be surrendered on the altar of service for him.

But now, it appears, there is a new Calvinism, with new Calvinists, which has swept the old objectives aside. A recent book, *Young, Restless, Reformed*, by Collin Hansen tells the story of how a so-called Calvinistic resurgence has captured the imaginations of thousands of young people in the USA, and this book has been reviewed with great enthusiasm in well-known magazines in the UK, such as *Banner of Truth*, *Evangelical Times*, and *Reformation Today*. This writer, however, was very deeply saddened to read it, because it describes a seriously distorted Calvinism falling far, far short of an authentic life of obedience to a sovereign God.

If this kind of Calvinism prospers, then genuine biblical piety will be under attack as never before. The author of the book is a young man (around 26 when he wrote it) who grew up in a Christian family and trained in secular journalism. We are indebted to him for the readable and wide-reaching survey he gives of this new phenomenon, but the scene is certainly not a happy one.

The author begins by describing the Passion conference at Atlanta in 2007, where 21,000 young people revelled in contemporary music, and listened to speakers such as John Piper proclaiming Calvinistic sentiments. And this picture is repeated many times through the book – large conferences being described at which the syncretism of worldly, sensation-stirring, high-decibel, rhythmic music, is mixed with Calvinistic doctrine.

We are told of thunderous music, thousands of raised hands, ‘Christian’ hip-hop and rap lyrics (the examples seeming inept and awkward in construction) uniting the doctrines of grace with the immoral drug-induced musical forms of worldly culture. Resolved is the brainchild of a member of Dr John MacArthur’s pastoral staff, gathering thousands of young people annually, and featuring the usual mix of Calvinism and extreme charismatic-style worship. Young people are encouraged to feel the very same sensational nervous impact of loud rhythmic music on the body that they would experience in a large, worldly pop concert, complete with replicated lighting and atmosphere. At the same time they reflect on predestination and election. Worldly culture provides the bodily, emotional feelings, into which Christian thoughts are infused and floated. Biblical sentiments are harnessed to carnal entertainment.’ (Pictures of this conference on their website betray the totally worldly, show business atmosphere created by the organizers.)

Truly proclaimed, the sovereignty of God must include consecration, reverence, sincere obedience to his will, and separation from the world. You cannot have Puritan soteriology without Puritan sanctification. You should not entice people to Calvinistic (or any) preaching by using worldly bait. We hope that young people in this movement will grasp the implications of the doctrines better than their teachers, and come away from the compromises. But there is a looming disaster in promoting this new form of Calvinism”

The previous six paragraphs are excerpted from Peter Masters, **"The Merger of Calvinism with Worldliness"** - <https://metropolitantabernacle.org/articles/new-calvinism-the-merger-of-calvinism-with-worldliness/>



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born again salvation and holy living (2 Ti. 3:16-17). We emphasize the believer's life as a priest (1 Pe. 2:5), pilgrim (1 Pe. 2:11), ambassador (2 Co. 5:20), builder of the New Testament church (1 Co. 3:9-15), builder of the home (Eph. 5:22 - 6:4), teacher (Heb. 5:12-14), spiritual warrior (Eph. 6:10-19), and minister of spiritual gifts (Ro. 12:3-8).

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a biography of David, the Psalms of Degrees, the Imprecatory Psalms, and many other things.

Mastering the English Bible - Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

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- A highlights study of Proverbs, the book of practical wisdom, and an introduction to Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. Proverbs is covered extensively, with a passage-by-passage study of chapters 1-9, plus topical studies on child discipline, counsel, the fool, friendship, the poor, the sluggard, the talebearer, the tongue, and wine. There is also a practical study on the Proverbs 31 wife.

Mastering the English Bible - Prophetic Books

- 37 video classes, textbook 239 pages, syllabus
- An extensive survey of the 16 prophetic books from Isaiah to Malachi. The introduction covers the divine inspiration of the prophets, the repetition, the chronological order, the historical background, the figurative language, and the major themes. We deal extensively with every major theme of Bible prophecy, including Christ's first coming, the day of the Lord, Armageddon, Christ's coming in glory, Christ's millennial kingdom, and the millennial temple.

Mastering the English Bible - Gospels

- 49 video classes, textbook 291 pages
- An extensive survey of Christ's birth, preaching, miracles, trials, vicarious suffering, resurrection, and ascension. The life of Christ is covered under the major events described in the Gospels, from Christ's preexistence in John 1 to the resurrection appearances and teaching and ascension.

Mastering the English Bible - Acts

- 42 video classes, textbook, 182 pages
- The book of Acts is the Holy Spirit's church planting manual, and this course deals with the nature and definition of the church, baptism, church membership, the Lord's supper, apostles, elders, deacons, missionaries, evangelism, repentance, preaching, prayer, fasting, and much more. The course gives the Bible student a good understanding

of early church history and deals with important doctrines and practices such as Christ's resurrection, ascension, and second coming, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the inspiration of Scripture, Bible prophecy, and holiness. The course refutes heresies that are prevalent today and clears up many controversial issues, such as Pentecostal tongues, healing, Spirit baptism, Spirit filling, the woman's role in the ministry, baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, sign miracles, repentance. Every modern church growth practice must be tested against the book of Acts.

Mastering the English Bible - Romans to Corinthians

- Textbook 304 pages, syllabus
- An extensive study of these prominent New Testament epistles. The course begins with an overview of Paul's life and ministry. Romans is the first epistle in the New Testament canon because it is the most important. It contains Scripture's most extensive study of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It covers the believer's new standing in Christ, holy living, surrendered living, spiritual gifts, relationship with civil government, Christian liberty, and separation. We deal extensively with Romans 9-11 which answers the question, Have God's covenants with Israel failed? (Ro. 9:6)? The theme of the Corinthian epistles is "correction of a carnal church," and there is not a church today that does not need this instruction. There are fundamental passages on various aspects of doctrine and practical Christian living: the judgment seat of Christ, church discipline, Satan, lawsuits between brethren, fornication, marriage, support of preachers, idolatry and the Christian life, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, charity, tongues, the bodily resurrection, God's help and comfort, suffering in the Christian life and ministry, the superiority of the gospel over the law, ambassadorship, separation, repentance, New Testament giving, weapons of spiritual warfare in the thought life, the danger of false teaching, Paul's journey to heaven, and the signs of an apostle.

