

# FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

## CORONAVIRUS CRISIS HELPING US HAVE A STRONGER CHURCH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



The title of one of our new books is *21 Steps to a Stronger Church for the 21st Century*. This is not mere theory or “armchair theology.” This is what we are building by God’s grace. We are church planters, have been since the early 1980s. Our goal is to see 100 sound churches established for the glory of God and the enlightenment of this dark world. We want Biblical churches, not American churches or Nepali churches or Australian churches or Spanish churches or Filipino churches. As a heavenly, pilgrim people, we intend to test the cultures of this present world by Scripture and conform them to Scripture. We want churches founded solidly on the New Testament, not after the pattern of the church fathers or the Waldenses or Anabaptists or Lutherans or Anglicans or Reformed or Puritans or Methodists or Fundamentalists or Brethren or even the Independent Baptists. We don’t despise tradition; we learn from it; but *all* ecclesiastical tradition must be tested by the *sole* authority, which is Scripture rightly divided. We pray always that God will remove all unwitting traditional blinders from our eyes so that we can see His Word without obstruction and obey it and please Him.

**We are focused on using this coronavirus crisis to prepare for the near future** when (we believe, in answer to prayer) it is dissipated and we regain our liberties. As long as the Lord tarries, we have our marching orders in the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20), which is a *very* big work, at the heart of which is preaching the gospel to every soul and building sound, life-changing New Testament churches, which are the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Ti. 3:15). We are focused on this *like a laser*. **This week where we minister, we are on nationwide**

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## A BIBLICAL MEASURE OF A CHURCH

Instead of “How many members do you have?” or “How many are you running in Sunday School?” or “What’s your Sunday morning attendance?” or “What was the attendance of your last special day?” or “How many young people are attending activities?” or “How many kids were at camp this year?” or “How are the offerings?” or “How much is your property worth?” biblical questions would look like the following: Are we seeing life-changing conversions of sinners? What percentage of those who have professed Christ have gone on to be baptized and to grow in Christ and serve Him? What percentage of our members are real Bible students? What percentage faithfully, enthusiastically attend prayer meetings? Do you have real prayer meetings in which the members themselves spend time in prayer together? What percentage of our homes are holy and separated from the world? What percentage of our homes are effectually raising their children for Christ? What percentage of the husbands are the spiritual leaders of their homes and are modeling a serious walk with Christ, Bible study, prayer, love for souls, ministry in the church? What percentage of the wives are modest and spiritual keepers at home? What percentage of the children in the homes are properly disciplined and biblically educated? What

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**house lockdown. We can't even take a walk or visit a store, but we see it as an opportunity rather than a frustration.** God's people are not in the hands of the times, the times are in God's hands, and so are we. "My times are in thy hand (Ps. 31:15); "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (Joh. 10:27-28). **We have instructed our church members to be busy in three projects so that we will come out of this time better prepared to be what God wants us to be and to do what God wants us to do. First, Bible study.** Those who haven't done this before have been assigned the project of reading Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah (11 books) as quickly as they can with good understanding and writing out the major events in Old Testament history. We have seen recently that though our church members read through the Bible each year, many aren't reading with enough understanding. They don't have a good timeline of Bible events ready at hand in their minds. So reading these 11 books and focusing on this as they read should give them this essential knowledge on which they can build. When they finish the OT, they will read Matthew and write out the major events in Jesus' life, and then Acts and write out the major events in the history of the first churches. The goal is to be able to list all the major events in Bible history from memory. **Second, family life.** Our families are focusing on being what God's wants them to be by working on godly husband-wife relationships, biblical child training, and family devotions. For devotions, they are reading a page of *Child Discipline* (a free eBook available from Way of Life) and discussing it and praying together. Without godly families that are raising a godly seed (Mal. 2:15), we can't have truly fruitful New Testament churches. **Third, prayer.** We are praying together especially for the following things: for our government leaders and those worldwide to have wisdom, that people will be more eager to listen to the gospel and be saved here and we will have much new fruit of conversions this year, that the travel restrictions will be eased so we can have our assemblies and pursue evangelism, and that the coronavirus will stop *completely* by the end of April everywhere in the world, that it will dissipate like fog in the sunshine. Our faith is resting on the following wonderful promises of our merciful and almighty God: Psa. 50:15; 91:14-15; 145:18; Jer. 33:3; 2 Ch.16:9; Eph. 3:20. **(21 Steps to a Stronger Church for the 21st Century is available as a free eBook from [www.waylife.org](http://www.waylife.org).)**

