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STILL PREACHING. SINCE MAY 1, 1955

As the preacher's sermon dragged on and on a little girl became restless. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

CONNECTED

April—June 2019

I'M NO PROPHET

It is doubtful that there are many people on the face of this planet who believe in planning and preparation more than I do. I'm not the best at it, but I sure try.

There is a fine line between completely trusting God and doing everything within your power to do everything God expects you to do. Routinely I see people going to the extreme in both directions.

I believe in a division of labor. Everything is ultimately up to God, without Him we are nothing and can do nothing. In no way does that take away personal responsibility. He always has the final say, and will always do what He wants to do; however, there are some things he expects us to do. There are lots of things He will not do unless we do what He expects us to do. He will not save a lost sinner unless that sinner believes in Him as personal Savior.

When I read the multitude of Scriptures about *sowing and reaping*, I don't have too much trouble realizing there will not be any *reaping* (God's part) unless there is *sowing* (our part). Throughout the Scriptures I see God telling men to do lots of things. If they do so, He will do what only He can do. If they don't do what He says, God is not obligated. Preachers are notorious for becoming *too cute*; smarter than God. It's as if somehow they throw away their brain. To prop up some preconceived notion, they can twist even the most obvious Scriptures. When you read the Bible, it is obvious that men

have responsibilities. They are to work, plan, go, plant, preach, give and plenty more. Just read about *the ant and the grasshopper*. Proverbs 6.

So, I plan and organize and work as hard as I know how to ensure a fruitful future. Since I was a kid I have watched and read about farmers. It seems to me that's what they all do. At the same time, I am quite aware that God is in full and ultimate control. He can trump me at any time. Without notice or explanation! I have seen him do it several times.

When I resigned the pastorate of Berean Baptist Church in Houston on the first Sunday of June 2009, I never again expected to be the pastor of any church. My full expectation was to stay fully engaged in ministry, primarily the writing and preparation of good books and study materials. I thought to serve in the ministry of the Christian Law Association and do some evangelistic work, but my main pursuit for the rest of my life was to be the writing and preparation of materials that would keep on teaching and preaching beyond my mortal years. My heart is still to get back to doing just that; however, I must yield to what God has for me at any given moment. I am not my own; I have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. He is my Owner and Master.

Not long ago I said to someone, "*If I ever start to prophesying, stone me.*" That's what the Israelites did to prophets whose prophecy did not come

true. I am not sure what God has in store for me; I am sure that I will gladly give my best to whatever he has for me. I want to get back to a ministry of writing and publishing good study materials, and I am working toward that end. I'd enjoy spending a little more time preaching, conducting seminars and ministering to sister churches, and am also planning to do so; but for now I will happily serve Him here as pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Houston.

I want the truth about planting and watering, but depending on God to give the increase to be a reality in my life. Look at the life of the apostle Paul and it's easy to see that he had all kinds of plans, and was working diligently to see them come to fruition; but he said, "*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,*" **Philippians 4:11**. Dream, and work like a Trojan to make those dreams come true; always with the awareness that God may have other plans with which you will be perfectly content.



LOVE ONE ANOTHER

AGGRESSIVE HATRED OF CHRISTIANS

It is the first chapter of Romans which traces the downward steps of mankind which once knew God, but rejected Him. We know that Adam and his generation knew God. Noah and his family were there too, but coming generations increasingly disdained restraints. They were bent on doing things their way to the extent of denying the existence of God. (It's called humanism.) They threw God out of society and reduced themselves to the worship of images and animals. Just dig into cultures worldwide; their histories are full of Totem Poles, statues and religious relics of all sorts. Many of them would come to worship what they believed to be the greatest animal of all, man. Yes, the worship of humans including self-worship or homosexuality. *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, as four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves," Romans 1:22-23.* The next verses describe the utter reprobation of those *"did not like to retain God in their knowledge," Romans 1:28*, and then offers perhaps the most glaring description of a vicious, hate-filled society you will ever read. Among other things they are called *"haters of God," Romans 1:30.*

We are there. For the most part this world in which we live hates God and everybody who embraces Him. In fact, the more closely people align themselves with the clear teachings of the Bible and seriously follow the steps of Jesus Christ, the more vicious the hatred toward them. Jesus warned that it would be that way. *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake," Matthew 5:11.* He warned that those who follow Him would be relegated from society and even killed, *John 16:2.*