Mastering the English Bible - Galatians to Thessalonians

- Textbook 286 pages, syllabus
- A practical highlights study of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, and 2 Thessalonians. These epistles contain a divinely-

inspired course on the Christian life, home, and church. Major themes are Christ's incarnation, sinlessness, vicarious suffering, resurrection, ascension, and preeminence, the Trinity, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, holiness, the believer's new position in Christ, heavenly citizenship, the pilgrim walk, the danger of false teaching, persecution, and spiritual warfare. Another major theme is Bible prophecy: the imminent return of Christ, the Rapture, the day of the Lord, Christ's coming in glory, and Christ's kingdom.

Mastering the English Bible - Pastoral Epistles

- Textbook 279 pages, syllabus
- There are three New Testament epistles written specifically for preachers. A *thorough* study of the Pastoral Epistles is essential for every preacher and church leader and should be a major part of every Bible training institution. Further, the study of the Pastoral Epistles should be a lifelong pursuit. Here we find practical teaching on Jesus Christ, the Godhead, and the Gospel, the divine inspiration of Scripture, God's standards for pastors and deacons, instruction on the training and ordination of preachers, the preacher's study life, the discipline of pastors, and the support of preachers. There is a huge emphasis on the importance of sound doctrine, warnings about false teaching, instruction for the woman's ministry, godly Christian living. Another major theme is Bible prophecy, including the imminent return of Christ, last days apostasy, Christ's glorious return, and Christ's kingdom.

Mastering the English Bible - General Epistles

- Textbook 300 pages, syllabus
- A highlights course on Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, and Jude. The General Epistles form a large part of the New Testament faith and contain

instruction essential for every individual believer, every Christian home, and every church. As a part of "all Scripture," these epistles are necessary to make the believer "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Ti. 3:16-17). Major themes include Christ's vicarious atonement, Christ's High Priesthood, the new covenant's superiority to the old, the divine inspiration of Scripture, the definition and priority of faith, the new birth, election, the proper place of works in justification, patience in trials, the danger of the world, the control of the tongue, divine healing through prayer, the life of holiness, the pilgrim walk, spiritual warfare, marriage, the church as a spiritual house, persecution, separation, pastoral authority and ministry, spiritual growth. Another major theme is Bible prophecy, particularly last days scoffers, the imminent return of Christ, the day of the Lord, and the new heaven and new earth.

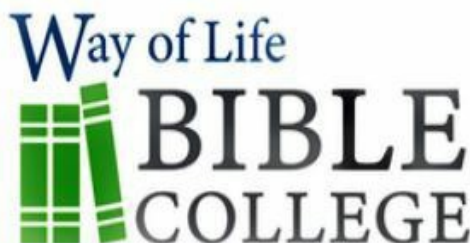
Mastering the English Bible - Revelation

- Textbook 261 pages, syllabus
- Revelation's chief purpose is to exalt Jesus Christ and to challenge New Testament saints to be ready for Christ's imminent return. This course is practical, comprehensive, and life changing. The student will learn how to interpret the book by the literal method that brings out the meaning of the most obscure sections. Revelation 19-22 is simply breathtaking, with its description of the Bride's wedding and eternal dwelling place, and we have attempted to bring out the glory of this passage to the believer's heart. In the preparation of this course the author gleaned from the pages of many out-of-print pre-tribulational studies as well as visit the sites of the seven churches of Revelation in Turkey.



Mastering the English Bible

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HYMNS - Jewels From WILLIAM COWPER

By David Cloud



The following is excerpted from *Transforming Congregational Singing in the 21st Century*, <https://www.wayoflife.org/bc/course.php>



William Cowper (pronounced Cooper) (1731-1800) was one of the most prolific of British poets and hymn writers.

The son of an Anglican pastor who was chaplain to King George II, William began to show signs of severe depression during his student years studying for law. When faced with the bar examination for a position in the House of Lords at age 23, he was plagued by fear and became suicidal. He had to be confined for 18 months. This deep melancholy appeared off and on to the end of his life.

While living with a pastor friend, Morley Unwin, in the area of Olney, Cowper was converted and befriended by Pastor John Newton, author of “Amazing Grace.” Newton lived next door to the Unwins. With Newton, Cowper was involved in the abolitionist movement, and wrote poems in support of the cause, including “The Negro’s Complaint.” From 1767 to 1770, Cowper was in good spirits, but upon the death of his brother that year, he descended into despondency.

He was haunted by thoughts that he was not predestined to salvation according to Calvinist “sovereign election” theology. At times he could trust God, and it was during these times that he wrote his famous hymns. He said that of all the gifts God gives to us, God, Himself, is the greatest. But at other times he was crippled by the fear of being among the non-elect and abandoned by God.

His final poem, “The Castaway,” reflected this mindset. Consider the first two stanzas:

Obscurest night involv'd the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent.
He lov'd them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

How different this terribly gloomy poem is to faith-filled hymns such as “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood” and “O For a Closer Walk with God”!

Partly to help his friend, Newton suggested that they collaborate on a collection of hymns. Called *Olney Hymns*, it was published in 1779. Cowper contributed 68 of the 348 hymns, including “God Moves in a Mysterious Way,” “O For a Closer Walk with God,” and “There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood.”

In 1772, Cowper descended yet again into dark depression. “He now sunk into an apparently hopeless state of gloom and wretched despondency, that continued, without a ray of sunshine, for five long years. ... The few remaining years of Cowper were sad enough. Deeper and deeper fell the shadows, with intervals—growing shorter and fewer—of glimmering light” (“William Cowper,” Hymnologyarchive.com).

“There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood,” 1772
William Cowper

1 There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains:
 Lose all their guilty stains,
 Lose all their guilty stains;
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains.

