



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

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Table of Contents -

[Feature Article - The 401st Prophet -](#)

[Deacon True Sez -](#)

[How Important is Entertainment? -](#)

[Old Born Drunk -](#)

[Cartoons For Wise Men -](#)

[Links In The Media Chain -](#)

[JC Ryle on Witnessing to Jews -](#)

[Poems That Preach -](#)

[Therapy For The Funny Bone -](#)

[Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -](#)

[What About UFO's? -](#)

[Eddy-Torial -](#)

Feature Article - The 401st Prophet

By Vance Havner

"Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him." (1 Kings 22:7)

There is no period of Bible history more dramatic than the life and times of Ahab. Some of the worst and some of the best Old Testament characters were his contemporaries. There was Jezebel, one of the most wicked women who ever lived, and there was Elijah, who lived in a tempest and

went to heaven in a whirlwind. The times were evil, but they were not dull. Something was happening every minute.

On one occasion, Ahab planned a campaign against Ramoth-gilead. It was a case of a bad man doing a good thing in the wrong way. He had Scripture for the undertaking (Deuteronomy 4:43), but it takes more than a verse of Scripture to justify such a venture. Ahab inveigled King Jehoshaphat of Judah into joining him in the enterprise. Jehoshaphat was a good man but easily influenced. Ahab put on a banquet — a kick-off supper is usually all it takes to line up a Jehoshaphat. The King of Judah had no business in such a project, and the prophet Jehu asked him, “Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?” (2 Chronicles 19:2). That text ought to be brought out of the moth balls and put into circulation!

Jehoshaphat asked that the Israelites enquire of the Lord. It was a little late, since they had already made up their minds, but four hundred false prophets were called in and they were unanimous in their opinion. When four hundred preachers agree, there may be grounds for suspicion. Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we may enquire of him?” Give Jehoshaphat credit at least for raising the issue: “Isn’t there somebody around who speaks for God?” Ahab replied, “There is yet one man . . . ” (1 Kings 22:8). Thank God, there usually is! But Ahab added, “...but I hate him” — which is to the eternal credit of that one man—“because he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (verse 8). Does that not remind us of the Greatest Prophet of all, who said, “. . . me it (the world) hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil” (John 7:7)?

While a messenger went to bring Micaiah, one of the false prophets put a theatrical touch on his prophecy and added a dash of Hollywood. Zedekiah waved horns and dramatized the success of the forthcoming venture. It is bad enough to be a false prophet, but to be a ham actor besides is too much.

It was a day of unification, with Ahab and Jehoshaphat uniting; it was a day of unanimity, with four hundred prophets in unison; it was a day of uniformity. The messenger advised Micaiah that the clergy had agreed and that he should go along with them. But Micaiah had not been regimented, standardized, collectivized, or brainwashed. He had no axe to grind. He was not riding the bandwagon. He was not on his way up. The grass did not look greener in the next pasture and he craved no man’s bishopric. He was not a link in anybody’s chain.

Joseph Parker said, “The world hates the four-hundred-and-first prophet.” Micaiah was Number 401. He broke the monotony when he said, “As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak” (1 Kings 22:14). He was put on a diet of bread and water, but better a prophet on bread and water than a politician at the feasts of Ahab. With his immortal words Micaiah answered the question of Jehoshaphat: he was the prophet of the Lord besides.

We live in days not unlike the times of Micaiah. It is a time of unification. Ahab and Jehoshaphat are still going up against Ramoth-gilead. The world is being unified into the world state, the churches into the world church. It is a time of unanimity, of yes-men and rubber stamps. Adlai Stevenson is reported to have said that he had devised a new word, “yo,” which can mean either “yes” or “no”! It is a time of uniformity. We are like eggs in a crate. We talk about being “different” but never have we been more alike. Teenagers boast of being different but they dress alike, talk alike, look alike. The human race is gradually being homogenized into one faceless, monolithic mass. It is the day of the lowest common denominator, the happy medium, the middle of the road. A pleasant “get-alongism,” a “togetherness,” has so paralyzed us into moral inertia that it

is almost impossible to arouse us from our amiable stupor. The steamroller is flattening all the mountains into one level plain. Such a time does not breed prophets.

