

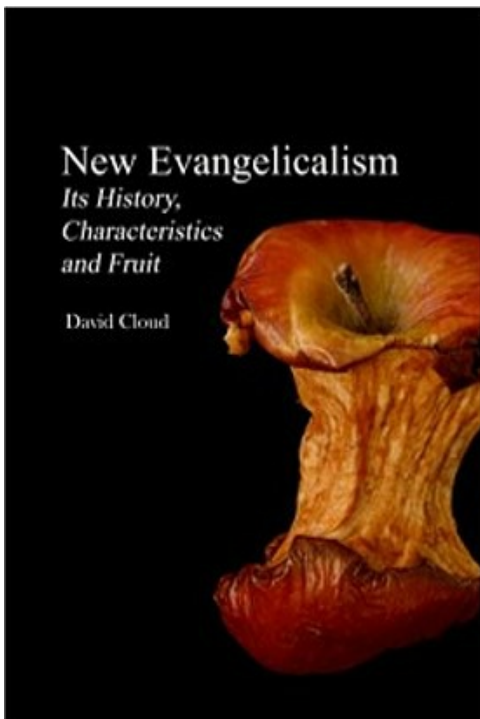


April 13, 2012

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Feature Article - The Old Evangelicalism

Prior to the 1950s, the terms “evangelical” and “fundamentalist” referred to A STRICT “PROTESTANT” CHRISTIANITY. Generally speaking (and certainly in contrast to the mushy evangelicalism of our day), evangelicals of past generations were militant soldiers for Christ.

The term “evangelical” can be traced to the English revivals of the Wesleys and Whitefield and even to the earliest days of the Protestant Reformation. In either case, Evangelicalism of old was dogmatic and militant. It was old-fashioned Protestantism. Luther was excommunicated by the pope; John Wesley and George Whitefield were barred from Anglican churches for their bold preaching. All of the Protestant denominations once identified Rome as the Revelation 17 whore of Babylon. Those men, though we Baptists don’t see eye to eye with them on many important points, stood militantly for what they believed. This is exactly what the New Evangelical does *not* do (except, as we will see, on a few issues that are popular within his circles).

John Calvin was no New Evangelical when he said: “Popery is nothing else than a monster formed out of the innumerable deceptions of Satan, and that which they call the Church is more confused than Babylon.” This was typical of the position held by all of the old Protestant leaders.

Martin Luther was no New Evangelical when in December 1520 he published two tracts in answer to the Bull of Leo X, one of which was entitled, "Martin Luther against the Execreable Bull of Anti-Christ." He charged the Pope and his cardinals of acting "the undoubted part of the Anti-Christ of the Scriptures."

William Tyndale, the father of our English Bible, was no New Evangelical when he identified the pope as the Antichrist in his treatise *The Practice of Prelates* as well as in the preface to the 1534 edition of his New Testament.

Hugh Latimer, an Anglican Greek scholar who loved the Word of God during the time of Tyndale, was no New Evangelical when he said, "Do you not know that the Pope is very Antichrist, whom the Scripture speaketh of? But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life. I have been an officer of his but I have given it up, and defy him and all his works" (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 35, 36). Latimer was burned at the stake by Queen Mary.

In his 1893 work titled *Union with Rome*, Christopher Wordsworth, bishop of Lincoln in the Church of England, stated the view that prevailed among evangelical Protestants at that time, and it was not a New Evangelical position: "... we tremble at the sight, while we read the inscription, emblazoned in large letters, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great,' written by the hand of St. John, guided by the Holy Spirit of God, on the forehead of the Church of Rome" (Wordsworth, *Union with Rome*, p. 62).

David Otis Fuller, speaking of evangelicals of bygone days, said: "Each man possessed the same fierce conviction--that all truth is absolute, never relative. For these men, truth was never a nose of wax to be twisted to suit their system of dialectics or deceptive casuistry. Two times two made four. In mathematics, their supreme authority was the multiplication table; in theology, their absolute authority was the Bible" (D.O. Fuller, Preface, *Valiant for the Truth*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961, pp. ix, x).

It is impossible to be a New Evangelical and hold "fierce" convictions!



Baptist pastor CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON (1834-1892) is an example of what "evangelical" meant in generations past. Spurgeon's ministry was characterized by unhesitating exposure of error. He stood unhesitatingly against Roman Catholicism. Consider this excerpt from one of Spurgeon's sermons, which demonstrates just how much he was NOT a New Evangelical:

"It is impossible but that the Church of Rome must spread, WHEN WE WHO ARE THE WATCHDOGS OF THE FOLD ARE SILENT, AND OTHERS ARE GENTLY AND

SMOOTHLY TURFING THE ROAD, and making it as soft and smooth as possible, that converts may travel down to the nethermost hell of Popery. We want John Knox back again. DO NOT TALK TO ME OF MILD AND GENTLE MEN, OF SOFT MANNERS AND SQUEAMISH WORDS, we want the fiery Knox, and even though his vehemence should 'ding our pulpits into blads,' it were well if he did but rouse our hearts to action" (C.H. Spurgeon, *Sermons*, Vol. 10, pgs. 322-3).

It is obvious that Charles Spurgeon was no New Evangelical, but his description of the soft-mannered men and silent watchdogs of his day fits today's New Evangelicalism exactly.

Spurgeon was not content to preach boldly against error; he also separated from it. Though misunderstood and misrepresented even by his own brother and some of his former students, Spurgeon did not draw back

from separating from the Baptist Union of Britain because of the false doctrine that was being countenanced:

“Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it. It is our solemn conviction that where there can be no real spiritual communion there should be no pretense of fellowship. FELLOWSHIP WITH KNOWN AND VITAL ERROR IS PARTICIPATION IN SIN. As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established, I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my counsel has been ‘Come out from among them.’ I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation from known evil. That I might not stultify my testimony I HAVE CUT MYSELF CLEAR OF THOSE WHO ERR FROM THE FAITH, AND EVEN FROM THOSE WHO ASSOCIATE WITH THEM.”

This position is ridiculed today as “secondary separation,” but it is actually obedience to God’s Word (2 Thess. 3:6) and it is the path of wisdom, because “*evil communications corrupt good manners*” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Another example of what old Evangelicalism was is the late evangelist JAMES A. STEWART. He was used mightily in revivals in Eastern Europe between the end of World War II and the descent of the Communist Iron Curtain, and his sermons were characterized by uncompromising declaration of Bible truth. Not only did he preach the gospel and the “positive truths” of the Word of God, he also reprovved error and compromise in a very bold fashion. In sermons such as “Potpourri Evangelism,” Stewart witnessed unhesitatingly against ecumenical evangelism, which was beginning to raise its head in his day. Consider a quotation from that sermon, first preached in the 1940s (excerpted from James Stewart, *Evangelism*, Asheville, NC: Gospel Projects), and ask yourself how popular would James Stewart be in Evangelical circles today?

We must be more afraid of flattery from the camp of the enemy than persecution. Read the pages of Church history. Persecution never did the Church of God any harm, but compromise with the world has always robbed it of the power of its purity. ...

‘Potpourri Evangelism’ consists of two features: mixed evangelistic campaigns and mixed Christianity. By mixed evangelistic campaigns I mean the alliance of Modernistic and Evangelical churches together in an evangelistic effort. ...

When religion gets up a revival, it must have from five to twenty churches of heterogeneous creeds and sectarian bodies to go into a great union effort; it must have a mammoth choir with great musical instruments, and many preachers and multiplied committees, and each committee headed by some banker, judge, mayor, or millionaire’s wife. It signs cards as a substitute for the broken-hearted cry of scriptural repentance. It must count its converts by the hundreds in a few days’ meeting. It must apologize for natural depravity. ...

Human religion’s enterprises have an atmosphere of earthliness about them. It despises the day of small things and scorns little humble people and lonely ways. It is eager to jump to the height of prosperity. Its music has no pathos in it, its laughter lacks divine cheerfulness, its worship lacks supernatural love, its prayers bring down no huge answers, it works no miracles, calls forth no criticism from the world, and has no light of eternity in its eyes. It is a poor, sickly thing, born of the union of the heart of the world with the head of Christian theology--a mongrel, bastard thing with a backslidden church for its mother and the world for its father. Oh, my dear brother and sister, never forget that this unnatural monster will be destroyed at the coming-again of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ (James A. Stewart, *Pot-Pourri Evangelism*, pp. 25-28).

Countless other examples could be given to show that Evangelicalism of past generations involved contending plainly for the faith and separating from error. When was the last time you read things like the

above, that we have quoted from the pens of old-line Protestants and Evangelicals, in *Christianity Today* magazine or preached by Billy Graham or Charles Colson or Charles Swindoll or Max Lucado or John Maxwell or James Dobson or other popular Evangelicals today? Sadly, today's Evangelicalism is almost 100% in the business of upholding "potpourri evangelism" and "turving the road of Roman Catholicism." Even the most conservative of Southern Baptist Evangelicals do not speak out boldly against the Pope after the former fashion or against the ecumenical evangelism practiced by their fellow Evangelicals such as Billy and Franklin Graham and Luis Palau.