2 The dying thief rejoiced to see
 That fountain in His day;
 And there have I, though vile as he,
 Washed all my sins away:
 Washed all my sins away,
 Washed all my sins away;
 And there have I, though vile as he,
 Washed all my sins away.

3 Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
 Shall never lose its pow’r,
 Till all the ransomed church of God
 Are safe, to sin no more:
 Are safe, to sin no more,
 Are safe, to sin no more;
 Till all the ransomed church of God
 Are safe, to sin no more.

4 E’er since by faith I saw the stream
 Thy flowing wounds supply,
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die:
 And shall be till I die,
 And shall be till I die;
 Redeeming love has been my theme,
 And shall be till I die.

5 When this poor, lisping, stamm’ring tongue
 Lies silent in the grave,
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
 I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save:
 I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save,
 I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save;
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
 I’ll sing Thy pow’r to save.

Music score

https://library.timelesstruths.org/library/music/T/There_Is_a_Fountain/There_Is_a_Fountain.pdf

“God Moves in a Mysterious Way” 1774
William Cowper

Tune arranged by William Ravenscroft
 8.6.8.6.

God moves in a mysterious way
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants His footsteps in the sea
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never failing skill
 He treasures up His bright designs
 And works His sov’ reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust Him for His grace;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
 Unfolding every hour;
 The bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be the flow’r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
 And scan His work in vain;
 God is His own interpreter,
 And He will make it plain.

Sheet music

https://library.timelesstruths.org/music/God_Moves_in_a_Mysterious_Way/score/

Midi <https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/675>

“Sometimes a Light Surprises,” 1779
William Cowper

Meter: 7.6.7.6.D

1 Sometimes a light surprises
 The Christian while he sings;
 It is the Lord, who rises
 With healing in His wings:
 When comforts are declining,
 He grants the soul again
 A season of clear shining,
 to cheer it after rain.

2 In holy contemplation
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new;
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
Let the unknown tomorrow
Bring with it what it may.

3 It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His people, too;
Beneath the spreading heavens,
No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
Will give His children bread.

4 Though vine nor fig tree neither
Their wonted fruit should bear,
Though all the field should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there;
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice,
For while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.

Music score

https://library.timelesstruths.org/library/music/S/Sometimes_a_Light_Surprises/Sometimes_a_Light_Surprises.pdf



"Christ My Song: ("Ere God Had Built the Mountains") 1853 **William Cowper**

This hymn is based on Proverbs 8:22–31.

Ere God had built the mountains,
Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before He filled the fountains
that feed the running rills;

In Thee, from everlasting
The wonderful I AM
Found pleasures never wasting,
And Wisdom is Thy Name.

When like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
Of ocean's mighty flood,
He wrought by weight and measure;
And Thou wast with Him then:
Thyself the Father's pleasure,
And Thine, the sons of men.

Thus Wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and Thy grace,
Thou everlasting Lover
Of our unworthy race!
Thy gracious eye surveyed us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom Thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

And could'st Thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted
And nailed Thee to a tree?
Unfathomable wonder?
And mystery divine?
The voice that speaks in thunder
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

The meter is 76.76 D and can be sung to the tune "Chenies."

https://hymnary.org/text/ere_god_had_built_the_mountains

https://www.christmysong.com/288/jtr288en4_ere_God_had_built_the_mountains.pdf



This report is excerpted from [Transforming Congregational Singing in the 21st Century](https://www.wayoflife.org/bc/course.php),
<https://www.wayoflife.org/bc/course.php>





Review of **21 Steps To A Stronger Church For The 21st Century**

The following review of [21 Steps to a Stronger Church in the 21st Century](https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/21_steps.php) is by Pastor Bill Hardecker.

It is available at:

https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/21_steps.php

Basically, I thought your book was a master class on how to move the church towards godliness. It is loaded with Biblical truths, loving warnings, foundational challenges, and practical suggestions to move churches towards godliness and away from worldliness. You held up some church practices and philosophies in the light of God's word, exposed some flaws, and offered some correctives. It surely is the kind of book church members and leaders ought to read often to help strengthen God's precious flock.

I have benefitted tremendously from it as a missionary in trying to set up a church to start off on the right path. I refer to it often and review and evaluate and make adjustments and God has certainly blessed. Society is crumbling because homes are crumbling, and homes are destroyed because the church is not being taught and challenged Biblically and practically. And until we model our ministry according to God's word, it is only a matter of time that we will see a further downgrade of our churches, and that is why homes and nations are destroyed.

The biggest thing I got out of your book is to examine everything in the light of God's word including long-standing traditions that contribute to the downgrade and get rid of them for the sake of doctrinal and Biblical integrity.

21 Steps to a Stronger Church for the 21st Century great quotes:

"It can be demonstrated from Scripture that a true New Testament church maintains a regenerate church membership..." (Introduction)

"Churches can get stronger if they have the will." (Intro.)

"There is no program that will produce a perfect church. There never has been a perfect church on this earth, but there are many things we can do to make churches much stronger." (Intro.)

"A New Testament church is a unique environment in which the Spirit of God can operate freely to do His supernatural work of regeneration and sanctification." (Intro.)

Salient points on the church as the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) - by possessing the truth, understanding the truth, defending the truth, by serious Christian living - great quote "Doctrinal orthodoxy is not enough. The truth must be demonstrated." (pg.12); by discipline; by holding up the truth.

Excellent exposition of 2 Peter 2:3-5 on the Chief Cornerstone. (pg. 14) followed by living stones exposition of 1 Peter 2:4-5 (pg.16).

The stress on a regenerate church membership is gold! (pp. 20-25).

Then the expositions and applications of 1 Thess. 1:3-10; Col. 1:25-29; Eph. 4:11-16. This is part of the strength of this book - it is a pure exposition and application of the Bible.

The challenging evaluation questions in pp. 54-55 is great and the best way to ascertain where a church is at spiritually.