A few days ago I read Ken Ham's February 22 letter in which he explained how a Wisconsin-based atheist group of attorneys called *Freedom from Religion Foundation* sent letters to 1,000 public schools within driving distance of his Kentucky *Creation Museum* and life-size model of Noah's Ark. The schools were warned that they would face legal action should they organize trips to visit the Museum or Ark model. Threats like these have continued from the day Ham initiated his Kentucky creation projects in 1994. In fact, the secularists in the Kentucky/Cincinnati area went to unbelievable lengths to stop the projects. To stop the project one atheistic attorney argued in court that allowing the museum to be built on private property with private funds was a violation of the so-called *"separation of church and state."*

I challenge you to acquaint yourself with *The Voice of the Martyrs*. Around this world, God's people are paying a high price. American Christians are quite sheltered and generally ignorant (and unconcerned) about the aggressive hatred against God's people that is alive and well in today's world. Most of us who read this little newsletter have had it very easy, and know almost nothing of vicious hatred and persecution; but I suspect that will soon change.

HIGHLY BLESSED

Christians who are part of the English-speaking world are highly blessed to have such an abundance of good Christian resource materials. Having the Bible in English is huge, and getting it to us came only after a clandestine struggle over a long period of time and at a tremendously high price, especially in blood. Thank God for men like Tyndale and Wycliffe. But we have so many other great materials such as Strong's Concordance along with his Hebrew and Greek dictionaries. That's a huge gift. We have the works of W. E. Vine, Kenneth Wuest, A. T. Robertson and Joseph Thayer. We have Bible dictionaries, interlinear Bibles, church histories, biographies on almost every great Christian leader in or after the Bible, historical background information, maps galore, theological works, almost endless commentaries, multiple expositions on every book of the Bible, study materials galore, millions of sermons, song books, super computer programs for studying the Bible and just about anything your heart might desire.

Outside the English-speaking world it's not this way. Most of them have some written materials, but nothing to compare with the abundance we enjoy in English. Some languages do not yet have a Bible and very few have more than the most basic Christian study materials.

It has long been my heart to produce as many good study materials as possible with the abilities which God gave me. All I produce is in English, but I am driven to make these materials available in other languages. Some like my *History of Churches* is in Spanish. God has blessed my *Basic Bible Truths* far beyond what I could ever have dreamed. It has been translated into several languages including Spanish which is currently being edited for publication on Amazon.

Over the last several months with the help of a few very dedicated people, *Basic Bible Truths* is now available to the Russian-speaking world. Currently copies must be ordered through me; however, we hope to soon have them available through Barnes and Noble.

I would appreciate your prayers for me as I seek to make other materials available in other languages. Do not lose sight of how blessed we in the English-speaking world are. Most other languages are starved for good Christian materials.



When Bob Hope was asked why he chose showbiz for his career he responded, "When I was born, the doctor said to my mother, Congratulations, you have an eight pound ham."

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ODDS & ENDS

- * Lord willing, on May 30 of this year I will be 78.
- * August 3 Mrs. Hutson and I will celebrate our 57 anniversary.
- * Sunday night, Oct. 27, Dr. David Gibbs, Jr. will be our guest speaker at Northwest Baptist Church.
- * Tuesday, November 12 I will leave for Israel to lead a group of 43 on a 10-day spiritual pilgrimage of a lifetime.
- * Many of my books are available digitally and in paper format on Amazon and on Barnes & Noble.
- * I am currently editing *What We Believe and Why 2*.
- * If you know of someone who would like to be added to my *Connected Newsletter* distribution list, have them send me an email.
- * My website is www.lesterhutson.org.
- * I have multiple copies of my 3-column set called *Survey of Bible History*. This series is a 39 chapter commentary and study guide of *Genesis* with a chapter on Job. My plans are to have them with me at the Rodgers Baptist Church Missions Conference July 22-24. As long as supplies last they will be available at no cost.



A great time with great people!

"OF THE FOUR WARS IN MY LIFETIME, NONE CAME ABOUT BECAUSE THE U.S. WAS TOO STRONG."