(excerpted from the book [New Evangelicalism: Its History, Characteristics, and Fruit](#) by David Cloud)

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The Problem of the Chocolate Festival -

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:1-3

Have you noticed how the chocolate festival arrives earlier every year? There is no escaping the aisles of randomly shaped chocolates wrapped in glittering foil, guaranteed to catch the eye of every salivating child, and resulting in an alarming spike in grocery shop tantrums!

I am sorry but I just can't get into it. It is a holiday that the world celebrates, and which has no meaning to them. This is not a victory celebration because Christ has defeated sin and death, this is chocolate and hot cross buns and more chocolate and a four day weekend for the working people.

We ought to avoid thinking of the dates of Christ's death, burial and resurrection as a 'holiday' but rather as a 'holy day'. A holy day is a day (or days) set apart to God, set apart to seeking His face and humbling ourselves before Him. This is the time to remember that we are buried with Him, and raised to walk in newness of life. When Christ rose from the dead, He had won the battle with sin and death. He tells us that we need never be bound by sin again. When we are saved, our old sinful self is 'buried', left behind; it is no longer a part of who God wants us to be. Unfortunately, our old sinful self pretty much refuses to believe it is dead; it revives remarkably easily, and is awfully sprightly for something supposed to be dead.

While we are remembering Christ's death for us, and His victory over that slave driver called Sin, we need to examine ourselves to see if that villain is creeping around the edges of our encampments, or worse, lording it over us without a fear of reprisal.

The First Question -

In Colossians 3:1-3, we are reminded that we are risen with Christ. Remember, in salvation we die to self, and we are raised to walk with Christ. So the first question we should ask ourselves is, "Am I walking with Christ?"

It is usually not too hard to know the answer to this question, but quite a bit harder to actually admit it. Most of us are not doing all we can to keep close to our Saviour. When I read through Psalms I am always convicted by the psalmists' incredible desire to pursue after God. They are very descriptive, they desire to know God like a panting deer needs water, like a man searches for hidden treasure; they seek for Him with their whole hearts. They call His law 'wondrous', while we sometimes call it 'too hard'; they say His testimonies are their delight and counsellors, while we sometimes say 'too long', or worse still, 'a bit boring!' Do you know why we say these things? It is only because we are not walking close to our Lord. It is only because we are not trying to walk close to Him. The psalmists considered themselves to be 'pursuing' after God; we are sometimes less than halfhearted in our pursuit. We sometimes would rather sit on the sidelines and watch others pursue, and maybe critique their technique with our friends. Get up off the ground, and put on your running shoes! We must follow closely to Him, if we are to live as He would have us live. Find ways to seek Him out; ask others their ways of pursuing, and what they have learnt on the journey. On this earth, we will never get to the place where we should stop following closely after God, but when we get to Heaven the Bible tells us, "We shall know, even as we are known." That will be a wondrous revelation to us all, we will be glad that we continued in our pursuit while here on earth!

The Second Question -

The next phrase I want to consider is this, "Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth." Question 2 - Do I love the things of this earth more than I love what God loves? It's a relationship question again! If I am sincerely pursuing after God, what He considers important, I will too! What does God consider to be important? For that answer you need to get into His Word, because that is where He reveals what He considers important. Here are a few things God says are important: Our relationship with Him is very important, our relationship with others is also very important - people are very dear to His heart, He wants us to have listening ears for the frequent times He has something to say to us. The list will go on as you get into your Bible because God really wants us to see how much He has to give, and to realize how little the world has to offer. This world is not our home, we are on our way through it, we don't need to accumulate things. We don't need to take on the characteristics of the world, with all the fads and trends and catch phrases. We need to be focused on our Heavenly home, preparing ourselves for the time when we get there. "And now, little children, abide in Him: that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John 2:28

The Third Question -

The last phrase is this - "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Imagine that you are given a precious heirloom. It is a locket and there is an exquisite portrait inside. With the giving also comes responsibility; should you lock it up in a safety deposit box, only bringing it out on special occasions; or should you keep it on your person continuously, so that you always know where it is? Hard decision! Thankfully, this is not a decision most of us will ever have to make but we have put Someone else in this situation. When we give our lives to Christ, we are handing over what God considers to be a very precious possession - us! There is no dilemma in God's mind over whether He should tuck us away, or keep us continually with Him. His choice is evident in many Scriptures; John 10:28 tells us that no-one is going to be able to pluck us out of Christ's hand, and verse 29 says that we are also in the Father's hand. He has us on His person! There is no safer place in the known world, there is no safer place in the outer reaches of the universe; God has us in His care. No matter what happens in our lives, the struggles, sicknesses, temptations and testings - none of these things can move me from my Father's hand. Romans 8:35 - 39 gives us a comprehensive list of things that might try and dislodge us from our Father's love, but none of these are able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. You are a very precious treasure to the Lord, He is keeping you in His hand. If there is ever a distance between you, you can be sure that we are the ones who have wandered, and we must hurry back to our safe place with Him! Question 3 is this - Am I still where I should be with God, or have I begun to wander? Answer honestly. Psalm 119:59 and 60 says, "I thought on my

ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”

Three important questions demand three answers upon which much depends. Put God first this year, pursue your relationship with Him, and do not let yourself stray from His side. Know that you are a precious treasure in His sight!

Joye Binstead

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Deacon True Sez -

Did you ever notice how these "election and predestination" preachers never admit that, for the most part, they were led to the Lord by someone who was not a Calvinist? Our preacher once told us that Spurgeon, who was a 5 point Calvinist, was converted in a Methodist church.

Say, do you suppose that God foreordained that? Do you reckon that the Lord is saying something there about the barrenness of reformed churches?

Maybe He was "destroying the wisdom of the wise and bringing to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

Just maybe.

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Matthew 5:13-16

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Damage Control at Wycliffe -

(It is noteworthy that Wycliffe agreed to an audit, as long as it was done by the World Evangelical Alliance, a fellow traveler when it comes to compromise. - Ed)

Wycliffe Undergoes Independent Review of 'Father, Son,' in Bible Translations

World Evangelical Alliance to Audit Translation Practices for Non-English Texts

By *Stoyan Zaimov*, Christian Post Reporter

March 30, 2012 | 12:44 pm



<http://www.christianpost.com/news/wycliffe-undergoes-independent-review-of-father-son-in-bible-translations-72393/>

Wycliffe Bible Translators, one of the world's biggest Bible translation companies, has agreed to an independent review by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) of its policies on translating terms such as "God the Father" and "Son of God" after complaints about how the terms are presented in some non-English copies of the Bible.

"Recognizing the role of the Church in fulfilling the Great Commission, and respecting the leadership of the WEA and those they will engage in this review process, we commit ourselves to following the wisdom and guidance that this review will produce," announced Bob Creson, president of Wycliffe, in a statement on the company's website.

Wycliffe came under heavy criticism when Biblical Missiology created an online petition alleging that the translation company had eliminated familial terms describing God and Jesus in certain Arabic and Bengali translations of the Bible so as not to offend Muslim readers.

Biblical Missiology, a network of missionaries, linguists, theologians and global pastors, demanded that Wycliffe stop replacing phrases such as "Son of God" with "Messiah of God" or "God the Father" with "guardian." Bible Missiology said it had "privately appealed" to Wycliffe "to no avail" to stop producing these controversial translations.

"Western missions agencies Wycliffe, Frontiers and SIL are producing Bibles that remove 'Father,' 'Son' and 'Son of God' because these terms are offensive to Muslims," reads the networks' online petition.

Russ Hersman, senior vice president of Wycliffe Bible Translators USA, explained in a February interview with The Christian Post, however, that such accusations are either false, or that Bibles with problematic translations have already been removed.

"[Lives of the Prophets] was an audio drama that originally substituted inadequate familial terms in the mid-1990s. Since that time, the translation has been removed from circulation and will not be re-released until it has been corrected and revised," Hersman told CP.

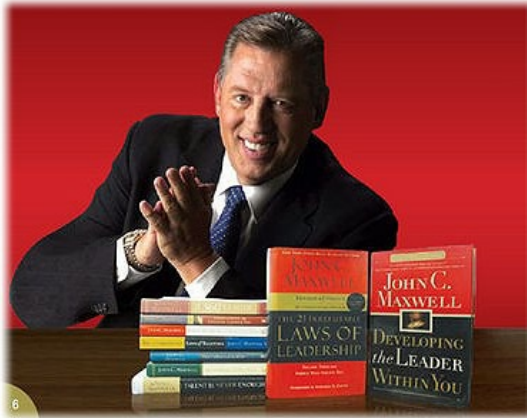
Still, Wycliffe announced earlier this week its partnership with the WEA, which is seen by observers as a step to further distance itself from accusations of inaccurately translating important terms in the Bible.

"Rejoicing that many Christians globally do not have to learn Hebrew or Greek to read God's Word and wishing to strengthen Evangelical unity on the basis of God's Word, the WEA has agreed to facilitate an independent external audit of Wycliffe and SIL International's practice of the translation of 'God the Father' and the 'Son of God,'" said Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general of the WEA, in a statement.

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Should we Follow Men Like John Maxwell?

(I recently saw the headline of an article stating that more "Christians" follow the advice of Donald Trump and Kim Kardashian than they do the Bible. Sadly, we find pastors following the counsel of men like John Maxwell, too. Leading independent Baptist pastors in Australia read his books, learn his psychology and business methodology, and teach his materials in their conferences. Whether he truly knows Christ or not we do not know. We only know that much of what he writes and teaches is the wisdom of man, not the wisdom of God. Dear reader, remember that "evil communications corrupt good manners!" - Ed)



John C. Maxwell - General Teachings/Activities *

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. Acts 20:28-31.