**A BIBLICAL MEASURE OF A CHURCH**

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percentage of the youth are on fire for the Lord, meaning surrendered to Christ and separated from the world from the heart and testing their friends, music, and social media by God's Word and being transformed by the renewing of the mind by being serious Bible students and seeking to prove the perfect will of God according to the path of Romans 12? What percentage of the members are actively seeking to share the gospel and win people to Christ as the ambassadors God has called them to be? Does the church have an aggressive program to reach everyone in the community and beyond with the gospel? What percentage of the members participate in the church's evangelistic outreaches? Is the church holding the line against the world's music and contemporary music? Is it being properly educated in this important issue? Is the church seeing men called to preach and is it training any men for the ministry? Is the church spiritually stronger today than it was 10 years ago? Is the church starting other sound churches? Is it multiplying itself? If these are the questions that preachers are asking, they will have different goals, different plans, different programs, different emphases than most churches today. And they will be laying a foundation to avoid the great collapse that we see on every hand.

## PRINCE CHARLES RECOVERING FROM CORONAVIRUS ON HIS ESTATE; MY ESTATE IS BEING BUILT



Prince Charles, first in line to the British throne, tested positive for coronavirus and is resting at the Balmoral Estate. The 71-year-old “has been displaying mild symptoms but otherwise remains in good health and has been working from home.” His wife, Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, is with him. Queen Elizabeth II, who will be 94 next month, is said to be in good health. Balmoral Castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, is one of the queen’s personal estate houses. It has been in the family since 1852, when the property was purchased by Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria of Victorian Era fame, and the new castle was constructed by his design. It is built of granite quarried on the estate. It features a seven-story turreted clock tower. The family, with their nine children, spent time there, and Victoria spend extensive periods at Balmoral after Albert’s death. The estate

covers 50,000 acres and includes plains, moors, forests (including 3,000 of old-growth Caledonian pine), mountains, valleys, lakes and streams. It is a working estate with hunting moors, forestry (10,000 tons of wood annually), farmland, cattle, ponies, and managed herds of deer. Fifty full-time and 50-100 part-time staff maintain the estate. Philip loves Balmoral and has added features such as water garden since the 1950s. Philip stays in Birkhall, a beautiful home nestled in a valley on the estate, near the river Muick. I, too, have an estate. I haven’t seen it yet, but it is under construction. As a joint-heir with Christ, I will occupy it one day. It has many advantages over Balmoral and Birkhall, three of which are that it is designed and built by God, it is eternal, and it is a free gift of God’s grace purchased by Jesus Christ.



*Birkhall Estate*

## CHURCH CLOSING, THEN REOPENING WITHOUT OLD PEOPLE

The following is excerpted from "Church asks older members to worship elsewhere," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Jan. 18, 2020: "Grove United Methodist Church in Cottage Grove is closing in June [and] reopening in November [without the elderly members.] The church wants to attract more young families. The present members, most of them over 60 years old, will be invited to worship somewhere else. A memo recommends that they stay away for two years, then consult the pastor about attending the Cottage Grove location again. Officials say the church needs a reset, and reopening the church is the best way to appeal to younger people. ... Methodists' regional Annual Conference is paying \$250,000 to restart the church. They have hired a specialist in starting new churches--Jeremy Peters. Peters, 32, has moved to Cottage Grove with his wife and three children. He is working with community groups, laying the groundwork for the relaunch, probably in November. 'It's a new thing with a new mission for a new target,' said Peters, 'and a new culture.'"

## ANTIQUITIES THIEF FEARS END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND

A religious Jew who stole an antiquities artifact in Israel 15 years ago returned it recently, fearing that the end of the world is at hand. He was a teenager when he swiped a Roman ballista stone from an archaeological exhibition. It is from the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70. Now married with children, the man is seeking to have a clear conscience when he stands before God ("It's the End of the World,' Says Repentant Israeli Antiquities Thief," *Israel Today*, Mar. 18, 2020). If he would read his Bible with open eyes, he would see that he will give account for *every* sin against God in *thought* and *deed* and therefore there is no possibility of being justified by one's deeds; only through the Messiah's vicarious atonement can a sinner be justified. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil" (Ecc. 12:14). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5-6).

### INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org).