Men who speak for God never merge into the fog around them. Noah stood alone in a civilization of culture and progress. His contemporaries must have laughed at him as an eccentric who was building an oversized houseboat and looking for the world to end. Elijah stood alone among the priests of Baal and the stooges who ate at Jezebel's table. When he challenged the multitude, that fifth-amendment crowd "answered not a word." Amos stood alone in the religio-political system of his day. Dr. Kyle Yates wrote, "His time had not been spent in a divinity school. He was unwilling to be classed as a member of the guilds who made their living by bowing to the wishes of the people and preaching a pleasing message that would guarantee a return engagement." Jeremiah stood alone among the tranquilizers of his day who were preaching peace when there was no peace; but we are still reading Jeremiah while the happiness boys of his day have been forgotten. Daniel spoke for God in the midst of a pagan empire and it was worth a night in a lion's den to be able to read God's handwriting on the wall. Paul conferred not with flesh and blood but got his orders direct from Headquarters. He was not the product of any assembly line. Dr. Mordecai Ham said, "Paul was a strategist who thought out his strategy on the field of war, not in some Jerusalem war office where parchment and sealing wax were more plentiful than experience and foresight."

True prophets are solitary people; eagles do not fly in flocks. It is not easy to be a Lone Dissenter. When the messenger was sent for Micaiah he must have said, in effect, "The clergy have agreed, and you had better make it unanimous. It is quite an honor to speak before two kings and four hundred prophets. Why are you such an odd number! This is a good gravy train and you had better ride it. This is the mood of the hour and you had better get with it." The same subtle pressure today would persuade preachers to get in step with the times and ride the wave of the future. What we need are more preachers out of step with the times, more odd prophets like Micaiah. We are told that we must adjust. Adjust to what! What is there in this world set-up to adjust to? God's man needs to adjust only to God's Word and God's will. It is not the business of the prophet to harmonize with the times. "...what concord hath Christ with Belial?" (2 Corinthians 6:15). The preacher is a soloist; he was never meant to play the accompaniment to anything. The pulpit is not a platform from which to boost the projects of men to bring in a false millennium, the Kingdom without the King. No matter how much Scripture may be quoted or how many false prophets bid Ahab go up against Ramoth-gilead, Micaiah will stand his ground and refuse to be swept off his feet by popular movements. The greatest need of the hour is a four-hundred-and-first prophet of the Lord besides, that we may enquire of him.

There are several ways of silencing a prophet. Persecution will do it. John the Baptist's head is not always brought in on a charger; there are newer ways of decapitating the prophet with more finesse. Promotion sometimes does it. The prophet is given a high seat in the synagogue and is never heard from again. The pressure of the times and discouragement can do it. Jeremiah wanted to quit preaching, get out in the wilderness, and run a motel. Another prophet can sometimes do it, as when the prophet at Bethel backslid in his own revival, and he who could turn down a king was deceived by another prophet.

Prophets are not popular at home; they are without honor in their own countries. They are not popular with politicians. Ahab hated Micaiah—but he feared him enough to disguise himself when he went to battle, lest Micaiah's predictions came true. There was another prophet by the name of Obadiah who was out with Ahab looking for grass when he should have been with Elijah praying for rain. The true prophet does not know how to work both sides of the street. He refuses to dine with Jeroboam and does not let his hair down with the priests of Bethel.

Prophets are not popular with Pharisees. Our Lord asked, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" (Acts 7:52), and He said, "... ye are the children of them that killed the prophets" (Matthew 23:31). One generation stones prophets and the next builds sepulchres in their honor. Organized religion hates the preacher whose headquarters is heaven, whose Superintendent is God. They are enraged when they cannot control him. The times are never propitious for the Lone Dissenter.

Naturally, one can hardly expect a sermon on Micaiah to be any more popular than its subject. But it is worth preaching if in the congregation one man will hear and heed the call to be a New Testament prophet. If such a prospect is reading this, God bless you. The odds will be four hundred to one, the diet may be bread and water, and the orders are: "... what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." If you are interested in the prophetic ministry, get ready for trouble! You will be despised by Amaziah and all who want to preserve the status quo at Bethel. You will be hated by Jezebel and all who would set up the worship of Baal alongside the altar of Jehovah. You will be too angular to fit the Procrustean beds of the religious world. You will not be able to feather your nest in this world; scant provision is made for prophets down here. You will report to Heavenly Headquarters and get your orders from the Main Office. If you are a prospect, think it over. You had better mean business, else your ministry will be pathetic instead of prophetic. And remember that prophets are needed, but not wanted.