* Unless otherwise cited, the material in this report was excerpted and/or adapted from the Fall 2003 issue of [Midwest Christian Outreach Journal](#).

John C. Maxwell (born February 20, 1947) is one such man to warn against. Maxwell is a high-profile author, former pastor (3,500-member Skyline Wesleyan Church, San Diego, 1981-1995), and founder of The INJOY Group, a company whose main purpose is "... to help churches and church leaders to realize their full potential." Currently residing in Atlanta, he conducts leadership training conferences across America, speaking to more than 250,000 people each year, and claims to have a "lifelong commitment to evangelism." He has been dubbed: "America's expert on leadership" and "Dean of Christian Leadership." He is featured on the "peoplesuccess.com" Internet resource, along with other humanistic, self-motivation, self-help figures such as Zig Ziglar, Og Mandino, etc.

Maxwell grew up in Ohio, where he made a profession of "faith in Christ at the age of three, and reaffirmed that commitment when he was 13." He holds a BA degree in Theology (1969, Circleville Bible College—Church of Christ affiliated), a Master of Divinity (1989, from the hyper-charismatic Azusa Pacific University), a Doctorate of Ministry (1993, from the notoriously apostate Fuller Theological Seminary), and five honorary Doctorates of Divinity (including ones from the California Graduate School of Theology and Liberty University). Maxwell has authored more than 30 books, some of which have achieved best-seller status. His more recent and/or best-selling publications include:

- *Leadership Promises for Everyday* (2003)
- *Developing the Leaders Around You* (2003:rev.)
- *Thinking for a Change* (2003)
- *Attitude 101* (2003)
- *The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player* (2002)
- *Your Road Map for Success* (2002)
- *Leadership 101* (2002)
- *The Maxwell Leadership Bible* (2002)
- *Running with the Giants* (2002)
- *Be All You Can Be* (2002)
- *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* (2001)
- *Developing the Leader Within You* (2001:rev.)
- *Failing Forward* (2000)
- *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* (1999)
- *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (1998)
- *Becoming a Person of Influence* (co-author) (1997)
- *The Winning Attitude* (1993)

Major concerns about Maxwell's material, broadly speaking, are:

First, the manner in which Maxwell handles the Scriptures to "teach" his principles is sometimes egregiously mistaken, i.e., the Bible is not teaching the principles that Maxwell contends it is. His handling of the Scripture indicates Maxwell does not know (or at least is not utilizing) the proper methods of Biblical interpretation.

Second, Maxwell either implicitly or explicitly endorses some New Age teachers and doctrines.

Third, Maxwell employs questionable theological doctrines—such as a mistaken notion of the miraculous, a conspicuous absence of the cross, and various psychological doctrines, including self-esteem psychology and temperaments psychology.

One of our specific concerns is Maxwell's frequent misuse of Scripture.

Some examples:

1. **Proverbs 29:18** — "Where there is no vision the people perish." In *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* (ILT), Maxwell asserts, "vision gives team members direction and confidence" (ILT, p. 96). The context shows that Maxwell is thinking of a vision as the ability of the team to "look beyond current circumstances and any obvious shortcomings of current teammates to see the potential of the team" (ILT, p. 95). Maxwell's use of this verse displays a common misunderstanding that is perhaps created by the ambiguity of the English term "vision" used in the King James Version—the Hebrew word *hazon*. According to Hebrew scholar Thomas Howe, it is "primarily used in the OT to refer to a divine communication, i.e., when a prophet receives a vision." The Hebrew word is better translated as (with the complete verse): "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law" (NKJV). Notice the contrasts in the parallelism of the verse. The "no revelation" (no vision) is a parallel contrasting "law" (Hebrew, Torah) and the "cast off restraint" is a parallel contrasting "happy." One can see this verse is teaching that without the Word of God, God's people become unrestrained; and only with instruction (Torah) can God's people be happy or blessed. Thus, the verse has nothing to do with what Maxwell is discussing. Howe comments, "There does not seem to be a single instance where this word is used in the OT according to the popular way the word 'vision' is used (the ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom, or a mental image of what the future will or could be like)."

2. **John 2** — On pages 12-13 in *The Winning Attitude* (TWA), Maxwell uses the story of Jesus at the Cana wedding to illustrate several principles. Maxwell's discussion here is illustrative of how many teachers misuse the Bible, especially if the passage in question is historical narrative. Rather than taking the narrative at face value and trying to understand what it is saying, Maxwell often "allegorizes" or "moralizes" the text. This means taking the elements of the story and trying to make each element symbolize some aspect of the Christian life. Here, for example, Maxwell takes the overall "lesson" of the story to be obedience. Maxwell tells us that we are to obey Jesus even if "you are not in the right place" (TWA, p. 12), and takes the fact that Jesus performed His miracle at a wedding instead of a church to mean we can expect "some of God's greatest blessings will be at 'other places' if we are obedient to Him." Maxwell goes on to point out how other elements of the narrative illustrate obedience in our Christian lives. One should be obedient (1) when "you have lots of problems," (2) when "you are not encouraged," (3) when "you have not walked with Him very long," (4) when "you have not seen Him work miracles in your life," and (5) when "you don't understand the entire process" (TWA, p. 13). These principles supposedly are taught in the narrative when the characters (1) run out of wine, (2) when Jesus says, "My hour has not yet come," (3) because the disciples had just met Jesus, (4) because this was Jesus' first miracle, and (5) because the characters did what Jesus commanded even in light of not knowing what Jesus was up to. While these might be useful points in some sense, they have nothing to do with Jesus at the Cana wedding.
3. **1 Samuel 17** — In *The Winning Attitude*, Maxwell says, "When Goliath came up against the Israelites, the soldiers all thought, He's so big we can never kill him. David looked at the same giant and thought, He's so big I can't miss" (TWA, p. 31; emphasis in original). This again is an example of missing the real reason why the narrative tells us a story. To take Goliath as if he is illustrative of problems or obstacles in our lives, the Israelite's reaction as negative thinking, and David's reaction as positive thinking, is to completely violate sound principles of Biblical interpretation regarding historical narrative. Maxwell's use of this passage has nothing to do with why God's Word tells us this story.
4. **Romans 10:7** — "Faith comes by hearing ..." Maxwell discusses how the negative and positive words we hear can either encourage or discourage us (TWA, pp. 56-57). What he thinks Romans 10:7 has to do with this is not clear in his discussion. One can only assume he thinks it is relevant since he quotes part of the verse as a heading introducing this discussion. There is also an issue of the categories of "positive" and "negative" in these discussions, but let it suffice to say here that Paul's point in Romans 10 has nothing to do with positive or negative words and the impact they might have on us being encouraged or discouraged. Rather, Paul is concerned with the truths contained in the Word of God and how the hearing of God's truths can give rise to faith in God. Taking Romans 10:7 the way Maxwell does ignores the context, reduces Paul's words to a mere platitude, and misses Paul's meaning altogether.
5. **Proverbs 23:7** — "For as he thinks within himself so he is." Here is another example of a verse that is commonly taken out of context to say something it clearly does not mean. As Maxwell discusses one's self-image, he comments, "It is impossible to perform consistently in a manner inconsistent with the way we see ourselves. In other words, we usually act in direct response to our self-image" (TWA, p. 61-62). Whether this pop psychological concept is true or not (it is not), this passage from Proverbs has nothing to do with one's self-image. When one reads this verse, a question he should ask is, "Who is the 'he' referring to?" In answering the question about what is the antecedent of the pronoun, we have to look to the context. Consider the fuller citation: "Do not eat the bread of a miser, Nor desire his delicacies; For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. 'Eat and drink!' he says to you, But his heart is not with you" (vv. 6-7). It should be clear that this passage has nothing to do with self-image. Rather, the writer is warning that though the miser outwardly seems to be hospitable, inwardly he resents the fact you are eating his food. So, the counsel goes, do not be deceived by his hypocritical outward actions, but be aware that how he is inwardly toward you (as he thinks in his heart) is his true disposition. Further, Maxwell recounts a testimony where one uses

this passage as a commentary on how one sees the world around him—how one's attitude can make a difference (TWA, pp. 132-134). Again, it should be clear this has nothing to do with the passage.