Ronald Reagan

408th Anniversary of the Authorized King James Version of the Bible
May 2, 1611 - May 2, 2019

Hospitals resort to hiring doctors

PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE PROMPTING MOVE, ADMINISTRATORS SAY

**ANSWERS THAT
BUILD FAITH SEMINAR** with *Hutson Smelley*

CALVINISM & CHOICE
MAY 4th



@

**Northwest
Baptist Church**
Glorifying God, Changing Lives

A BOOK I HAVE READ

Our Man in Damascus: Elie Cohn

Eli Ben-hanan

Steimatzky House
11, Hakishon St.
P.O. Box 1444
BNEI BRAK 51114
Israel
No ISBN

On May 18, 1965, the Zionist spy Elie Cohn was hanged from a hook in Martyr's Square in Damascus, Syria. "The execution was carried live, from beginning to end, by the Syrian television network, while in Israel a pale woman watched every scene...She was Nadia Cohn, the wife of Israel's greatest spy." This story in espionage is "The thrilling, shocking, true story of Israel's most daring spy."

This book is short, only 143 pages. They are electrifying, a story for the ages. The book is not well-written, but the story is so powerful that it will stun you. The *Allentown Call* said this book, "dramatizes a true life spy story that puts fiction to shame." The *National Jewish Monthly* said, "Elie Cohn made the spies of fiction look like amateurs." I didn't want to put down this book; it was too compelling.

Several times I have been up on the Golan Heights which is back in Israeli hands (at a terrible price in blood and guts). I have seen the groves of great trees that grow around the patchwork underground bunkers which the Syrians had up there when Israel was first reborn. They constantly used these to shell the Israeli communities around the Sea of Galilee which is Israel's chief source of water. The Syrians knew this and had plans to divert the waters away from Israel. Without this water, lush Israel would quickly turn to a desert. From air reconnaissance, the bunkers were invisible.

In a way that is breathtaking, Elie Cohn infiltrated the Syrian military brain trust and became a trusted advisor. To insure that the bunkers would not be spotted, Cohn advised the generals to plant trees around each bunker which they did. Before long the bunkers became green bull's eyes for Israeli aircraft. With a ham radio operation from a room in his home in Damascus, Cohn kept the Israeli military apprised of every Syria plan. Until they found him. They had been duped and thoroughly humiliated. To them, no punishment of Elie Cohn was sufficient.

If you've been to Israel, this book will thrill you. If you're going to Israel, you should read this book before you go. If you haven't been and aren't going, you will still be gripped by this great true story.

*The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want*

"We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress."

Will Rogers

SCANDALOUS

The news has been full of sordid stories of sexual misconduct and abuse. Big names have been caught red handed: politicians, comedians, business tycoons, media mongrels, school principals and teachers, parents and even preachers. Yes, even preachers! There is good reason to believe that many have been falsely accused, and are not guilty; however, there is no denying that a great number across the board are guilty as charged.

The Catholic priests who capitalized on boys and girls were in the news. The *Houston Chronicle* and the *San Antonio Express-News* raised the ugly curtain on the Southern Baptist Convention. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* made sure that the sins of Independent Baptists, particularly the Fundamentalists, didn't stay in the closet.

Sickening. Infuriating. Pathetic. Scandalous. Church leaders, many of them with big names, capitalizing on trust and innocent children. No doubt there are far more innocent, godly men of integrity in the ministry than there are sexual predators; however, those who are guilty give all of the rest of us a bad name. One skunk can stink up the whole place.

The news media is not known for honest journalism. They have a sinister way of twisting things, censoring out what they don't like and loading the news with their biases. Even so, they don't always get it all wrong. As a whole, the media obviously doesn't like God and Christianity. They don't hesitate at making us look really bad. They constantly undermine the Bible. They obviously do not understand Independent Baptists, especially those of us who are not affiliated with any denominational movement, but they clearly exposed how vulnerable we are.

