

## AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of April 30, 2023 -

Sunday Morning Service	45
Sunday Evening Service	35
Wednesday Eve., 05/03/23 Service	21

## AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of April 30, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,054.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/30/23:	\$ 1,054.00

- Week of April 23, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,059.05
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 275.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/23/23:	\$ 1,334.05

- Week of April 16, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,494.60
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/16/23:	\$ 1,494.60

- Week of April 9, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,650.00
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 255.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/09/23:	\$ 1,905.00

- Week of April 2, 2023 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,986.05
Foundation Piering Fund	\$ 50.00
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/02/23:	\$ 2,036.05

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,600.00



## FOUNDATION PIERING FUND -

Amount Received, Week of 04/30/23: \$ 0.00

Amount For Entire Project \$13,600.00

Amount Received So Far \$13,528.00

Total Still Needed To Pay Off Entire Repair: \$ 72.00

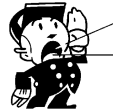
## LISTEN TO -



ABIDINGRADIO.COM

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



### THANK YOU For Your Continued Faithfulness In Giving!

During the early part this pandemic, we were unable to meet in the church-house. But - that did not mean that the expenses of having a church-house were suspended. We still had bills to pay - electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, phone, internet, facility insurance, copier lease, office supplies, etc., and, praise the Lord, His people kept praying, watching online, & supporting their church with their giving.

Sadly, some people only give when they are in attendance at church - sort of like paying for "services rendered" - but the truth is that they are robbing THEMSELVES of God's blessings when they withhold their tithes and offerings and only give when they are here (see Malachi 3:10). Thankfully, most of our people have remained faithful, in so many ways, during this crisis, including financially.

WE HAVE 3 WAYS YOU CAN GIVE:

1. By mail - 23 East Wells Blvd., Sapulpa, OK 74066
2. Drop it off - call the Church Office to arrange it. 224-1924
3. Online - Go to the link below and give electronically:

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=433047>

WE ARE GLAD WE CAN NOW GATHER TOGETHER TO PRAISE GOD & STUDY HIS WORD TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH-HOUSE!  
YOUR FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS GIFTS WILL HELP US KEEP UP WITH THE BILLS AND CONTINUE OUR RENEWED OUTREACH EFFORTS!

## Church Directory

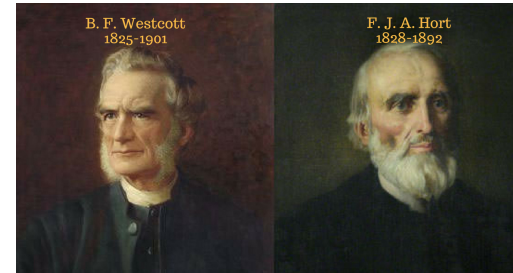
Todd W. White	Pastor
Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell, Lois Mae Floyd	Pianists
Derek Quinnely	Greeter
Larry & Mary Byars	Outreach
LeAnna White	Custodian
GinaMarie Shufelt	Flowers
Seth White	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, David Smith, Derek Quinnely	Trustees

# SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY REMINDER

Volume XXIX

May 7, 2023

Number 18



## The Ungodly Fruit of Modern Textual Criticism

by Evangelist David Cloud

Among many additional reasons, we reject modern textual criticism because of its terrible fruit: *the increasing uncertainty and skepticism, a weakening of the authority of Scripture, and the promotion*

*of the ecumenical movement.*

### 1. Modern Textual Criticism Has Resulted in Uncertainty in the Biblical Text.

Whereas, prior to the late 19th century the vast majority of Bible-believing Christians were confident that the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts were the preserved Word of God, today there is no real certainty where textual criticism has been accepted. The Masoretic Hebrew has been challenged by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and other sources, so that some *twenty to thirty thousand* textual changes have been suggested for the Old Testament. The Greek Received Text has been replaced with a constantly changing so-called "eclectic" text.