6. [Numbers 13 & 14](#) — Maxwell uses the story of Israel's failure to enter the Promised Land in Numbers 13 and 14 as illustrative of how "negative thinking limits God and our potential" (TWA, p. 122). Besides false notions of "positive thinking" and "negative thinking," Maxwell's use of this passage misses the real reason why Israel failed to reap God's promises. It had nothing to do with being "positive" or "negative." Rather, Israel's failure was due to unbelief. There was no question that God repeatedly had promised Israel that He was going to give them this land. This promise constituted God's inauguration through Abraham of His relationship with His chosen people (Genesis 12:1-3). The difference between the two reactions of the spies and the nation of Israel was that Caleb and Joshua believed God's promise, and the others did not. It is as simple as that. The lesson is profound. The issue of believing God resounds throughout the entire Bible. In fact, our very salvation is a function of believing God (Romans 4:3-5). To reduce the Numbers passage to the categories of positive and negative thinking, rather than belief and unbelief in God, is to tragically miss the whole point of the passage and neglect a perfect opportunity to teach a very important Biblical doctrine.
7. [Matthew 21:21](#) — "If you have faith and do not doubt you shall say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and it shall happen." Maxwell employs this passage to teach that "the only thing that will guarantee the success of a doubtful undertaking is the faith from the beginning that you can do it" (TWA, p. 139). There are several things wrong with taking the passage this way. First, one's faith is not to be in one's self. I need not have faith that I can do it. Rather, faith should be directed toward God. He is the one who can do it. But what is it He can, or will, do? This is the second problem with Maxwell's use of Scripture here. Faith is believing what God has said. If the mountain is to be cast into the sea, it will only be because that is God's will. We do not bring it about simply because we believe it. First John 5:14 says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." If something is not God's will, then no amount of my believing it or having "faith" in my ability to do something will be able to bring it about. But, how are we to know whether God has willed it? God's will is fully revealed in His Word—the Bible. If we pray and ask according to the Bible, we can know God will grant our petitions. This is not to say that we cannot pray for things about which the Bible is silent. We are invited to "cast our cares upon Him" (1 Peter 5:7). However, we must be willing to accept God's will even if it conflicts with ours. We cannot presume that God would give us anything we ask if He has not promised it in His word.

Also of great concern is Maxwell's use of New Age teachers and philosophies.

The following examples may cause some believers not only to embrace the material Maxwell presents, but also view these teachers and doctrines as harmless.

1. [\(1\) Norman Vincent Peale's The Power of Positive Thinking](#): On several occasions, Maxwell favorably quotes or refers to Norman Vincent Peale (TWA, p. 47, 172). In fact, in *The Winning Attitude*, Maxwell recounts an episode that illustrates one of the dangers of endorsing writers such as Peale. He says, "My father has always been a positive influence in my life. Once, while visiting my parents back east, I noticed he was reading Norman Vincent Peale's book *The Power of Positive Thinking*. When I noted that he had read this book previously, he replied enthusiastically, 'Of course! I must keep building my attitude'" (TWA, p. 47). It is sad how many professing Christians consider Peale's doctrine to be consistent with the Christian worldview. A more thorough examination of Peale's teachings is presented in another BDM report, but a few examples here should suffice to show that the doctrines of *The Power of Positive Thinking* are not Christian:

- (a) Many mistakenly think Peale's "positive thinking" is merely an encouragement to be optimistic in one's outlook on life. Many mistakenly think all Peale is saying is that one should try to look for the good in every situation. This is not "positive thinking." But even if it were, it is still not a Biblical. The Bible encourages us to think truly—not optimistically. Philippians 4:8 ff says, "Finally brethren, whatever things are true ... meditate on these things." In the Bible, sometimes God was very "negative": "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'" (Genesis 2:16-17). And sometimes Satan was very "positive": "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die'" (Genesis 3:4). The categories of "positive" and "negative" do not necessarily track the categories of "good" and "evil."
- (b) The second problem with Peale's position, even if he were talking about being optimistic (which I contend he was not), is that we have no right to encourage anyone to be optimistic unless and until that person has believed on Christ for eternal life. If we help the lost person to gain an optimistic attitude, he will be discouraged from seeing his need for a Savior. The lost person should not be optimistic because he is doomed without Christ.
- (c) There is a conspicuous lack of the cross in Peale's "positive thinking." He does not link the fruits of "positive thinking" to an acknowledgement of one's own sin and the provision that God has made through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. So, even if Peale's point were that one should have an optimistic attitude toward life, this still would be misguided because of the greater need that one have a realistic, or true, attitude and recognize that one is entitled to genuine optimism only if one has believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- (d) An optimistic attitude toward life is not what Norman Vincent Peale's Power of Positive Thinking is all about. Rather, this "power" is something by which one can "rise above obstacles which ordinarily might defeat you" by "channeling spiritual power through your thoughts." For Peale, this power is not merely an attitude, but is a real power that resides in us. Peale encourages his readers to "believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy." Peale likens this power in other places as a "Higher Power" that "is constantly available (AA's 12-Step Higher Power?). If you open to it, it will rush in like a mighty tide. It is there for anybody under any circumstances or in any conditions." (Even in the condition of unbelief?) Tragically, Peale wants to relate this power to God. He credits a friend of his for making him realize that he should "practice resting ... in God [for] His support and power. Believe that He is giving it to you now and don't get out touch with that power. Yield yourself to it—let it flow through you."
- (e) In relating this power to God, Peale comments, "Contact with God establishes within us a flow of the same type of energy that re-creates the world and that renews springtime every year. When in spiritual contact with God through our thought processes, the Divine energy flows through the personality, automatically renewing the original creative act." This type of thinking should sound familiar to anyone who has studied New Thought, New Age, or Occult philosophy. For Maxwell to favorably mention Peale in his material is misleading at best and potentially heretical at worst.

In both *The Winning Attitude* and *Becoming a Person of Influence* (BPI), Maxwell uses the categories of "positive" and "negative." He talks about the positive and negative influences on us (TWA, p. 44), our positive and negative influence on others (BPI, p. 8-11), positive and negative words and attitudes (TWA, pp. 57-58), and positive and negative thoughts (TWA, pp. 119 ff.). But the categories of "positive" and "negative" are impotent to capture a proper understanding of reality vis-à-vis our personal and spiritual lives. Rather, "positive" and "negative" are better suited to a discussion of an energy like electricity. In terms of a discussion of spiritual matters, "positive" and "negative" bespeak more of New Age and Occult philosophy. Because New Thought, New Age, and Occult philosophies hold that the spiritual realm is an "energy" of sorts, one finds the categories of "positive" and "negative" used extensively in such literature. Instead of "positive" and "negative," the Bible speaks in terms of "true" and "false," "good" and "evil," "righteous" and "unrighteous," and "godly" and "ungodly."

2. **Positive Mental Attitude Pioneer Napoleon Hill:** Concerns about Maxwell quoting Napoleon Hill in *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* (p. 69) are similar to concerns about him quoting Norman Vincent Peale, except Napoleon Hill is much more overtly Occult. Hill is the author of *Think and Grow Rich*, which is probably one of the most widely read "positive mental attitude" and success-motivational books around. The thrust of the book is that success is a function of one's attitude. Specifically, Hill teaches there is a "Supreme Secret" that is the key to life. The secret is: "Anything the human mind can believe, the human mind can achieve." In other words, the power of the mind is the key to bring what is needed in life. Worse is Hill's testimony as to how he learned this secret (via an Occult vision of a disembodied "Master"). Maxwell never warns his readers of these Occult teachings when he references Napoleon Hill.
3. **Mystical "Christian" Writer Richard Foster:** In *The Winning Attitude*, Maxwell quotes New Age mystic writer Richard Foster (TWA, pp. 174-175). One of Foster's works is *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. Foster is also co-director of *Renovaré*, an international, New Age, ecumenical organization that emanates from the religious traditions of Quakerism, whose message is that today's Church is missing out on some wonderful spiritual experiences that can only be found by studying and practicing the "meditative" and "contemplative" lifestyle "of early Christianity." In actuality, *Renovaré* espouses the use of the early pagan traditions of guided imagery and visualization, astral projection, "Zen" prayer techniques for meditation (i.e., Buddhism), and Jungian psychology (i.e., a blend of Eastern mysticism and Roman Catholic mystical spiritual tradition, which nicely fits the New Age model), all as means of obtaining "personal spiritual renewal" in the lives of believers. (For a more detailed analysis of *Renovaré* and the teachings of its co-directors, psychologist Richard Foster and William Vaswig, see *Media Spotlight's Special Report of March, 1992: "Renovaré: Taking Leave of One's Senses"*):
 - (a) **Foster teaches techniques of meditation** by saying, "the imagination is stronger than conceptual thought and stronger than the will. In the West, our tendency to deify the merits of rationalism—and it does have merit—has caused us to ignore the value of the imagination." He goes on to advocate listening to our dreams. "For fifteen centuries Christians overwhelmingly considered dreams as a natural way in which the spiritual world broke into our lives." He suggests that "we can specifically pray, inviting God to inform us through our dreams. We should tell Him of our willingness to allow Him to speak to us in this way." But then Foster adds, "At the same time, it is wise to pray a prayer of protection, since to open ourselves to spiritual influence can be dangerous as well as profitable." Further, Foster thinks if one practices at meditation. he can develop his skills in order to internalize and personalize the Scriptures. For example, He claims that in meditating on a parable of Jesus, one enters "not as a passive observer but as an active participant; remember that since Jesus lives in the Eternal Now and is not bound by time, this event in the past is a living presentment experience for Him. Hence, you can actually encounter the living Christ in the event, be addressed by His voice and be touched by His healing power."
 - (b) **Foster advocates the Occult teaching of out-of-body experiences.** He teaches: "In your imagination allow your spiritual body, shining with light, to rise out of your physical body. Look back so that you can see yourself lying in the grass and reassure your body that you will return momentarily. Imagine your spiritual self, alive and vibrant, rising up through the clouds and into the stratosphere. Observe your physical body, the knoll, and the forest shrink as you leave the earth. Go deeper and deeper into outer space until there is nothing except the warm presence of the eternal Creator."
 - (c) **Foster also endorses New Age writer Agnes Sanford, author of the book *Healing Gifts of the Spirit*.** He says, "This advice, and much more, was given to me by Agnes Sanford. I have discovered her to be an extremely wise and skillful counselor in these matters. Her book *The Healing Gifts of the Spirit* is an excellent resource." Agnes Sanford is a Pantheist. She says, regarding the earth, the sea, the clouds, the birds and the sun, "all these God made and He made them out of Himself." Further, Sanford teaches: "You see, God is actually in

the flowers and the growing grass and all the little chirping, singing things. He made everything out of Himself and somehow He put a part of Himself into everything."

Regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit, she says, "But no experience ever equaled in bliss this baptism of pure light and power that came to me from God, not through the medium of man counseling and praying with me, but through the sun and the waters of the lake and the wind in the pine trees." Sanford appeals to the New Age writer Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's works *The Phenomena of Man* and *The Divine Milieu* as authority for her own teachings.

- (d) [Foster even includes himself in the New Age Movement](#). He says, "We of the New Age can risk going against the tide. Let us with abandon relish the fantasy games of children. Let's see visions and dream dreams."
4. [New Age Psychologist James Allen](#): On page 13 of *The Winning Attitude*, Maxwell quotes James Allen. Among author Allen's works is *As a Man Thinketh*. Allen is another installment of those positive-thinking, New Age writers who carelessly weave verses from the Bible with New Age and Occult philosophy. In the grand tradition of the New Thought Movement, Allen claims, "all that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts." Further, Allen maintains that "as a being of Power, Intelligence, and Love, and the lord of his own thought, man holds the key to every situation, and contains within himself that transforming and regenerative agency by which he may make himself what he will." The contrast between this and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ should be obvious.

Another area of great concern is Maxwell's teaching of heretical doctrines.

For example:

1. [Maxwell's Notion of the Miraculous](#): In *The Winning Attitude*, Maxwell gives a "four-step formula to handle fear" from Acts 4:29-30 (TWA, pp. 139-142). Maxwell takes verse 30 to say that just as the First-Century Apostles had their ministries attended with miracles, "This must happen in your life" (TWA, p. 141). But the Christian should not expect his life and ministry to be attended with the miraculous the way the Apostles' lives and ministries were attended with the miraculous. This is not to say God cannot perform a miracle in someone's life as God sees fit, but Maxwell is missing the significance of the presence of miracles in the ministries of the Apostles. Primarily, miracles are God's supernatural intervention in the affairs of humans in order to vindicate His special revelation and messenger. Throughout the Bible, God used miracles to prove that a given prophet or apostle was speaking in God's name. God used miracles to vindicate the ministries of Moses, the Prophets, the Apostles of Jesus, and most significantly, of Jesus Himself. To teach that any Christian should expect the miraculous in his life is to, at best, dilute the significance of the miracles in the Bible.
2. [A Conspicuous Absence of the Cross](#): In Chapter 14 of *The Winning Attitude*, titled "The God Above You" (TWA pp. 169-179), Maxwell ostensibly turns to a discussion about how, with one's security in Christ, "I can afford to take a risk in my life. Only the insecure cannot afford to risk failure. The secure can be honest about themselves. They can admit failure. They are able to seek help and try again. They can change" (TWA, p. 169). Maxwell discusses how one can draw strength from God's Word, prayer, and the Holy Spirit. What is disturbing about his discussion is that nowhere does Maxwell clearly link these prerogatives to having eternal life through trust in what Christ did for us on the cross. Though he mentions a number of verses, including Paul's discussion of our security in Romans 8, he says little that could not have been said by a liberal "Christian" or by someone speaking from a generic religious perspective. Maxwell summarizes the change wrought in the disciples' lives by the Holy Spirit as "changing an attitude" (TWA, p. 178). Throughout Maxwell's discussion of the power the Holy Spirit gives, Maxwell characterizes that power as a power to be successful rather than a power to live a righteous life and witness for Christ. When the power of the Gospel is relegated to merely a change in attitude, rather than to a saving relationship with God

through the cross of Christ and being conformed to the image of Christ through the exigencies of life (cf. Proverbs 15:3 1, Phil. 3:7-15, James 1:2-4), then something is missing.

3. **Maxwell's Use of Pop Psychology:** Maxwell's writings are laced with pop psychological concepts and methodologies. For example:
 - (a) **Self-esteem Psychology:** In *The Winning Attitude*, Maxwell assumes a self-image psychology (TWA, p. 61 ff.). Sadly, self-image and self-esteem are ideas that are widespread throughout the professing evangelical church. To say the least, such an encroachment of psychology is unhealthy for a growing Christian life. Rather, the Gospel of Christ admonishes us to deny ourselves (Matt. 16:24). It is telling us that Paul's "self-image" deteriorated as he grew closer to Christ. In 1 Cor. 15:9, Paul describes himself as the "least of the apostles." Later in his life he says that he is the "least of all the saints" (Eph. 3:8). Near the end of his life, Paul's self-assessment was that he was "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). Paul understood the key to his relationship with God was an increasing love for Christ and an increasing disregard for himself.
 - (b) **Four Temperaments Psychology:** Maxwell also endorses Tim LaHaye's Four Temperaments teachings. (TWA, p. 54) What is disturbing about such an approach is that not only is the four temperaments psychology not taught in the Bible, but one would be hard pressed to find such teaching in any academic textbook on psychology. Educational Psychologist and prolific writer on the dangers of "Christian" Psychology, Martin Bobgan comments: "Christian authors promoting the four temperaments and similar typologies base their ideas on unproven psychological theories and subjective observations which are based on neither the rigors of scientific investigation nor the rigors of exegetical Bible study." (Must reading for anyone desiring a fuller understanding of teachings on the temperaments would be *Four Temperaments, Astrology & Personality Testing*, by Martin and Deidre Bobgan, EastGate Publishers, Santa Barbara, CA, 1992, 213 pages.)

Bible believing Christians should also beware of some more of Maxwell's unscriptural positions and efforts to promote godless organizations and philosophies.

For example:

1. **Promise Keepers:** Maxwell "... is frequently asked to speak for organizations such as Promise Keepers and Focus on the Family ...", and his INJOY Group, Inc. "ministry" is listed as a Promise Keepers Ministry Alliance. It is well documented that the PK organization is ecumenical, charismatic, and psychoheretical (and that James Dobson's Focus on the Family employs a psychological gospel that cannot save and cannot sanctify). PK's roots are Catholic and charismatic to the core. PK's contradictory stand on homosexuality; its promotion of secular psychology; its unscriptural feminizing of men; its depiction of Jesus as a "phallic messiah" tempted to perform homosexual acts; and its ecumenical and unbiblical teachings should dissuade any true Christian from participating. Promise Keepers is proving to be one of the most ungodly and misleading movements in the annals of Christian history.
2. **Worldly Models:** In his book *Developing the Leaders Around You*, Maxwell endorses the teachings of behaviorist psychologist Edward Thorndike (p. 124). True Christians reject the man-made, man-centered theory of behavior modification. Although the book is written to "identify and train potential leaders," Maxwell never mentions the Lord Jesus Christ. Evidently, he feels that God is not a worthy reference point for genuine leadership training. Instead, he refers frequently to so-called management experts, advertising experts, marketing specialists, "success" experts, psychologists, and "leadership specialists." The Word of God is never quoted. Only Moses and Jethro are briefly referred to for their leadership influence. The plan of salvation is never alluded to in any way, and yet Maxwell claims to have "... the priority of personal commitment to evangelism."

3. **New Evangelicalism:** Maxwell quotes from, and is in sympathy with, such persons as neo-evangelical psychologizers Stuart Briscoe, Billy Graham, Tony Campolo, and Chuck Swindoll; and church growth guru Rick Warren (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:7, Romans 16:17).
4. **Female Pastors:** One of the individuals Maxwell offers as a showcase for his leadership training skills is a woman who became a pastor on staff at his former church (Developing the Leaders Around You, p. 209). This is in clear violation of God's Word (1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Tim 2:12).
5. **Jesus of Nazareth and the Jim Jones-Hitler Connection:** In his book Developing the Leader Within You, Maxwell quotes these words from a non-Christian source: "Hitler was a leader and so was Jim Jones. Jesus of Nazareth, Martin Luther King, Jr., Winston Churchill, and John F. Kennedy all were leaders. While their value systems and management abilities were very different, each had followers." (Source: James C. Georges, from an interview in Executive Communications.) Maxwell makes no effort whatsoever to point out that Jesus was NOT just another leader with better values and superior management skills. The casual reader is left with the impression that Jesus of Nazareth was just another leadership figure like Hitler or cultist Jim Jones—only with "different" values.

<http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/exposes/maxwell/general.htm>

<http://gochristfellowship.com/about-us/our-pastors/>

<http://www.johnmaxwell.com/meet-john/bio/>

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Termites in Yoyo's -

Evil Men and Impostors Grow Worse and Deceive

Heidi Swander - Olive Tree Ministries

21 March 2012

Bono "sometimes seems to be the chief theologian of the Emerging Church"

I've been memorising the tiny book of Jude in the last few weeks. It is amazing to me to think of Jesus' brother writing to first century Christians and saying, "For certain men have crept in unnoticed . . . ungodly men who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ," (v. 4). It's amazing because it sounds like the DVD I've just previewed; a new and timely video entitled, *The Submerging Church: How the Emerging Church is Drawing Multitudes Away from Biblical Christianity*. What we're observing in the 21st century was already prevalent at the inception of the church.