It is time for another four-hundred-and-first prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him.

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Deacon True Sez -

Old Bert bought him a new bulldozer the other day. He painted "Model G" on the side, so I asked him why.

He said, "It stands for 'Gossip'; it moves dirt, moves a lot of dirt, and moves it fast."

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

How Important Is Entertainment? -

If this sense of need and a feeling of dependence are at the root of natural religion, it is not hard to see why the great god Entertainment is so ardently worshiped by so many. For there are millions who cannot live without amusement; life without some form of entertainment for them is simply intolerable; they look forward to the blessed relief afforded by professional entertainers and other forms of psychological narcotics as a dope addict looks to his daily shot of heroin. Without them they could not summon courage to face existence.

The growth of the amusement phase of human life to such fantastic proportions is a portent, a threat to the souls of modern men. It has been built into a multimillion dollar racket with greater power over human minds and human character than any other educational influence on earth.

And the ominous thing is that its power is almost exclusively evil, rotting the inner life, crowding out the long eternal thoughts which would fill the souls of men, if they were but worthy to entertain them. The whole thing has grown into a veritable religion which holds its devotees with a strange fascination; and a religion, incidentally, against which it is now dangerous to speak. For centuries the Church stood solidly against every form of worldly entertainment, recognizing it for what it was—a device for wasting time, a refuge from the disturbing voice of conscience, a scheme to divert attention from moral accountability.

For this she got herself abused roundly by the sons of this world. But of late she has become tired of the abuse and has given over the struggle. She appears to have decided that if she cannot conquer the great god Entertainment she may as well join forces with him and make what use she can of his powers. So, today we have the astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of providing earthly entertainment for the so-called sons of heaven. Religious entertainment is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of God.

Many churches these days have become little more than poor theatres where fifth-rate “producers” peddle their shoddy wares with the full approval of evangelical leaders who can even quote a holy text in defence of their delinquency. And hardly a man dares raise his voice against it.

The great god Entertainment amuses his devotees mainly by telling them stories. The love of stories, which is a characteristic of childhood, has taken fast hold of the minds of the retarded saints of our day, so much so that not a few persons manage to make a comfortable living by spinning yarns and serving them up in various disguises to church people.

What is natural and beautiful in a child may be shocking when it persists into adulthood, and more so when it appears in the sanctuary and seeks to pass for true religion. Is it not a strange thing and a wonder that, with the shadow of atomic destruction hanging over the world and with the coming of Christ drawing near, the professed followers of the Lord should be giving themselves up to religious amusements? That in an hour when mature saints are so desperately needed vast numbers of believers should revert to spiritual childhood and clamour for religious toys?
(excerpted from *The Great God Entertainment* - by **AW Tozer**)

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Old Born Drunk -

Some years ago Dr. Ken Connolly told me of a man in London whose mother was a notorious drunkard, so much so that when she delivered her son, the poor little beggar first saw the light of day from the sawdust covered floor of a sleazy pub. He was born with what we would today call "alcohol foetal syndrome". He was a drunkard before he was even born, and had the symptoms of acute alcoholism right from the first. So they called him "Born Drunk." What a terrible name for a boy to grow up with. When he grew older and the Devil's poison had taken its toll, they began to call him "Old Born Drunk." Someone shortened it to O.B.D. And it stuck.

The Salvos were doing a great work among the debauched and depraved sinners of London's East Side in those days. They had reached many people with the gospel. One of those people was a man known as the Puncher, a notorious prize fighter (bare knuckle) and drunk.

It was the Puncher's idea to have revival meetings on London's East Side. He and other men equally infamous, but now redeemed, decided to have a parade with themselves as the spectacle to lure in the crowds. Since they had been so well-known in their past lives of debauchery, they knew people would take the bait if for no other reason than burning curiosity. You needn't think this was an easy thing for any of them to do. They feared the threat of the mob, and for the safety of their families (in the early days of the Salvation Army, it was as common to take a brick to the head as to see a penitent kneel at the drumhead).