Note the following statements by prominent textual critics of the last 100 years testifying to the gross uncertainty produced by modern textual criticism:

- "[The New Testament text is more unsettled] than ever, and PERHAPS FINALLY, UNSETTLED" (Rendel Harris, Side Lights on New Testament Research, 1908, p. 3).
- "The ultimate text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, IS FOR EVER IRRECOVERABLE" (F.C. Conybeare, History of New Testament Criticism, 1910, p. 129).
- "In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, WE DO NOT KNOW THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE GOSPELS, AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT WE NEVER SHALL" (Kirsopp Lake, Family 13, The Ferrar Group, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, p. vii).
- "... it is generally recognized that THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE BIBLE CANNOT BE RECOVERED" (R.M. Grant, "The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch," Journal of Biblical Literature, vol. 66, 1947, p. 173).
- "The textual history that the Westcott-Hort text represents is no longer tenable in the light of newer discoveries and fuller textual analysis. In the effort to construct a congruent history, our failure suggests that WE HAVE LOST THE WAY, that WE HAVE REACHED A DEAD END, and that only a new and different insight will enable us to break through" (Kenneth Clark, "Today's Problems," New Testament Manuscript Studies, edited by Parvis and Wikgren, 1950, p. 161).
- "...the optimism of the earlier editors has given way to that SKEPTICISM WHICH INCLINES TOWARDS REGARDING 'THE ORIGINAL TEXT' AS AN UNATTAINABLE MIRAGE" (G. Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles, 1953, p. 9).
- "In general, THE WHOLE THING IS LIMITED TO PROBABILITY JUDGMENTS; the original text of the New Testament, according to its nature, must be and remain A HYPOTHESIS" (H. Greeven, Der Urtext des Neuen Testaments, 1960, p. 20, cited from Hills, The King James Version Defended, p. 67).
- "...so far, the twentieth century has been a period characterized by GENERAL PESSIMISM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOVERING THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY OBJECTIVE CRITERIA" (H.H. Oliver, 1962, p. 308; cited from Eldon Epp, "Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism," Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism, p. 25).

(continued inside)

● “The primary goal of New Testament textual study remains the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote. We have already suggested that TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL IS WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. Therefore we must be content with what Reinhold Neibuhr and others have called, in other contexts, AN ‘IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY’” (R.M. Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, 1963, p. 51).

● “...every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that WE HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN TEXTUAL THEORY SINCE WESTCOTT-HORT; THAT WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DETERMINATION AS TO WHAT THE BEST TEXT IS; THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE TRANSMISSION AND ALTERNATION OF THE TEXT IN THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default” (Eldon J. Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism,” Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 43, 1974, pp. 390-391).

● “...WE FACE A CRISIS OVER METHODOLOGY IN NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. ... Von Soden and B.H. Streeter and a host of others announced and defended their theories of the NT text, but none has stood the tests of criticism or of time. ... following Westcott-Hort but beginning particularly with C.H. Turner (1923ff.), M.-J. Langrange (1935), G.D. Kilpatrick (1943ff.), A.F.J. Klijn (1949), and J.K. Elliott (1972ff.), A NEW CRISIS OF THE CRITERIA BECAME PROMINENT AND IS VERY MUCH WITH US TODAY: a duel between external and internal criteria and the widespread UNCERTAINTY AS TO PRECISELY WHAT KIND OF COMPROMISE OUGHT TO OR CAN BE WORKED OUT between them. The temporary ‘cease-fire’ that most--but certainly not all--textual critics have agreed upon is called ‘moderate’ or ‘reasoned’ eclecticism’ ... the literature of the past two or three decades is replete with controversy over the eclectic method, or at least is abundant with evidence of THE FRUSTRATION THAT ACCOMPANIES ITS USE...” (Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism, 1993, pp. 39-41).

● “...every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that we have made little progress in textual theory since Westcott-Hort; that WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DETERMINATION AS TO WHAT THE BEST TEXT IS; that we do not have a clear picture of the transmission and alteration of the text in the first few centuries; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default” (Eldon Epp, “The Twentieth-Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism, p. 87).