Actually, Paul warned about it when he said his goodbyes to the Ephesian church elders in Acts 20: "For I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves," (vv. 29, 30).



To illustrate how these verses relate to what I've just viewed, The Submerging Church quotes Rob Bell, in his notorious book, *The Velvet Elvis*: "What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archaeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was just a bit of mythologising the gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?"

What was it that Jude said? He said the ungodly men he's referring to deny "the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ," i.e., His Deity!

For an Emergent pastor to even suggest the possibility that Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin denies the virgin birth and the deity of the Lord Jesus all in one fell swoop! Joseph Schimmel, the producer of *The Submerging Church*, says, "This kind of comment shows that [Rob Bell's] faith isn't built upon Jesus Christ as God-in-the-flesh -- the God-man who came to die for our sins." Rob Bell is a spiritual leader to thousands. Shades of Paul's chat with the Ephesian elders: "From among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things . . ." Of course, the root cause of this kind of radical and heretical departure from a foundational truth regarding God the Son is an obvious lack of respect for, and adherence to, the Word of God -- the final and objective truth of all time according to Jesus Christ.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that a peer of Bell's, Tony Jones -- a "theologian-in-residence" at the Emergent Solomon's Porch located in Minneapolis, Minnesota -- is quoted as saying, "So we must stop looking for some objective truth that is available when we delve into the text of the Bible," (*Post-modern Youth Ministry*, p. 201).

But that's nothing. In an article entitled, "Why is the Emerging Church drawn to deconstructive theology," Jones explains that he believes the Bible to be a subversive text and uses perverse language to express the degree of his displeasure regarding what he deems "the transgressive nature of our sacred text."

Producer Schimmel gives other examples of Emergent disregard for Scripture and likens it, appropriately, to Satan's questioning God's Word in the Garden of Eden when he queried Eve with, "Hath God said?" Another section of this DVD that informed me discussed the Emergent Church's overall sympathy for Islam. It was well-publicised, when he first began this practice, that Brian McLaren chose to celebrate Ramadan. Ramadan is the Muslim holy month commemorating the time Muslims believe Mohammed received the Koran through divine revelation.

Question: What is an alleged Christian doing celebrating the inception of a book that denies the deity of Jesus Christ, the truth of the trinity, and the fact that Jesus Christ actually died for our sins? According to the Apostle John, it is the spirit of antichrist that denies the Father and the Son.

But this next fact really floored me: Do you remember the document that many Muslims and Christians signed a few years back -- *A Common Word Between Us and You?* [See *Apostasy Alert* 19 March 2012] Both Jan and Eric Barger have covered the scriptural inappropriateness of this document. Well, here is the quote from the Koran from whence that document title originated: "O people of the book! Come to a common word between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah," Sura 3:64. I was astounded to read the entire verse and realise that those who signed the Yale document were either ignorant of this Islamic passage or saw no problem committing to what the Koran plainly states. This is what Brian McLaren celebrates and that with which the Emergent Church sympathises.

The most disturbing, yet enlightening, information I gleaned about the Emerging Church was on the bonus DVD entitled, *The Emerging Church and the Bono-Screwtape Connection*. Phil Johnson, a pastor at Grace

Community Church in Sun Valley, California, was shocked to discover that Bono (the Irish Rocker) appears to be an icon of the Emerging Church movement. "If you've been tuned in to pop-culture anytime during the past two decades, and know anything about Bono, that might help you grasp something of the look and feel of the movement," Johnson said. "Emergent types seem to quote Bono all of the time. I would say that he sometimes seems to be the chief theologian of the Emerging Church movement," (Absolutely Not! Exposing the Post-modern errors of the Emerging Church).

Indeed, this egotistical icon who, by his own admission, denies any faith and exemplifies none of the fruits of the Spirit; regularly perverts Scripture in his music; and has praised and promoted the work of Satanists, is endorsed by Emergent leaders. Brian McLaren and Tony Campolo in their book, "Adventures in Missing the Point", state, "U2's lead singer, Bono, is using his wealth and celebrity to . . . increase the kingdom of God in the here and now." A scant perusal of Bono's life indicates lewdness and a propensity for the demonic.

What was it Jude said? He said that ungodly men would turn the grace of God into lewdness. And so it is.

I think what I appreciated most about The Submerging Church was that it repeatedly quotes Emergent leaders -- either by video or in writing -- thus damning them with their own words; then, the producer saturates his topic with Scripture to show God's view on it. The DVD covers a wide range of topics including -- but not limited to -- Emergent & Purpose Driven; The Daniel Plan; Rick Warren's P.E.A.C.E Plan, and homosexuality. This documentary minces no words. My heart is grieved to learn yet more of the perversity of this faction that appears to be consuming churches and deceiving even some teachers we have so long respected.

But this, too, Paul warned of when he told Timothy, "But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," (II Tim. 3:13). The good news is that it also shows the lateness of the hour and provides hope for the soon return of our coming King!

Apostasy Alert

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Matthew 5:17-19

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Therapy for the Funny Bone -

For Cutting Through Rush Hour Traffic



Dog For Sale

A guy is driving around the back woods of Montana and he sees a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house:

'Talking Dog For Sale' He rings the bell and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard.

The guy goes into the backyard and sees a nice looking Labrador retriever sitting there..
'You talk?' he asks.

'Yep,' the Lab replies.

After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says 'So, what's your story?'

The Lab looks up and says, 'Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young...I wanted to help the government, so I told the CIA.

In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping.'

'I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running...But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals.' 'I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired.'

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

'Ten dollars,' the guy says.

'Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?'

'Because he's a liar. He's never been out of the yard'

A mother went to wake her son for church one Sunday morning. When she knocked on his door, he said, "I'm not going!"

"Why not?" asked his mother.

"I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me. Two, I don't like them."

His mother replied, "I'll give you two good reasons why YOU WILL go to church. One, you're 47 years old. Two, you're the pastor!"

You just gotta love the Irish -

Murphy dropped dead the moment he arrived home from a vacation in the tropics. He was laid out in the coffin for friends and neighbours to pay their last respects. "He's got a great tan," Mrs Doolan from next door mused. "The holiday did him the world of good." And he looks so calm and serene," said Mrs McGuinness. "That's because he died in his sleep." explained Mrs Murphy, "and he doesn't know he's dead yet, but when he wakes up, the shock will kill him!"

The Irish patient who hobbled into the surgery's waiting room. "I hope the doctor finds something wrong with me because I'd hate to feel like this if I was well!"

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Philippians 2:14-15

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Reaching Children for Christ -

(We believe that reaching children for Christ is part of the great commission. Once in a while I meet someone who opposes churches having Sunday Schools and youth ministries or youth camps. I always wonder about the hardness of their heart. How could we want anything but God's glorious salvation for children as soon as they can grasp the facts of their great need and God's wonderful supply through Christ? In testimony time at church recently, one of the ladies there rejoiced publicly that she came to know the Lord in Sunday School, and as a result, all her family had come to Christ. Winston Churchill once said that there is nothing better for us to do than to put milk into babies. He was wrong. There is nothing better for us to do than to put the Bread of Life into children! - Ed.)

No more sickness, no more pain, no more troubles that this sin sick world can inflict.



Little Isaac Stace was the son born to Emily and Stephen Stace. They lived on a small family cattle property in North Western N.S.W. Stephen his father was born on the land and so was Isaac. Isaac loved the bush and all that went with living in the wide open spaces. He loved his little pet animals, and even as a very small toddler he wanted to be with his father tending to the sheep and cattle. When an orphan lamb or kid was found it would be taken home for little Isaac to bottle feed it till it grew enough to tend for its self.

Isaac was born into a family, Mum & Dad, Grandparents, Brother and Sisters, Uncle and Aunts, who loved the Lord and taught him that Jesus loved him also.

Recently the family moved to their own property on the central coast of N.S.W. and were setting it up for their family. While their home was being established they were sleeping in a caravan.

After a busy day helping his dad with feeding of calves and lambs, and doing some welding jobs, Isaac had his evening meal and went off to the caravan for an early night. Because it was a little distance from the living area, his Mum & Dad would leave a candle burning to give him comfort.

It only took a few minutes and the next thing his Dad knew the van was totally engulfed in flames. Every effort was made but little Isaac would have been asleep with no recognition of what was happening.

Such a short life, but that night our Heavenly Father needed Isaac in His glorious home above.

Isaac was our nephew's son and we loved him dearly, but in all our sorrow here on earth we rejoice that we will see this little boy soon we believe, as he has only gone on ahead, and we will be with him when Jesus comes and takes us home.

His fathers comment to me was, "Uncle Kevin I would not want him back because God has taken him, and He knows best." This may sound hard to us, but we need to realise that God knows best, and knew this little boy's future.

Whether it be by fire, flood or famine, or whatever takes us we need to be trusting in that precious shed blood of Jesus, for He has paid the price of our sin and if we will repent of that sin and trust Him we WILL see our loved ones who have trusted Him and gone on before.