Immerse the church in prayer pp. 60-66 - is excellent, with loads of practical suggestions - powerful and very much neglected - God's house is a house of prayer!

"Two things are necessary to have a regenerate church membership: caution and wisdom about receiving candidates for baptism, and maintaining Biblical standards for membership." (pg. 67)

The Biblical and practical suggestions in pp. 66-71 is a gold mine all on its own with further resources from **wayoflife.org**. This section alone is worth the entire book.

Immerse the church in Scripture (pp. 77-81) is equally excellent and practical with additional suggested resources from Way of Life Publications. The church ought to be a Bible training institute.

The rest of the topics are once and again practical with additional resource recommendations from WOL: Disciple All of the People; Deal with Sin; Emphasize Separation from the World (pg.90-93); this is no longer being taught by scores of churches as they have acquiesced to the spirit of the world; Emphasize Bible Prophecy; Double Down on Evangelism; Have a Strong Vision for Church Planting and World Missions; Aim to Incorporate All of the Biblical Elements of a Discipling Church.

The book is 100 pages of solid Biblical exposition, loving warnings, foundational challenges, and practical suggestions to move churches towards godliness and away from worldliness.

"There are many things we can do to make churches much stronger."

21 Steps to a Stronger Church in the 21st Century
https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/21_steps.php



21 Steps To A Stronger Church For The 21st Century

By David W. Cloud

In a time when the average Baptist church is getting steadily, shockingly weaker, moving farther down the contemporary path with each passing year, we are intent on moving in a much stronger direction, and we are thankful for the churches that we know of personally that are on the same path. We have no intention of following the crowd, and we are not afraid of being in the minority.

The church we see in the New Testament is a church of born again disciples of Christ who are committed to serving Christ.

AVAILABLE AT:

https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/21_steps.php

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?



THE PRIDE FLAG A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITARIANISM

(Friday Church News Notes, July 5, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from "The Pride Flag," *PJMedia*, June 13, 2024: "Obviously, to the LGBTQ community, the pride flag--regardless of its iteration--is a symbol of diversity, unity, and pride. Yet, every June, we learn what the flag's true colors are. Whatever the flag purported to represent in the past, it now represents a movement that has become entrenched in intolerance, coercion, and oppression. Throughout the year, but especially during the month of June, various institutions display the pride flag to not only virtue signal their support of the LGBTQ community but also declare their loyalty to leftist social values. This display, especially when mandated or strongly encouraged in workplaces, schools, and public spaces, forces individuals to conform to an ideology they may not agree with. Dissenting voices are often labeled as bigoted or regressive, stifling genuine discourse and marginalizing those with differing beliefs. ... On top of that, there's a growing movement to force compliance with the LGBTQ agenda, including laws and regulations compelling the use of 'preferred pronouns.' Such mandates typically emerge under the

guise of inclusivity, but in reality, they are the epitome of authoritarianism as our government attempts to enforce compliance with this ideology. Meanwhile, the LGBTQ movement and its allies marginalize and attack religious communities with traditional values. ... **The flag really stands for the oppression of anyone who disagrees with this ideology."**

SPORTS LIKE A DRUG TESTIMONY (Friday Church News Notes, July 5, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is a testimony from a reader in response to the report last week "Sports Like a Drug": "I grew up worshiping sports in Metro Detroit, a spoiled brat who went to 15-20 professional sporting events a year between 1987 and 2007. I moved West to pursue a career in sportswriting as a lost soul. I got saved in Idaho in 2011. Then the Lord Jesus Christ began to pull up the blinds of reality and show the idolatry of sports worship. I no longer watch professional sports and want absolutely nothing to do with it. It is a god in this culture. So thank you for writing about it, because many pastors in a major metropolitan area will promote their favorite team from the pulpit, and people in the congregation worship sports teams. Here is something I strongly believe: if a man has enough time after his 8-hour work day to watch



professional sports, then he is not in the KJV scriptures on that particular day.”

THE CHOSEN AND THE BIBLE

(Friday Church News Notes, July 5, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- Lighthouse Trails has published a new booklet *The Chosen and the Bible: 20 Questions to Ask Yourself*. Following is an excerpt: “Author William Paul Young’s 2007 novel *The Shack* was a number one New York Times best-seller, selling over twenty million copies worldwide. The book has been read and loved by both Christians and the world as well. It eventually became a Hollywood movie and a twenty-week series on Christian television. For years, any criticism of *The Shack* was usually countered by Shack fans with—‘Hey, it’s just a novel!’ Yet in 2017, ten years after its original publication, and in the midst of his TV series, author William Paul Young openly declared what many had long-suspected—that he was a universalist. He had also gone on record stating that *The Shack* was more than ‘just a novel.’ He said, ‘*The Shack* is theology. But it is theology wrapped in story.’ Today, *The Chosen* TV series has been viewed by millions of people around the world. Its devoted fans have also donated millions of dollars to the series’ record-breaking crowdfunding campaign. Any



biblical criticism of *The Chosen* is usually countered by Dallas Jenkins and Chosen fans with—“Hey, it’s just a TV show!” However, Jenkins seems to already be following William Paul Young’s *Shack* universalism path as he uses his highly visible Chosen platform to introduce mystical New Age Catholic universalists like Richard Rohr and Brother Lawrence to his ever-growing fan base. Obviously, the lesson Christians should have learned from *The Shack* has been lost amidst all The Chosen fanfare. And the lesson is that fictional false Christs can be used by our Spiritual Adversary to cleverly condition and deceive people. In short, what seems to be ‘just a novel’ or ‘just a TV show’ can turn out to be something else entirely. ... Given that Dallas Jenkins admits that 95% of *The Chosen*’s content is not from the Bible, and you are told to watch the series as if the Bible didn’t exist—how much truth will you ever learn from this multi-season series? As one watches episode after episode, season after season, you are learning more about fictional backstories than anything that is actually true. You will be ever viewing, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. The Bible warns about things that have ‘a form of godliness’ but lack the true power of God and His Word. It says, ‘from such, turn away.’” [2 TIMOTHY 3:5] www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) *The Chosen and the Bible: 20 Questions to Ask Yourself* can be viewed online or ordered as a booklet at www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com.