Two weaknesses are immediately apparent. In the case of too many ministers, there is far too little accountability. A *two-adult rule* is a safeguard during church functions. Once everyone goes their separate ways, it is very easy for things to ferment. A pastor, youth pastor or other church leader can make poison calls or texts with little likelihood of being caught. A common thread throughout this scandalous news has been *grooming*. The spiritual leaders whom children (and their parents) trusted as men of God commonly used their position and the trust to prepare these young victims for sexual abuse. They would brag on and flatter young girls who were usually between 12 and 16 years old. They often did so off-campus with cell phones using text messages. They would share their romantic feelings and talk about how they dreamed of time with these "beautiful" young ladies. (Often young men.) They would cultivate these relationships and finally move into a physically immoral scandal. Many senior pastors, youth pastors and other staff have almost no transparency or accountability for their time or actions other than at church functions. That is just as true of Independent Baptist as of any of the others, perhaps more so.

Furthermore, very few young people (or their parents) are taught to recognize *grooming*, let alone report it. That's a big weakness. These sexual abusers know that, and capitalize on it. A common factor in all of these news reports is the propensity of the perpetrators to tell their victims, "*Don't tell anybody about this.*" Many of them have said to their victims such things as, "*I am a man of God; this is a holy thing.*" "*If anyone finds out, I will lose my career.*" and "*If you tell anyone, I will kill myself.*" Ironically and reprehensibly, when many of these cases have come to light, the victims have been treated as the culprits and bad guys, while the perpetrators have been made to appear to be victims.

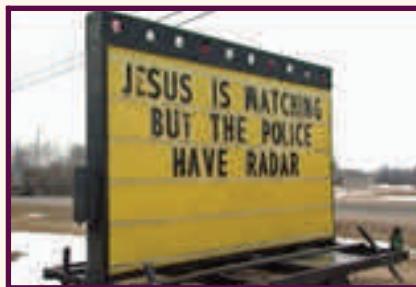
That brings up the second major weakness is what I call *the fraternity mentality*. In many churches including Independent Baptists, preachers are treated as if they are too holy to touch. *How dare you lift a finger against the man of God?* Couple that thinking that those who fail should always be forgiven and given a second chance, and you have a formula for cover-up and the propagation of evil. Yes, repentant people who fail should be forgiven. To put them in a position to repeat their failure is a stretch beyond the Scriptures. It is a grave mistake to put a known sex offender into a children's ministry. These news reports heavily emphasize how often offenders ended up in another church doing the same old thing. In case after case, the pastor or deacons of the church where they did their dirty deed recommended them to the next church. I have been preaching for over 60 years and have watched this *fraternity mentality* play out time and again. Preachers, staff members, missionaries and other ministry people can be bullies, lazy, harsh, womanizers, incompetent, dishonest and generally bad; but nobody wants to expose them or say, "*This is wrong and needs to stop.*" In fact, very few churches even bother to do background checks or run references; and those who do have a hard time getting the truth. Somehow we have the idea that we have to *stick up* for each other even to the detriment of honesty and the work of God.

I will never forget the time when I was pastor of the 11th Street Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas. I met a young attorney named Frank Somerville. His dad was an Assembly of God preacher. I attended one of Mr. Somerville's seminars. Talk about an eye-opener! He didn't talk very much about children's ministry, but he did set my head spinning. I realized that as the leader of one of God's churches, I have a moral responsibility to protect (1) our innocent and vulnerable children, (2) our children's workers and (3) the church corporately. I met Dr. David Gibbs, Jr. and he began to give me structure as to how that was to be done. I am most grateful for these and other good men of God who are serious about integrity in the work of God. Those who know me very well are aware that for a long time I have been very vocal about protection against sexual misconduct. I have endured considerable criticism for being somewhat of an activist in this area. That's okay, but I don't intend to shut up or stop.

We pride ourselves in being "*independent*" Baptists. Nobody is stronger on church autonomy than we are. Jesus said in whom much is given, much is required. The God who entrusts us with this freedom from ecclesiastical governance expects us to govern our own selves with sparkling integrity. We must police ourselves. Every preacher should be transparent and accountable. We must ferret out and expose evildoers within our ranks. There is something basically immoral about kicking an evil can down the road. It seems to me that if we'd been taking care of God's business as we should, all of this bad news about sexual scandals would never have happened.



A class of first graders were discussing a picture of a family. One little boy in the picture had a different hair color than the other members. One of the children suggested that he was adopted. A little girl spoke up, "I know all about adoption, I was adopted." Another child asked, "What does it mean to be adopted?" "It means", said the little girl "that you grew in your mommy's heart instead of her tummy!"



IN GOD WE TRUST!