● “...we no longer think of Westcott-Hort’s ‘Neutral’ text as neutral; we no longer think of their ‘Western’ text as western or as uniting the textual elements they selected; and, of course, we no longer think so simplistically or so confidently about

recovering ‘the New Testament in the Original Greek.’ ... WE REMAIN LARGELY IN THE DARK as to how we might reconstruct the textual history that has left in its wake--in the form of MSS and fragments--numerous pieces of a puzzle that we seem incapable of fitting together. Westcott-Hort, von Soden, and others had sweeping theories (which we have largely rejected) to undergird their critical texts, but we seem now to have no such theories and no plausible sketches of the early history of the text that are widely accepted. What progress, then, have we made? Are we more advanced than our predecessors when, after showing their theories to be unacceptable, we offer no such theories at all to vindicate our accepted text?” (Epp, “A Continuing Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism, pp. 114, 115).

● “As New Testament textual criticism moves into the twenty-first century, it must shed whatever remains of its innocence, for nothing is simple anymore. Modernity may have led many to assume that a straightforward goal of reaching a single original text of the New Testament--or even a text as close as possible to that original--was achievable. Now, however, REALITY AND MATURITY REQUIRE THAT TEXTUAL CRITICISM FACE UNSETTLING FACTS, CHIEF AMONG THEM THAT THE TERM ‘ORIGINAL’ HAS EXPLODED INTO A COMPLEX AND HIGHLY UNMANAGEABLE MULTIVALENT ENTITY.

Whatever tidy boundaries textual criticism may have presumed in the past have now been shattered, and its parameters have moved markedly not only to the rear and toward the front, but also sideways, as fresh dimensions of originality emerge from behind the variant readings and from other manuscript phenomena” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” Harvard Theological Review, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

*The situation with modern textual criticism likened to that of Darwinian evolution.*

It is evident that the situation in the field of modern textual criticism is similar to that of Darwinian evolution. While many of the chief principles of Darwin and his early followers have been refuted or seriously challenged, such as the theory that life could spontaneously arise or that natural selection could account for life as we know it or that man descended from apes, the superstructure of Darwinian evolution remains strangely unshaken. Likewise, modern textual criticism in 21st century sits firmly upon the foundation laid by its architects of the 19th, and even as the foundational principles have been disproved (e.g., a Lucian Recension, the existence of a neutral text, the reliability of intrinsic and transcriptional probability) the superstructure remains largely and strangely unshaken. In the case of Darwinian evolution, the chief thing that was rejected in the beginning was the doctrine of a Creator, and regardless of how devastatingly the

foundational principles of Darwinian evolution are disproved, contemporary adherents of evolution refuse to reconsider the doctrine of a Creator or any form of Intelligent Design.

In the case of modern textual criticism, the chief thing that was rejected by Westcott and Hort and other early proponents was the Greek Received Text (and with it any practical doctrine of divine preservation), and regardless of how thoroughly the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort have been refuted by textual critics in the past 100 years, the children of Westcott and Hort refuse to take a new look at the Received Text. The reason is that the adherents of both disciplines refuse to admit that they must approach these subjects by faith in God and by faith alone, that they can never know the truth about creation or the Bible apart from faith in the divine revelation. Any other foundation is shifting sand.

## ***2. Modern Textual Criticism Has Resulted in “The Tyranny of the Experts.”***

“The critical point of departure had been made [with the ascendancy of the Westcott-Hort Text]. No longer was the majority of the Greek manuscripts, preserved by the churches, the basis for recognizing the original reading. From now on, the learned professors would deliver the Christian world from their ‘blindness and ignorance.’ By their scholarly expertise they would deliver to the churches a purer text of the N.T. Dr. Machen called this kind of scholarship ‘the tyranny of the experts.’ Now the ‘experts’ would rule over the churches and decide for them which variant reading was the acceptable one. After Westcott and Hort, the Pandora’s box had been opened. As a result, all the evils of German rationalism began to tear at the foundation of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures.