WHEN THE POPE SPOKE THE TRUTH (Friday Church News Notes, July 5, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Did you know that the Roman



Catholic Church has identified herself with Revelation 17? “In 1825, Pope Leo XII struck a medal, bearing on the one side his own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a ‘Woman,’ holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right a CUP, with the legend around her, ‘*Sedet super universum*,’ ‘The whole world is her seat’” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*). “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the

woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Revelation 17:1-6).

ONE STRING HARPS (Friday Church News Notes, July 5, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Many evangelical ministries are what I call “one string harps.” By this metaphor, the whole counsel of God is a 47-string grand concert harp, but these ministries limit their focus to one or two strings. It might be the string of the family (Focus on the Family), pro-life (Evangelicals for Life), disaster relief (Samaritan’s Ministries), evangelism (Laurie, Palau, Graham), poverty (World Vision), creationism (Answers In Genesis, Institute for Creation Research), campus ministry (Campus Crusade), complementarianism (Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood), child evangelism (Child Evangelism Fellowship), apologetics (Ligonier Ministries), etc. Multitudes of evangelical ministries are one string harps. They might play that one string well, but they tend to avoid anything that would interfere with that particular emphasis (and its fund raising). In contrast, **the Bible’s emphasis is on “all things.”**



Consider Christ’s command in Matthew 28:20, “teaching them to observe ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Consider Acts 20:27, where Paul stated his commitment to “declare unto you ALL the counsel of God.” God’s people are to “prove ALL things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 5:21). (Paul instructed God’s people to be followers of him; see 1 Co. 4:16; 11:1; Php. 4:9; 2 Th. 3:7, 9.) Jude instructed every believer to “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). As Jude didn’t delineate what part of the faith is to be defended, the obvious meaning is that all of it is to be defended. Whatever aspect of the faith is under attack at any given time, God’s people should rally to its defense rather than claim that it is a “non-essential.” If we are to teach all things and declare all things and prove all things and earnestly contend for all things, it is obvious that nothing in God’s Word is to be ignored for the sake of Christian unity, fellowship, evangelism, creationism, the family, right to life, caring for the poor, or any other reason. **The all string harp of God’s Word can only be found in a sound New Testament church.** It alone is divinely appointed to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), and it alone can be the pillar and ground of all truth (including baptism, the Lord’s Supper, discipline, interpretation of prophecy, etc.). The crying need of the hour is for doctrinally sound, life-changing, pilgrim-making New Testament churches that proclaim the whole counsel of God and disciple God’s redeemed people in all areas of life and ministry. I pray every day for God to raise up 500 strong New Testament churches in these last times.



THE BARE BONE FACTS (Friday Church News Notes, July 5, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, June 14, 2024: “When an engineer builds a building, a bridge or some other structure, he must build it so that it can withstand both stretching and compressing forces. In designing the structure to withstand both kinds of these forces, he must anticipate how much of each force the structure might face in its lifetime. Some materials, like cast iron and concrete, are very good at withstanding compression forces but very poor in handling stretching forces. Using one of these materials to build a structure that undergoes tensile or stretching forces could lead to disaster. Now let’s apply our basic engineering information to the problem of building a frame or skeleton for a living creature. Although you may weigh only 130 pounds, your long leg bone will very likely have to be prepared to deal with more than 1,000 pounds of compression and hundreds of pounds of tension from the muscles that are anchored to it. It’s a good thing, then, that normal bone is three times as strong as good solid wood and nearly as strong as iron! Tests have shown that the tensile strength of bone is 35,000 pounds per square inch, while iron is 40,000 pounds per square inch. But bone material is better than iron because it is three times lighter and much more flexible.

The structure of your bones is too carefully engineered to have been an accident. If life were the result of impersonal evolution, evolution would still be trying to engineer the best material for skeletons, and there would be an awful lot of jellyfish around!"



TRUMP'S NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON AN ALREADY WICKED NATION

(Friday Church News Notes, July 12, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- When it comes to politics and every other issue of life, God's people must exercise a biblical mindset, not a "conservative" mindset. I refuse to be influenced by, or to follow the example of, or be a party with, unsaved "conservatives" who idolatrously live by man's thinking rather than God's (Psalm 1:1-3). They know society's problems, but they don't know the spiritual fundamentals, and their weapons are carnal rather than spiritual (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Those who address symptoms rather than fundamentals aren't wise and are not ultimately successful. Consider former President Donald Trump. He can't Make America Great Again, because he doesn't know what made America great in the first place, and second, he doesn't have the power to do what would be necessary to Make America Great Again. It would require changing the character of America's churches. The best that

zealous political activity can do is get the Ten Commandments posted in public schools *in one state*, but what is really needed is for the Bible to be TAUGHT in every school in the entire nation, as it once was, and no amount of politics can bring that to pass. America has been thumbing her nose at God's holy laws for a long time, and we are convinced that *both* Biden and Trump are God's judgments on a wicked nation. There are some wise, moral men who could lead America fairly well, but those men weren't on the recent debate stage. People say, "I'm voting for a president, not a pastor." I have said that myself in decades past, but upon further consideration, it is not biblical thinking. God commands me to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), and the only proper basis for proving, before God, is to "search the scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11). Using this standard, it is impossible to support the idea that morality is secondary to economics, the military, border security, supreme court justices, oil exploration, etc. By all counts, Trump is an arrogant man, which is very much a moral issue. Does it matter? The Bible says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). Apparently arrogance is a fundamental issue of life, including political life. If God's judgment is on a proud man, what will happen to a nation that elects a spectacularly proud man to its highest office? Could it be that Trump's legal troubles are not fundamentally a political attack but rather a judgment of God? Could it be that he is not a victim? Trump has defied God's law of holy matrimony by a playboy lifestyle and multiple divorces, fathering five children by three women. He supports the