But as the Puncher said, "God has done a lot for us, we oughtn't to mind doing a bit for Him." So, they did it - they paraded through the worst streets of the East Side. The parade drew a crowd to the meeting hall, and in that crowd was O.B.D. and his wife, who had already been invited to the meeting by the Angel (Salvo) Adjutant. At the service, those former toughs all gave their testimonies - testimonies of their sinful past lives and how God had miraculously changed them. One of those toughs was a man simply known as Joe the Criminal, a hardened thief of the first order.

When the service was over, the altar, or penitent form, was crowded with seekers. O.B.D. and his wife were among them. The Angel Adjutant went over to him as he knelt there weeping. All he could say through his tears was, "Oh, I want to be like Joe!" And he got his prayer answered. He later told the Angel Adjutant, "While I was listening to Joe, thinking of what he's been, and seeing what he's become, all of a sudden it took me that I'd find God and get Him to make me like Joe. It took me like that. I just felt, all of a sudden, determined to find God. Determined! And," he continued, "while I was kneeling, while I was praying, I felt the Spirit of God come upon me. I said, 'Oh, God, make me like Joe!' and while I prayed, I felt the spirit come upon me. I knew I could become like Joe. I know I'm saved."

He was quite emphatic. But, the Adjutant, knowing his condition, how saturated his body was with booze, feared for the stability of his salvation. She was very anxious for him to get work other than the work he did delivering papers to the local pubs and taverns. O.B.D.'s wife, who had also gotten saved that night, was also concerned for her husband. O.B.D, however, proved decidedly stubborn.

"I don't want anything else," he told them, "I must show them that I am converted."

And show them he did. In the weeks ahead, O.B.D stuck to his guns, and whenever the Adjutant asked him if he felt the least bit tempted, he would simply reply, "The appetite has gone."

(Much of what is written above is excerpted from an anonymous biographical article about O.B.D. Our thanks to the author - Ed)

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Cartoons For Wise Men -

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Links In The Media Chain -

* Rothschild Australia and E3 International to take the lead in the global carbon trading market - Rothschild Australia and E3 International are set to become key players in the international carbon credit trading market, an emerging commodity market that analysts estimate could be worth up to US\$150 billion by 2012.

<http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=90090>

(Ed. - The passage of time indicates that the present unscientific hysteria about climate change is intended to bring about the redistribution of wealth from successful companies to the "poor", and of course, if banks and lawyers just happen to make a few hundred billion on the way through.....?)

* Could Adam have had abilities similar to this young savant before sin came into the world?

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

* Would you like to build a sand castle like this for your kids?

http://community.guinnessworldrecords.com/_Video-Worlds-tallest-sandcastle-watch-amazing-time-lapse-film/blog/3962007/7691.html

* For any tool freaks out there - (You know, of course, that a day without a trip to the hardware store is a wasted day?)

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/collectors/segments/s3229128.htm>

* Many Muslims eagerly await the coming of the 12th imam.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/new-iran-propoganda-vid-trumpets-imminent-return-of-12th-imam-the-coming-is-near/>

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

J.C.RYLE (1867) on Witnessing to Jews.

From his book, "Prophecy", pages 62-63.

(The practice of "spiritualizing" the plain statements of Scripture is not new. It has been the Devil's device to deny the literal meaning of the words of Scripture and thus render them powerless by hiding their meaning in foggy, pseudo-spiritual interpretations. By this method creation can be made a "symbolic eastern story" and evolution an alternative interpretation casting doubt upon God's Word. From the very beginning Satan has asked, Hath God said? and those who deny the literal interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures are asking the same question. By this method Zion can be the Church, and Israel can be obliterated from God's plan.

It is absolutely essential to the preaching of the Gospel of redeeming grace to take the Bible literally for how can a sinner rest his eternal hope on some fanciful book that requires a theologian to interpret it and can't be trusted to mean exactly what it says? J.C.Ryle highlights the inconsistency

of this method of interpretation and the awful consequences of using it when presenting the Gospel to a Jew. John R. Ecob, editor of the *Herald of Hope* magazine.)

"I warn you that, unless you interpret the prophetic portion of the Old Testament in the simple literal meaning of its words, you will find it no easy matter to carry on an argument with an unconverted Jew.