This ‘wrestling’ of the Scriptures has continued on until this day in both the higher and lower forms of textual criticism. The situation today involves almost as many different texts of the Greek N.T. as there are scholars. Each ‘scholar’ decides for himself what he will or will not accept as the Word of God. It comes down to two choices. We can accept the text handed down by the churches for nearly two thousand years or accept the findings of modern scholars, no two of which agree. If we go with the scholars, there is no one text that is accepted by all of them. Confusion reigns among the scholars. There is no standard” (Charles Turner, Why the King James Version, p. 9; Turner is the founder of the Baptist Bible Translators Institute of Bowie, Texas).

## ***3. Because of Modern Textual Criticism, the Certainty and Dogmatism of a Settled Biblical Text Has Been Replaced with the Uncertainty of Conflicting Texts.***

This is true for the New Testament. Westcott and Hort’s principles that gave us the critical Greek text in 1881 have undergone continual modification throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, and the Greek Testament based on those

theories has also continually shifted, with a subsequent change in the translations based on it. The 3rd edition of the UBS Greek New Testament differed from the 2nd edition three years earlier in more than 500 places, and the same five textual critics made those changes.

The same is true for the Old Testament. With the introduction of textual theories whereby the Hebrew Masoretic text was dethroned, the Old Testament has undergone continual revision on the basis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Greek Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Targums, the Symmachus and Theodotion Greek translations of the Old Testament, and other sources. These are the sources listed in the Preface to the 1978 New International Version as the basis for the NIV O.T. translation (pp. viii, xi).

Dr. Donald Waite observes: “The NIV editors have very honestly and very boldly altered the foundations of our Old Testament text in the above fifteen DIFFERENT WAYS, whenever it suited their fancy! You don’t know at what point they’ve used one document to contradict the Masoretic Hebrew text, and at what point they used another document” (Waite, Defending the King James Bible). According to Dr. Waite’s calculations, the 1937 Hebrew text by Rudolph Kittel (Biblia Hebraica) and the 1977 Stuttgart edition of the Hebrew Old Testament (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia) contain footnotes listing some 20,000 to 30,000 textual changes.

Even the New King James Bible, which professes to follow the same textual foundation as the King James Bible, follows instead an eclectic Old Testament, modifying the Hebrew Masoretic with the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, “a variety of ancient versions,” and the Dead Sea Scrolls (New King James Bible, Preface). As with the New Testament, those who are doing the revision of the Old Testament do not agree in their principles or their conclusions.

Consider one area of O.T. textual evidence, that of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first of these was discovered in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947, with subsequent finds in nearby caves. The first finds supported the Masoretic text but subsequent finds unearthed some O.T. manuscripts that differ from the Masoretic. Textual scholars do not agree on many important points touching these manuscripts, not even their date. G.R. Driver (1965) disagreed with Burrows, Albright, and Cross, claiming that the Dead Sea Scrolls were written in the first two centuries A.D., rather than B.C. This is brought out in the book Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls (1956) by F.F. Bruce. The very title of the book exposes the fact that the textual scholars disagree and that their conclusions are in flux.

## ***4. The Contemporary Doctrine of Eclecticism Has Elevated the Bible Student as the Master of the Text and Has Resulted in a Massive Decline in the Authority of the Scriptures in this Generation.***

The concept of dogmatic interpretation and preaching has faded greatly because of this damnable principle. In a typical

Bible study in a church that has bought into eclecticism, every individual is an authority unto his or herself as to what Greek manuscript or Greek text or English translation to follow in any given instance. There is no dogmatic authority for any statement, because someone can always come up with an alternative reading.

This same principle has greatly weakened the authority of Bible preaching. I recall a visit in August 2003 to Saddleback Church in southern California, where Rick Warren of “Purpose Driven Church” fame is senior pastor. I observed on the way into the auditorium that only a few people carried Bibles, and the reason became clear when I saw the bewildering multiplicity of versions that were used in the preaching. An outline of the sermon was handed out with the bulletin, and six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The Message, Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would be impossible to follow along in one’s Bible. ***The result is that the people do not bring their own Bibles and do not therefore carefully test the preaching. How could they, when any biblical statement they would attempt to examine has dozens of variations?***

### ***5. The Uncertainty Produced by Modern Textual Criticism Has Given Ammunition to the Enemies of the Bible.***

They recognize, even if the evangelicals and fundamentalists who have adopted textual criticism don’t, that an array of conflicting texts and versions undermines the doctrine of divine inspiration and preservation.