homosexual rights agenda, as we have documented elsewhere. He supports the murder of unborn children so long as they aren't too old in the womb. His gross lack of morality has now influenced the entire Republican Party, which is supposed to be very "conservative." Note this from the *Washington Times*: "The Republican National Committee took cues from presumptive presidential nominee Donald Trump on Monday and made a giant step toward passing a party platform that softens its stance on federal abortion limits. The RNC's platform committee signed off on a Trump-inspired vision that omits the party's embrace of a human life amendment to the Constitution and a 20-week federal ban on most abortions" ("RNC adopts Trump-inspired platform," *Washington Times*, July 8, 2024). What motivates such a thing? Cheap, filthy politics with its love of money and power. God's people can't control what the world does, but if Bible-believing churches would spend as much time in serious intercessory prayer and serious Bible study and building holy churches and holy homes and holy children and holy youth and in aggressive evangelism as they do in messing around with politics, sports, vain activities on social media, selfies, empty chatter, etc., THAT would change things. At 74 years old, the Lord's program for holy, biblically-educated, zealous New Testament churches is what I am focused on like a laser as long as God gives me health, and it is paying wonderful dividends even in this present life and apostate times. I wholeheartedly recommend it. The real answer is in God's house, not the White House.

MUSIC SEMINAR - UNRESOLVING CHORDS (Friday Church News Notes, July 12, 2024,



www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Pastor Nathan Searle of Southern Cross Baptist Church, Engadine, New South Wales (near Sydney), has a five-part series on "A Biblical Philosophy of Music." The titles of the series are #1 The Foundation, #2 The Great Deception, #3 The Apostasy and Worldliness of CCM, #4 Music That Honors the Lord, and #5 The Charge to Take a Stand. Part # 4 deals with unresolving chords which is a major characteristic of contemporary worship music. The resolution of chords produces finality to music. It resolves tension. Contemporary worship does not want resolution. It wants music that messes with the emotions. It wants to create a mystical, sensual experience. It is *very, very* important that God's people be educated in this matter. Pastor David Moss, North Hills Bible Church, York, Pennsylvania, says, "If we use music in our churches or in our personal lives that is contaminated with harmful elements of unresolved tension, even in small doses, our ability to demonstrate the difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean will be greatly inhibited" ("God's Song").

<http://www.scbc.org.au/music-conference.aspx>

JOHN 17 UNITY (Friday Church News Notes, July 12, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) -

John 17:21 is used as a major proof text for Christian unity. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The ecumenical interpretation is patently false and impossible. **First, John 17 is not a commandment addressed to men; it is Christ's High Priestly prayer addressed to God the Father, and the prayer was answered.** It describes a spiritual unity that is created by God among born again saints. **Second, John 17 is a unity based on salvation and truth and obedience and separation from the world.** "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and **THEY HAVE KEPT THY WORD.** ... For I HAVE GIVEN UNTO THEM THE WORDS WHICH THOU GAVEST ME; AND THEY HAVE RECEIVED THEM, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ... I HAVE GIVEN THEM THY WORD; AND THE WORLD HATH HATED THEM, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ... Sanctify them through THY TRUTH: thy word is TRUTH. ... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified THROUGH THE TRUTH" (John 17:6, 8, 14, 17, 19). John 17 is not a unity of true Christians with false, sound doctrine



with heresy. It is not a "unity in diversity" that ignores doctrinal differences for the sake of an enlarged fellowship. It is not a unity of professing Christians who love the world. **Third, to accept the ecumenical interpretation of John 17 requires disobedience to plain Scriptures such as the following:** Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3:5; Jude 1:3.

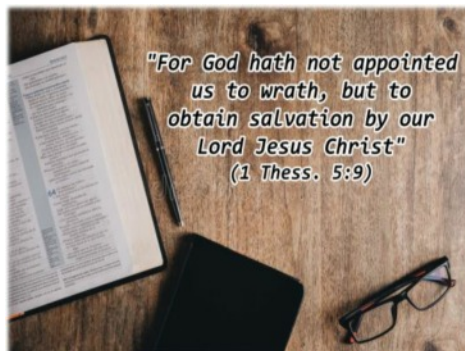
BAD COUNSEL FROM PASTORS ON THE CONTEMPORARY SLIPPERY SLOPE (Friday Church News Notes, July 19, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Note from Bro. Cloud: The following testimony from a young preacher describes what is happening widely in fundamental Baptist churches. It describes what has become the majority thinking over the past 20 years. I pray that this young man will stand fast in the "strictness" of God's Word and not follow a multitude to do wrong. "Dear Brother Cloud, I have been GREATLY encouraged by your writings because I had been struggling with the idea of holding to and preaching Christian standards when so many of the 'good' independent Baptist churches and pastors no longer do. I was getting to the place where I felt alone in desiring to preach and teach holiness from the pulpit, for I had asked many (at least 10) preachers if adapting CCM was ok and if we should preach hard on modesty and music and they ALL told me that if we love people and show them the love of the Lord they will eventually come around to creating their own standards. I was so discouraged because I had been convicted about the music/dress that I was listening to and allowing in my



own life and family and was desiring to find a man who would say, 'YES! TAKE A STAND!' So thank you for doing right no matter the cost. I have been the youth pastor at an independent Baptist church, but I have been asked to leave by the pastor because he feels I am 'too conservative/fundamental' for his ministry (our church is adapting CCM praise music and giving up modesty for the sake of 'keeping the unsaved in church'). I am in the process of seeking God's face and will for where He wants us to go and what He wants us to do. The main purpose of this email is to let you know that as I seek to serve the Lord, my goal is to be what you laid out in O Timothy magazine. My desire is to be one of the 1,000 preachers that will not give up the faith and will hold to sound doctrine and Biblical standards. I do not expect a response, but I wanted you to know that your sound Biblical teaching has given me the Biblical foundation I had been praying for/searching for so that I could respond (both to others and in my own heart) with the Bible as to why I DO believe that holding Bible standards on music, dress, television, technology, etc., is VITAL to Christianity today."