You would probably tell the Jew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. To those Scriptures you would refer him for proof. You would show him Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Daniel 9:26, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9, and 11:13. You would tell him that in Jesus of Nazareth those Scriptures were literally fulfilled. You would urge upon him that he ought to believe these Scriptures, and receive Christ as the Messiah. All this is very good. So far you would do well.

But suppose the Jew asks you if you take all the prophecies of the Old Testament in their simple literal meaning. Suppose he asks if you believe in a literal personal advent of Messiah to reign over the earth in glory, a literal restoration of Judah and Israel to Palestine, a literal rebuilding and restoration of Zion and Jerusalem. Suppose the Jew puts these questions to you, what answer are you prepared to make?

Are you prepared to tell him that the Old Testament prophecies of this kind are not to be taken in their plain literal sense? Will you dare to tell him that the words Zion, Jerusalem, Jacob, Judah, Ephraim, Israel, do not mean what they seem to mean, but mean the Church of Christ?

Will you dare to tell him that the glorious kingdom and future blessedness of Zion, so often dwelt upon in prophecy, mean nothing more than the gradual Christianizing of the world by missionaries and Gospel preaching?

Will you dare to tell him that you think it "carnal" to take such Scriptures literally, "carnal" to expect a literal rebuilding of Jerusalem, "carnal" to expect a literal coming of Messiah to reign, "carnal" to look for a literal regathering and restoration of Israel?

Oh, reader, if you are a man of this mind, take care what you are doing! I say again, take care. Do you not see that you are putting a weapon in the hand of the unconverted Jew, which he will probably use with irresistible power? Do you not see that you are cutting the ground from under your own feet, and supplying the Jew with a strong argument for not believing your own interpretation of Scripture?

Do you not see that the Jew will reply, that it is "carnal" to tell him that Messiah has come literally to suffer, if you tell him that it is "carnal" to expect Messiah will come literally to reign?

Do you not see that the Jew will tell you, that it is far more "carnal" for you to believe that Messiah would come into the world as a despised, crucified Man of sorrows, than it is in him to believe that He will come into the world as a glorious King? Beyond doubt he will do so, and you will find no answer to give."

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Poems That Preach -

Why it is called "Track"

"Well, Ben, how did you like the "tract"
I gave to you one day?"
The country pastor asked his man
That kept the weeds away.

"Oh, Massa, it was jes for me,
It sure done me some good;
I couldn' think why dey called 'em "track",
But now I'm sure I could."

"For when I read dat little book,
It track me ever'where;
It track me down the cellar steps,
It track me up the stair.

It track me out to de barn,
'Nen to de house it come;
It track me all 'roun' de farm;
At last' it track me home.

It track me 'till I 'fessed my sins;
Took what I stole right back;
It has done tracked me to de Lord!
God bless you for dat track.

I jes 'bout wore it out,
But did you want it back?
It's trackin' Mandy now, an' I know
Jes why you call it "track!"

Anon

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Therapy For The Funny Bone -

It's 2012 and it's the Olympics in London. A Scotsman, an Englishman and an Irishman want to get in, but they haven't got tickets.

The Scotsman picks up a manhole cover, tucks it under his arm and walks to the gate. "McTavish , Scotland" he says, "Discus" and in he walks.

The Englishman picks up a length of scaffolding and slings it over his shoulder. "Waddington-Smythe, England" he says, "Pole vault" and in he walks.

The Irishman looks around and picks up a roll of barbed wire and tucks it under his arm. "O'Malley, Ireland" he says, "Fencing."

On another occasion, a blonde making heavy breathing sounds from a phone box told a worried operator: "I haven't got a pen, so I'm steaming up the window to write the number on."

What's the difference between a female lawyer and a pit bull? Lipstick.

Why are laboratory scientists switching from rats to lawyers for their experiments?

1. Lawyers are more plentiful than rats;
2. The lab technicians don't get as attached to the lawyers, and
3. There are some things a rat just won't do.

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes -

* Billy Sunday on Revival -

"But somebody says a revival is abnormal. You lie! Do you mean to tell me that the godless, card-playing conditions of the Church are normal? I say they are not, but it is the abnormal state. It is the sin-eaten, apathetic condition of the Church that is abnormal. It is the 'Dutch lunch' and beer party, card parties and the like, that are abnormal. I say that they lie when they say that a revival is an abnormal condition in the Church.