We need to teach our children, our grandchildren, and anybody else's children who will let us teach them. Pat and I have no grandchildren of our own so we adopt all the children, as Grandchildren so that we might teach them "Jesus Loves Me," that beautiful old hymn with such a profound truth that every child needs to know. We believe that if we can implant such a truth into children, some day down life's road when Satan tells them "No one loves you," they will remember, "Jesus loves me."

Stephen & Emily would appreciate your prayers as they adjust to life without their little boy.

May God encourage you,

Pat & Kevin Milson. Malanda Q.

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Fresh Quills -

Wisdom, The Principle Thing

By Esther Oksbjerg

Earlier this year, in a class I attended at University, the tutor announced that we were going to have an auction. Each student was given a certain amount of 'money' to buy what was valuable to them. Wisdom was one of many items for sale from a list which included social recognition, pleasure and

happiness. When wisdom came up for sale, I was the only individual to bid on it, so it was one of the cheapest objects. I wondered, "Do people not know what wisdom is? Or do they just not care?" People chose 'a comfortable life' or 'an exciting life' or 'a world at peace' or some other option. They placed no or very little value on wisdom. This sparked the thought, "How do I see wisdom? Do I truly value it? How important is wisdom? What does God's Word say about the value of wisdom?"

The Value Of Wisdom

Both Job and Proverbs declare that wisdom is of great importance, and therefore we should treasure it. "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not" and "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom:

and with all thy getting get understanding." Prov. 4:5,8. The Bible states that wisdom is more valuable than any other treasure on earth. It is worth much more than gold, silver, or precious stones. (Proverbs 3:15, Proverbs 8:11, Proverbs 8:19, Proverbs 16:16, Job 28:15-19) A person who has the fear of the Lord will value wisdom and instruction. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (See Ps. 111:10, Prov. 1:7, Prov. 9:10).

The Search For Wisdom

Having God's wisdom does not describe how much or what we know, but rather how we live. Wisdom will guide us in making decisions which are honoring to God. The believer needs wisdom not only in life's big decisions, but also in day-to-day living. Wisdom is something that a person has to work at to find. It doesn't just appear. Searching for wisdom requires a teachable spirit and humility. Wisdom must be actively sought, through prayer and studying God's Word, as well as from wise and godly people who are in positions of authority. Psalm 90:12 says that we must "apply our hearts unto wisdom". Proverbs 2:2-5 outlines the search for wisdom. As believers grow spiritually, they realise that they need the wisdom of God in their lives, and consequently they seek after wisdom. Then as the Christian receives God's wisdom, they increase in knowledge and understanding and gain new and valuable spiritual insights. In Ephesians 5:17, Paul exhorts believers "be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." A wise Christian seeks the will of God for every situation.

The Source Of Wisdom

God is the source of true wisdom. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." James 1:5. King Solomon, who has been called the wisest man who ever lived, received his wisdom from God (I Kings 4:29, I Kings 5:12, I Kings 10:24, II Chr. 9:23). "The Lord giveth wisdom." Prov. 2:6. God rewards those who seek after wisdom, by granting their request. In I Kings 3 and II Chronicles 1, Solomon's quest for wisdom is recorded. "In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God,...Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great? And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hath asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like." (II Chronicles 1:7-12) Solomon recognized that to live a Godly life, he needed wisdom. The Lord was pleased with Solomon's answer. (I Kings 3:10)

We must be careful to search for the right kind of wisdom. James 3 teaches that there is wisdom that is from beneath (earthly) and wisdom that is from above (heavenly). "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17) Notice that wisdom from the Lord displays many of the fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22,23. Conversely, when we choose to follow the wisdom of the world, we are disregarding the path of true wisdom and our lives do not display these spiritual fruits. Several weeks ago my pastor made the statement, "We limit our wisdom when we are disobedient to God." Moses wrote in the book of Deuteronomy. "Keep therefore and do them [God's commandments]; for this is your wisdom and your understanding." (Deuteronomy 4:6)

The Purpose Of Increasing In Wisdom

In the getting of wisdom, we must recognize that the primary purpose for increasing in wisdom is to glorify God. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom...But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he

understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord..." (Jeremiah 9:23,24) Our wisdom should bring glory to the Lord, not to ourselves. While pride can keep a person from ever finding wisdom, humility is the underlying attitude for finding and maintaining wisdom. I want to close by encouraging you to "walk in wisdom." (Colossians 4:5) Walking in wisdom involves abiding in Christ, for without Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5). Those who are saved are "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (I Corinthians 1:30,31

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Green Communism -

by John Ecob

Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you"
Matthew 24:4.

The Last days are days of mass deception by media, churches, and politicians. The Green tag is the respectable environmental front for anti-God COMMUNISM. Children are being brainwashed in school to believe they can save the planet but they unwittingly are being recruited into the communist camp to destroy the right of the individual to be born (abortion), live (euthanasia), earn a living, own property (high taxes), leave their meagre assets to their children (death tax), and enjoy freedom of thought and religion (anti-discrimination). When Antichrist appears he will achieve the ultimate CONTROL of the individual determining what men buy and sell, and worship - on pain of death!



The Greens are preparing the world for the Antichrist's kingdom and naive environmentalists think they are saving the planet from destruction. The conscience of the younger generation is being taught that sin is hurting the environment. It matters not whether you live like an animal in a homosexual or adulterous relationship, murder the unborn, murder the elderly, or lie and deceive. The ultimate crime is to leave a tap running, cut down a tree, kill a whale for food, drive a motor vehicle or burn coal.

Read The Fine Print On The Greens

Peter Costello

September 29, 2010 SMH

It is an odd priority. When the Greens leader, Bob Brown, was asked to name his first legislative priority for the new Parliament he had no hesitation - euthanasia. Brown wants to repeal the federal statute that outlawed euthanasia in the Northern Territory. "This will restore the rights of territorians to be able to legislate for euthanasia," he told Network Ten.

I wonder if all those who voted for the Greens in August expected that? They might have thought a carbon reduction scheme was the No. 1 Green priority, or an end to logging. But it is euthanasia. Brown didn't run as the head of the euthanasia party. But that is the effect of making this his No. 1 priority.

The Greens have a funny attitude to people. They care about them, of course, but they worry there are too many of them and that this will choke the environment. They say we need a "sustainable relationship between humans and the environment", which involves a lot more birth control and a lot less use of natural resources. The Greens are the only party committed to abortion on demand. The others leave it to each MP to decide how to vote on abortion. Labor has members with differing views, as do the Liberals. Not the Greens. They have a party position spelt out in their platform.

It might be easier to die if the Greens have their way but they also want taxes levied on the estate of people who have died. Any other party that proposed to liberalise death laws and tax the dead would be accused of a revenue grab. But not the Greens. They do not particularly target taxes at the dead; they target the living as well, with proposals for tax rises in superannuation, capital gains, car use, electricity prices and companies. Bob Brown could have campaigned as the head of the tax party, because that also is the effect of his policies.

Labor can govern only with the support of Adam Bandt, the newly elected Green in the seat of Melbourne. The Greens will have the balance of power in the new Senate. Now that they exercise such power they are entitled to more scrutiny.

Imagine taking a journey from the GPO to the state border. The Green vote is highest where you start - in the inner-city terraces and converted warehouses. In the seat of Melbourne, the Greens polled 36 per cent and in the seat of Sydney 24 per cent. As you move out to the quarter-acre blocks in the suburbs, the Green vote declines. When you get to semi-rural and country areas it falls further. In Gippsland in Victoria it is 7 per cent and in Parkes in NSW 6 per cent.

As you take that journey, you will notice that families live in the suburbs where it is cheaper to buy a house with a garden for the children. They do not see their children as a threat to ecological sustainability but as their greatest contribution to society. If you travelled on a Sunday you would notice, as you moved out from the inner city to the outer suburbs, that the church services attract bigger crowds. Conventional religious belief is stronger. This explains why these electorates do not warm to the Green agenda of euthanasia, abortion, gay marriage and adoption.

The fascinating thing about Green supporters is that their natural habitat is not the open spaces or the pristine forests but the crowded cafes and asphalt alleys of high-density, inner-city living. Of course the inner-city areas were the traditional fiefdom of the political left. They still are. But the political left has found that marketing itself under the label "Green" has much better appeal, which is how Lee Rhiannon was elected as a senator for NSW.

She grew up as part of Sydney's first family of communism and followed her parents into the party. Her chances of being elected as a communist senator were zero but she has done well under the Greens banner.

Adam Bandt was an undergraduate and postgraduate scholar of Marxism. In another age he would have journeyed through the union movement to a Labor pre-selection. Now these activists turn "Green" and they are taking the inner cities with them. But they are also taking a lot of support from people who think that Green is a description of environmental policies. It is much more than that. It is a clever marketing label. Beyond the label is a fully formed agenda of radical positions on tax, economics and foreign affairs. It pays to look carefully before buying the product.

Peter Costello is a former Liberal federal treasurer.

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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -

- "Persecution for Christ's sake is not a mark of defeat, but of victory." - *Anonymous*
- "It will take a crucified Church to reach the world with the message of a crucified Christ." - *William Orchard*
- I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the Heaven and say there is no God. - *Abraham Lincoln*
- He forgetteth not the cry of the humble. Prayer is a haven to the shipwrecked man, an anchor to them that are sinking in the waves, a staff to the limbs that totter, a mine of jewels to the poor, a healer of diseases, and a guardian of health. Prayer at once secures the continuance of our blessings, and dissipates the clouds of our calamities.