A TESTIMONY ABOUT THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE
(Friday Church News Notes, July 12, 2024, www.wayoflife.org,

fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - "You are right to take a strong stand on the pre-tribulation rapture position. This is our blessed hope and the encouragement that Jesus gave to His Church, as we fight the good fight. Sadly, I left that position for over twenty years, favoring the pre-wrath rapture and then, for a while, the seventh trumpet rapture position. Over time, I lost my joy in Christ. I often repented of my fear of the judgments to come, my fear that I wouldn't be found worthy to escape, my fear that we hadn't prepped enough, my fear that I would lose my salvation, etc. It wasn't that I was afraid to die for my faith, but that those days are described as something far worse than any kind of tribulation ever experienced on earth. I wondered why God would allow His latter day Church to endure such horrible tribulation that could end with one of the weaker believers taking the mark of the beast?! I just prayed for strength, grace and courage to face the worst in that day. At the same time, there was also a pridefulness that had set in with me, as I had also noticed in others who held my anti-pre-tribulation view, and a disdain for those poor souls who held to such an easy escapist way out of tribulation. It was like we knew the truth and had some kind of deeper understanding of God's Word. Thankfully, God led me to a pre-tribulation website back in 2016. I fought it off for a bit, and then

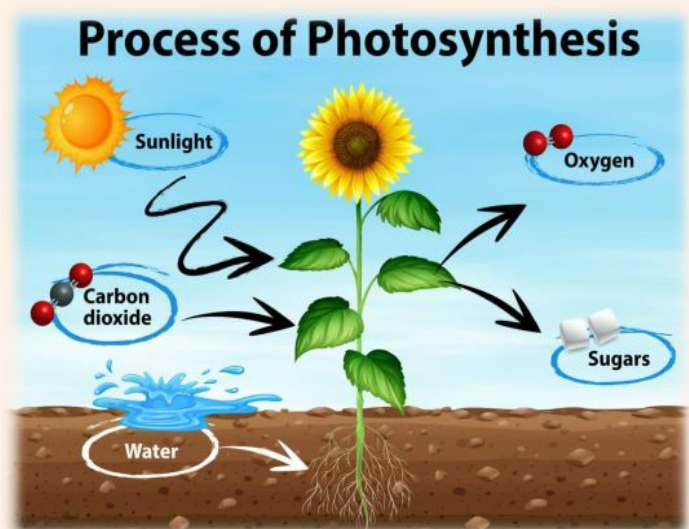


decided to listen to the Holy Spirit. I can't tell you how happy I am that I did. My joy was restored and I now believe it is absolutely the correct and Biblical rapture position and a very important doctrine. Thank you for all that you do. God bless."



TRUMP ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT Friday Church News Notes, July 19, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Donald Trump survived an attempt on his life on July 13 at a political rally in western Pennsylvania. The well-aimed deadly head shot only pierced Trump's ear when he moved his head at the very moment that the bullet reached him. I wept in gratitude for Trump's survival. We have often prayed for his safety and for his salvation. An attempt on Trump's life was almost inevitable in light of the hatred that has permeated large parts of American society, driven by the lies and false narratives that have been shouted from social media housetops. I can love Trump and want the best for him, and I can appreciate his warrior spirit, even while recognizing the truth of everything we said about him in last week's Friday News. We pray that this event will result in the toning down of some of the dangerous left-wing demonization. It seems to have had that effect temporarily to some extent. By God's mercy,

THE MIRACLE OF PHOTOSYNTHESIS (Friday Church News Notes, July 12, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, May 28, 2024: “All green plants, some algae, and even some bacteria are able to make food out of nothing more than air, water, light and a few minerals. The process is called photosynthesis, and without it we would run out of food to eat as well as oxygen to breathe. The green plant takes in the carbon dioxide that we and the animals exhale as waste and some water and, through photosynthesis, produces oxygen and a carbohydrate, and returns three fourths of the water it originally took in for future use. Chemically what happens is that the carbon atom in the carbon dioxide is removed from the oxygen and added to one water molecule, creating a carbohydrate, which is useful to us as food. While this all sounds simple, a more detailed summary of what happens each step of the way would fill a whole page with fine print. Evolutionists marvel at the great good luck involved in the fact that plants make useful things for us out of our waste products. We have grown in our appreciation of photosynthesis



because scientists have tried to mimic the process in order to build a new kind of solar cell for use in space. While the plant converts nearly 100% of the light it receives into energy, our best human efforts have reached only 8% efficiency. So, creationists ask, if the best human minds have produced only an 8% efficiency after years of work, how could no mind at all come up with nearly 100% efficiency--no matter how much time was involved?"

America escaped an event that would have had massive and terrible consequences.

LESSONS ON THE BORN AGAIN BELIEVER AND THIS WORLD'S POLITICS

Friday Church News Notes, July 19, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Some fail to understand my position on politics, Trump, *et al.* One man wrote, "I have read and understand your thoughts on Trump and now I await your thoughts on Joe Biden." I replied, "You missed the point." He said, "Okay, help me get to the point." I decided I would try to do that. FOLLOWING IS MY REPLY: My point is not politics. You are thinking politics, but I'm not talking about politics. I'm talking about measuring everything by Scripture

rather than by "right wing conservative politics." I'm talking about living a true biblical Christian life in this present world. In all of my remarks about politics and America and Limbaugh and Levin and Trump, etc., over the last several years, I can summarize the lessons as follows: **First, we must have a biblical testing mindset.** We must be serious Bible students, rightly dividing Scripture and rightly applying it by God's Spirit, and we must measure



everything by it. We must be the strong meat Christians of Hebrews 5:12-14, being skillful in God's Word and having our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. When we do that today, our thinking will be *far different* from "political right-wing conservatives." **Second, we must focus our attention on the business God has given us and not be sidetracked from it.** That business is what Christ described and emphasized between His resurrection and ascension (Mt. 28:18-20; Mr. 16:15; Lu. 24:44-48; Ac. 1:8). This is the business that is emphasized in the book of Acts. It is a business that is being accomplished less today than in the past 50 years. It is a dying business, whereas it should be a growing business. Ask the mission boards. Whether you support them or not, they are a bellwether of