"What we need is the good old-time kind of revival that will cause you to love your neighbors, and quit talking about them. A revival that will make you pay your debts, and have family prayers. Get that kind and then you will see that a revival means a very different condition from what people believe it does.

"Christianity means a lot more than church membership. Many an old skin-flint is not fit for the balm of Gilead until you give him a fly blister and get after him with a currycomb. There are too many Sunday-school teachers who are godless card-players, beer, wine and champagne drinkers.

No wonder the kids are going to the devil. No wonder your children grow up like cattle when you have no form of prayer in the home." Billy Sunday - "The Old-Time Religion"

* Where the word "blessed" is hung out as a sign, we may be sure that we will find a godly man within. Comment on Psa. 1:1 - by Sir Richard Baker

* You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice. - anon.

* There's a fine line between cuddling and holding someone down so they can't get away. - anon.

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

What About UFO's? -

When I was in high school I read everything in print on UFO's. Admittedly, in those days there wasn't much written on the subject. The English teachers in our high school required a research thesis from every student in order for us to graduate, so I wrote mine on UFO's. And then, a year later, I was converted to Christ and left little green men behind. Every once in a while I would come across a book or two on UFO's and read it. The best of them all was a book by John Weldon and Zola Levitt, called "UFO's - What On Earth Is Happening?"

Recently, Creation Ministries International, which publishes the Creation magazine, ran an article by Gary Bates, called "Lifting the Veil on the UFO Phenomenon." It focuses on the ministry of Joe Jordan, who was a "crystal-ball-rolling-new-ager" before his conversion to Christ. He worked for MUFON (Mutual UFO Network) for years, and was initially surprised to find that the entire UFO phenomenon was for many people a full blown religion. In the fall of 1996, Joe came across a born again Christian who unravelled all the ETangles in his worldview by pointing him to Christ. Joe was saved and began trying to reconcile his belief in aliens with the teachings of Scripture. Then he read Gary Bates' book Alien Intrusion, which he says, "helped me to shut the door on the idea of ET life. Despite what most Christians think, it showed me that the Bible does not allow for such things."

I would like to encourage every pastor to read the following vital paragraph from the magazine article about a discovery Joe made in his research.

The unwanted piece of the puzzle -

One of Joe's cases involved a brand-new Christian called Bill D. During an alleged alien abduction he cried out, "Jesus, help me!" and the encounter immediately stopped. When Joe contacted other MUFON researchers to see if they had similar cases, they would only agree to talk to Joe if it was 'off the record' for fear of their careers. The truth was they all knew of similar accounts of abductions being stopped by people praying, singing hymns, or calling on the name of Jesus. But because it was 'religious in nature' and not 'scientific', the evidence was being deliberately ignored and actually hidden. Joe's CE4 group knew there must be more cases with which they could expose the deception. A local newspaper, Florida Today, reported on CE4's initial findings. The story went viral via the press and internet, and suddenly, lots of people were contacting CE4 sharing similar testimonies.... To date Joe has worked with over 400 people who have had their 'abduction' episodes

halted in the name of Christ (some of them don't want to be identified). (Excerpted from "*Lifting the Veil on the UFO Phenomenon*", *Creation magazine*, Vol. 33 No.3, 2011 by permission.)

This information sheds light on one of the demonic deceptions that is confusing many Christians today and drawing them into the maze of New Age errors. If you have friends who follow sci-fi or are deceived into believing in ET's and UFO's, why not print out this article and ask them to read it? One of our Aussie brethren, Hughie Seaborn, told me this week of his son's experience in a dream. He dreamed that a UFO landed in his backyard, and a little ET tried to get in the window and door until he told him that his father believed in God, and to go away. The young man is not yet a believer, but knew enough to call out to God for protection. How much better it would be for him to know the Saviour himself. After all, the Lord Jesus Christ has all authority and power in Heaven and earth. - Ed.

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Eddy-Torial – By Buddy Smith

Two weeks ago the Heads Up! Eddy-Torial addressed the issue of Christian Rock music (CCM) infiltrating a church, and ultimately destroying the message of the gospel in that church. Bro. Kevin Wyatt sent the following revision of the same Eddy-Torial. He addresses one of the problems that pragmatism has brought into our churches over the past 50 years or so. The fact is that many of our churches are now so superficial that the focus has shifted from "BEING RIGHT" to just "DOING RIGHT." We used to believe that "BEING RIGHT with God" would result in "DOING RIGHT for God" as we grew in the Lord.