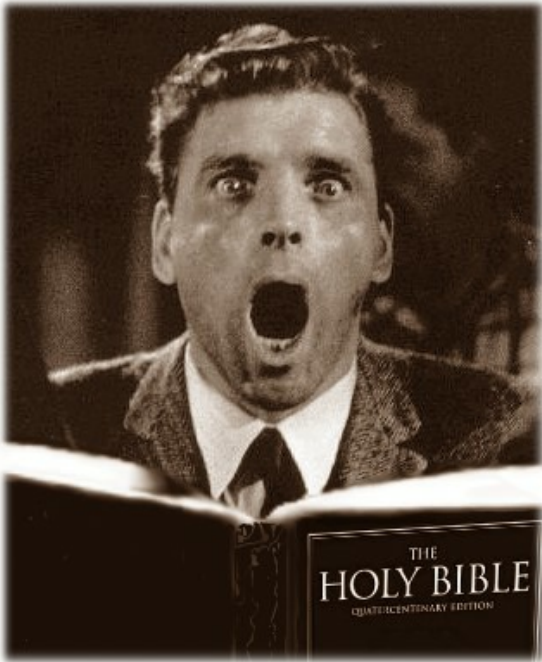
O blessed prayer! thou art the unwearied conqueror of human woes, the firm foundation of human happiness, the source of ever enduring joy, the mother of philosophy. The man who can pray truly, though languishing in most extreme indigence, is richer than all beside, whilst the wretch who never bowed the knee, though proudly sitting as monarch of all nations, is of all men most destitute. - *Chrysostom*

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Links to Make Us Think -

- Pelosi's Daughter Enrages Left with Welfare Video
http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/PelosivideowelfareHBO/2012/03/20/id/433239?s=al&promo_code=E77E-1
- Sounds your kids never heard -
<http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/106713>
- Anybody at your house like to make paper airplanes? -
<http://www.dump.com/paperairplane/> <http://thepaperairplaneguy.com/>
- Sharia is coming to Belgium -
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbMnA3uO9As&feature=related>
- For the kids at your house - A very smart elephant -
<http://www.wimp.com/elephantplays/>

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Eddy-Torial - The Missing Verses - Part 1

I am having a serious problem in my Bible reading, and it happens so often it is beginning to worry me. Initially, I wondered if it was my eyesight, but the optometrist says no, it's not my eyes. I even looked to make sure somebody hadn't slipped one of those new abbreviated, pretend Bibles in on me, but no, it's still the old King James Bible, teeth and all.

My problem?

Well, there are verses missing from my Bible. No, I've found no scissor holes or pages missing. I just can't find in my Bible what I am hearing preachers preach.

The Missing Verses -

I can't find any verses on the doctrine of BIG-ism. I received a letter the other day from a dear brother promoting BIG-ism, and after reading it, I said, "Wait a minute! That's not in MY Bible!" I searched and searched. I went back over the relevant passages and what he said just wasn't there. I looked in my commentaries and concordance and did a search in my Bible study computer program, and it's just not there. So I came to the conclusion that there are two possibilities. Either some thief stole all the verses on BIG-ism out of my Bible, OR some preachers are trying to add doctrines that have no biblical support.

The Origins of BIG-ism -

Since I couldn't find any verses for BIG-ism, I did the unforgivable. I researched its origins. I found out that "BIG-ism" is a shortened form of "Big Is Good - ism." I discovered that historians trace its beginnings back to the great world empires of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome. They list names like Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, Alexander the Great, Constantine, Genghis Khan, Charlemagne, Ignatius Loyola, and Queen Victoria as being the greatest advocates of BIG-ism. Under their leadership nation after nation adopted BIG-ism, built world empires, and wrote it into their law books and constitutions. Politicians puffed out their chests and crowed about BIG-ism all over the barnyard. Little businessmen cast aside integrity and honesty and embraced BIG-ism, they turned their little businesses into BIG businesses and made and lost millions. Economists traded good quality for large quantity and began to speak of a global economy. Educators discarded basic wisdom in favour of great knowledge, and founded BIG universities. Character became blase' and image became paramount. Men like Charles Finney and Robert Schuller and Billy Graham and Benny Hinn and Bill Hybels and Rick Warren saw in BIG-ism the goose that laid clutch after clutch of golden eggs and proceeded to breed geese, very BIG geese. And since philosophers see themselves to be the interpreters of the spirit of the age, they meditated and chanted their mantras and debated and then coined an umbrella term to describe the BIG-ism they saw all around them. They called it pragmatism.

When BIG-ism Conquered Fundamentalism -

For millennia, every one of God's men faced the BIG-ism of their generation. Enoch chose to walk with God rather than adjust to the society of Cain. Noah preached and sawed and hammered and loaded the ark and condemned the doomed pragmatism of his time. Abraham left the prosperous society of Ur and walked by

faith to an unknown destination. Jeremiah preached to a dying nation that was besotted with the BIG-ism of Assyria and Babylon. Our dear Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, confronted the BIG-ism of the wealthy and corrupt priests of Judaism and refused to be part of their dog eat dog pragmatism. The apostles and all their offspring, for twenty centuries, counted the cost and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, Rome, London and Wall Street.

Until recently, that is.

Somewhere back about 75 years ago, BIG-ism was invited into fundamental Baptist churches, lumbered down the aisle, made a questionable profession of faith, was immediately baptised into membership, went off to Bible college, converted the professors, and conquered our pulpits. Young Pastor "Big" soon introduced Sunday School contests, bought fleets of buses, read John Maxwell's books, and invented Leadership Conferences to train lots of little "Bigs" to be big "Bigs.". BIG-ism became so prevalent that our churches went into BIG debt so they could build BIG buildings which required BIG budgets to pay BIG interest payments, and then produced BIG name preachers making BIG claims for their BIG ministries.

(And we wonder where these BIG religious empires came from?)

What is never mentioned is the BIG numbers of backslidden BIGchurch members that stay at home on Sundays in their BIG (double-wide) recliners in their BIG houses drinking BIG bottles of beer, watching BIG football players (who draw BIG salaries) on BIG screen televisions.

The Total Absence of Proof Texts -

There simply aren't any verses in the Bible that command God's people to build something BIG! We do worship the great God, of whom Solomon said, "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built." (II Chron. 6:18) And we live in the cosmos He created that has boundaries we haven't discovered yet, and we possess the fathomless Bible, and the powerful gospel of Christ, and a glorious salvation. If preachers love the word "big" so much, they should use it to describe God and His works and His word, and ignore the puny empires of men which will all burn someday.

We have been assigned one BIG task, preaching the gospel to every creature, but there is no verse that teaches that we will obtain BIG results if we obey the great commission. We are glad that some preachers do see many come to Christ, and their churches have increased numerically.....

For a time. But, for the most part, gospel preaching churches have always been small, persecuted, and despised bodies of believers.

There were 3000 new members added to the little Jerusalem church at Pentecost. And more in Acts chapter 4. But the apostles never made it a practice to count noses. Luke wrote down a few attendance figures, but we never see the apostles reminding the Corinthians or the Ephesians of the BIG crowds they had in days gone by. Scripture is totally silent regarding advertising budgets, and attendance campaigns and leadership conferences where the apostles beat the drum for BIG-ism. Their focus was not on making a favourable impression by competing with a pragmatic world in BIGness, but by confronting a fallen world with the gospel of Christ and letting the chips fall where they may. When there were many converted and the crowds were large, they rejoiced. And when men spurned the love of God as they are doing now, they preached and prayed and plugged away. Most of God's work has been done by little people being faithful, not by religious superstars training God's people to be BIG!

It is embarrassing to see pastors of independent Baptist churches trying to build something BIG. And it is humiliating to watch the lovers of BIG-ism advocating the use of gimmicks and worldly and entertaining

advertising methods to make the churches BIGger. That is not our calling. It is not in the job description Christ gave to His disciples. Their assigned task was to preach the greatest message the world ever heard to the greatest number of people possible. The great commission does not guarantee BIGNess!

When pastors oppose the establishment of new little churches everywhere, down the street, next door, in nearby towns, and then pontificate ex-cathedra that everybody must attend their BIG church (campus?), they are telling us that they have replaced the great commission with BIG-ism. It has always been better to have 100 churches that minister to 50 people in each congregation, than one church that has 5000 people driving great distances just to be part of a BIG church. It has always been better for a little church to have a little preacher living in their midst, preaching simple sermons week by week than it is for that little church to have no pastor (apart from an impersonal television star) and have to stream all their sermons from a distant, aloof, and indifferent BIG church doing its best to become a megachurch.

When my dear Saviour said, "Fear not, **little flock**; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32), He wasn't talking about an earthly kingdom.

We need to remember that old proverb, "Whenever anyone sets out to build an empire, he has someone in mind to be emperor."

Pastor Buddy Smith

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Welcome to the Website of Grace Baptist Church - Malanda, North Queensland, Australia



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[Grace Baptist Church](#), Malanda, Qld., 4885, Australia.

To be included to receive copies please contact us by one of the following methods:

Post: P.O. Box 684, Malanda, Qld., 4885;

Phone: 07 4096 6657

Email: smiletex@bigpond.net.au

Website: www.gracebaptistmalanda.net.au