missionary work. We must focus on preaching the gospel to every lost soul in every nation before the opportunity is gone. **Third, we focus on the New Testament church.** It is the headquarters for the Great Commission. It is the pillar and ground of the truth. It is God's house. It is the training and equipping center for God's soldiers, the builder of godly homes that can raise a godly seed, the educational center for the preparation of God's ambassadors. If God's people focus on building strong New Testament homes and churches, that will do more to help the nation than any amount of political activity. **Fourth we must be pilgrim Christians.** We must *believe* and *live like* our citizenship is in heaven. We must be pilgrims more than patriots. We must be Christians who live according to Colossians 4:1-4; Hebrews 11:13-16; and Peter 2:11-12. We must leave a light footprint in this present world, knowing that this life is exceedingly brief and the next life is the "long home" (Ec. 12:5). **Fifth, we must refuse to be frustrated and fearful.** We know almighty God in Christ and believe that He is in ultimate control of all things in this wicked world. We must be Psalm 37 Christians. "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. ... Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth" (Ps. 37:1-2, 7-9). **Sixth, we must believe in the imminent**

coming of Christ and be ready for it. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

CHURCH PRAYING AND FASTING ON FRIDAYS FOR AMERICA

Friday Church News Notes, July 19, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- I received the following notice on July 11 from Lighthouse Baptist Church, Payette, Idaho, pastored by Steve Hensley. "Our church is going to have every Friday between now and the election as a day of corporate fasting and prayer for our Country and a special prayer meeting each Friday evening at 7:00. Pastor is going to try and get other churches he knows to do the same. American Believers are almost uniformly willing to assert that they are Patriots. That they would die for their Country. I believe that they mean it. But if we really love our Country and want it to survive with the kind of freedom to preach and teach as we've had for generations, then we should be willing to spend the time and sacrifice to fast and pray for it.



Soldiers give up far more than that. So any real believers who are patriots should be willing to get on their faces before God and beg Him for mercy and grace for our Country" (Lighthouse Baptist, Payette). "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

FOR WHOM SHOULD WE VOTE?

Friday Church News Notes, July 19, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- In response to my article about Trump in last week's Friday Church News Notes, I received questions about voting. One man said, for example, "I agree 100% here. What are your thoughts when it comes to voting if the only option is Trump? Just don't vote at all?" FOLLOWING IS A SLIGHTLY EDITED EDITION OF MY REPLY: "Thank you for the note and the question. It's always good to hear from you. Others have asked that same question in response to my little article about Trump. It's simply not something I'm going to address. Let each man do as he thinks right. I'm trying to focus the attention of God's people on what the Bible emphasizes in these times. I was shocked during Covid to see how this-world focused professing Christians are in a vast number of cases, how biblically weak their thinking is. Colossians 3:1-4 is a foreign concept. A very large number of members of supposed Bible-believing churches are the babes of



Hebrews 5:12-14. They are unskillful in the Word of righteousness and have not exercised their spiritual senses “to discern both good and evil.” Like babes, they choke on meat, get frustrated, and throw little fits. I think America is an idol to a large number of fundamental Baptists. I love America and am thankful for the great blessings I have enjoyed as a citizen, but I’m glad I have spent half my life living far away from America. I think it has helped me see things more clearly. If the thinking of God’s people is like the thinking of unsaved political conservatives, we aren’t thinking biblically.”

SOCIAL MEDIA DESTROYING GOOD SOCIAL GRACES (Friday Church News Notes, July 26, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)
- When I was young, the primary way



to communicate with a stranger was by letter. As part of a basic education, we were taught how to construct a formal letter, which was a letter to a stranger, whether an individual or an organization. It was founded on basic (biblically informed) social etiquette. We were taught to begin such a letter with a proper salutation and introduction. You didn’t write to a stranger and just start blabbing about something. You greeted the individual properly, depending on his or her position, introduced yourself briefly, including your name and address, and stated the purpose of your communication. You then communicated your message as succinctly as possible. Finally, you gave a proper conclusion and a polite sign off, such as “respectfully” or “sincerely.” The goal of a formal letter is “to clearly and effectively communicate the topic at hand in a clear, professional manner” (grammarly.com). Professionalism and graciousness in communication has almost been completely destroyed in the age of social media. The format of a formal letter was based on simple common sense. Why should someone pay attention to a communication from a complete stranger who doesn’t have the good sense to greet him or her in some respectful way and doesn’t introduce himself briefly? It’s a strange age, but God’s people don’t have to be carried along by it.

LOVE WITH EIGHT ARMS (Friday Church News Notes, July 19, 2024, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)
- The following is from CreationMoments.com, July 1, 2024: “Fertilized octopus eggs are about the size of a grain of rice. They are connected in clusters on slender stalks. Once her eggs are ejected and



fertilized, the mother octopus hangs the threads containing her eggs from the roof of her home. It could be a rock cave or even a dark, enclosed man made structure. By the time she is done hanging her eggs, she will have almost 20,000 ivory capsules strung around her. But now her real work begins. Until the eggs hatch, mother octopus will give up food, concentrating on nothing but cleaning her eggs of any material that might result in a fungus or parasite infection. She cradles the eggs gently in her arms, brushing each of the 20,000 eggs, and sometimes washing them with jets of water. There is nothing else she can do for her young, but this care receives her single minded attention. It is rightfully said that one cannot create something he doesn’t have. If one does not have love, he cannot create love in others. Therefore, the Creator of the octopus must know a great deal about giving individual love and care to a multitude of individuals. The Bible is our Creator’s own personal description of His love for you and me. Whether you know the personal care and love of your Creator or you don’t, you can learn the depth of His care for you through Jesus Christ in the pages of the Bible. Notes: Ruggieri, George D., with Norman David Rosenberg, ‘The healing sea,’ *Science Digest*, Aug. 1978, p. 18.”



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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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