Sadly, the emphasis of pragmatism is on sudden professions of faith and quick growth of churches. Waiting on the Lord and growing in the Lord are no longer baptistically correct. Pragmatism just loves shortcuts to success. It laughs at growth in grace and applauds shallowness and superficiality. Just about every week I have to deal with one of Pastor Pragmatix' basket cases. This week (so far) the phone call came as we were ready to sit down to breakfast on Sunday morning. A professing Christian who was "cut out of the womb 8 and 1/2 months early" in a spiritual C-section delivery by a hyperHylelessoulwinnertypepastor is having struggles doing right and wants somebody to fix it. So I gave him the same answers I gave him the last half dozen times he rang. And because he was weaned on maple syrup and cotton candy he struggles with meat and potatoes, no matter how fine I chop them.

Have a read of Bro. Wyatt's revision:

"How important is Spirit-led Christianity? –

Biblical, Spirit-led Christianity is more important than we realise.

Since we know from Holy Scripture the long term effects of permitting leaven to work in a church (Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?), we can predict the outcome of

permitting carnality to flourish in our churches. We are observing the deterioration and destruction of the churches that do not practice genuine Biblical, Spirit-led Christianity.

Here is one example of what happens.

Step #1 – Pastors learn to ‘do right’ (superficially) in Bible College.

Step #2 - Their young people insist on the same from others in the church.

Step #3 - Soon they persuade the song leader or youth director to use their materials, most of which encourage people to ‘do right’ rather than be right and breeds pride.

Step #4 - The young people sing special musical items that speak of "spiritual things" that are unknown to the congregation.

Step#5 - New philosophies are taught to the congregation, usually presented as a form of godliness.

Step #6 - The new philosophy affects the way the teens dress, the way they talk to each other, and even their body language.

Step#7 - The need to conform and perform (outwardly) creeps into the congregation.

Step #8 - The new atmosphere in the church (We must DO RIGHT!) begins to affect the marriages and families of church members so that arguments and despair, and finally divorces become common in the church.

Step #9 - Because some of the divorcees in the church are in leadership positions (or are related to the pastor?) it becomes necessary for the pastor to take a softer approach on divorce and remarriage.

Step #10 - The church becomes more hypocritical and intolerant of opposing doctrinal views, often becoming insulated.

Step #11 -As the church drifts away from a biblical foundation for its faith and practice, the pastor devises new methods for growth and stability.

Step #12 - The pastor chooses to either align his family with other, larger families who are also drifting, or to bring in the methods of big colleges, or to make the church more insensitive, or teach the church to depend on the strength of his personality to draw the people and hold them together.

Step #13 - The church begins to advertise widely making sure their reputation as the last bastion of Christianity is on every piece of advertising that goes out. (And if a student intends to go to Bible college, there is only one that is good enough.)

Step #14 -The pastor does not permit any dissent, and since he has rejected biblical church discipline with its focus on godly church members acting to disfellowship an unruly pastor, he must assume the position of a little pope and rule by decree.

Step #15 - Since the pastor has led the church away from the Bible into the wisdom of men, the members feel that they are not permitted to explore Biblical truths and instead hold fast to whatever the Pastor or his college says is currently popular.

Step# 16 - The pulpit ministry becomes less and less biblical and more and more (frighteningly) authoritarian , until finally, the gospel is no longer preached at all.

And God writes "Ichabod" over the door of the church.

How is this to be avoided? By the pastor teaching the church to practice Biblical, Spirit-led Christianity.

Where is he to start?

It begins on his knees and moves to the pulpit as the pastor preaches against sin in the church and for a genuine love of God and fellow man. When he preaches repentance, and clearly, biblically defines it, when he makes it clear that salvation involves dying to self and taking up my cross, and when he preaches to his people that the message, the morality, the music, the moods, the mentality, and the marriages of the church are all spiritual matters, he has begun to preach the whole counsel of God. It begins and ends with what the pastor genuinely believes and how that affects what he preaches and teaches.

Think about it. No, better than that, read the whole of your Bible and pray for the courage to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, they are His churches we are pastoring."

Bro. Kevin Wyatt

[\(Back to Table of Contents\)](#)