### ***6. Modern Textual Criticism Has Led Many into Theological Modernism.***

Dr. Edward Hills, who was trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level at Harvard, observed this phenomenon.

“... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to complete modernism, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn’t it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn’t it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn’t it right to ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch?

... Impelled by this remorseless logic, many an erstwhile conservative Bible student has become entirely modernistic in his thinking. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. He has merely traveled farther down the same path which he began to tread when first he studied naturalistic textual criticism of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New Testament textual

criticism and then drop it most illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study” (Edward F. Hills, The King James Version Defended).

The theological danger inherent within the practice of textual criticism was admitted more recently from the liberal side by E. Jay Epps of Harvard Divinity School: “Nor (for those who choose to work within a theological framework) is textual criticism a ‘safe’ discipline -- a phrase I have heard for four decades -- that can be practiced without challenge to theological convictions or without risk to faith commitments or truth assertions. ***I DOUBT THAT IT EVER WAS ‘SAFE’ -- AT LEAST FOR ANY WHO HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR MYRIAD VARIATION UNITS, WITH THEIR INNUMERABLE COMPETING READINGS AND CONCEPTIONS, AS WELL AS THE THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS THAT ARE EVIDENT IN SO MANY. BUT IF IT HAS BEEN A ‘SAFE’ DISCIPLINE, IT IS SAFE NO MORE.***

... Any who embrace it as a vocation will find its intellectual challenges to have been increased a hundredfold by its enlarged boundaries and broadened horizons, which extend into codicology and papyrology and also into related early Christian, classical, literary, and sociological fields, all of which favor accommodation of the richness of the manuscript tradition, WITH ITS MULTIPLICITY OF TEXTS AND ITS MULTIVALENT ORIGINALS, RATHER THAN THE MYOPIC QUEST FOR A SINGLE ORIGINAL TEXT. Both broad training and knowledge, and A CAPACITY TO TOLERATE AMBIGUITY will be high on the list of requisite qualifications for its practitioners” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” Harvard Theological Review, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. What Epps did not say is that all of the many fields into which the modern textual critic is led are dominated today by theological skeptics, and the evangelical or fundamentalist who follows this course is disobeying the Bible by not separating from heretics and is in dire danger of spiritual shipwreck.

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

***7. Modern Textual Criticism Has Furthered the Ecumenical Movement by Bringing Protestants, Baptists, and Catholics Together in the Field of Bible Texts and Translation.*** This is a powerful exhibit of the unscriptural fruit of modern textual criticism:

Whereas the Roman Catholic Church never accepted the Greek Received Text or the Protestant versions based on it and indeed it put translators such as William Tyndale and John Rogers to death, Rome has readily accepted the critical text. Note

the following statement by a Roman Catholic: “Catholics should work together with Protestants in the fundamental task of biblical translation...[They can] work very well together and HAVE THE SAME APPROACH AND INTERPRETATION...[This] signals a new age in the church” (Patrick Henry, New Directions in New Testament Study, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979, pp. 232-234).

The papal proclamation “Divine afflante Spiritu” in 1943 called for an ecumenical Bible. “[T]hese translations [should] be produced in cooperation with separated brothers” (New American Bible, New York: World Publishing Co., 1970, p. vii).

In fact, Rome has conformed its own Vulgate to the modern critical text. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, All Roads Lead to Rome, p. 201). It was published in 1979 by the German Bible Society.

In 1966 the Revised Standard Version was published in the “Roman Catholic Edition.” This version included the apocryphal books inserted among the books of the Old Testament and incorporated Catholic readings such as “full of grace” in Luke 1:28. As a result, the chief editor of the RSV, Luther Weigle, was rewarded the “Papal Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great” in 1966 by Pope Paul VI (Peter Thuesen, In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible, 1999, p. 142).

Since 1967, Cardinal Carlo Martini has been on the editorial committee for the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.

In October 1969, for the first time in its history the Church of England authorized a Catholic Bible for use in its services. The Full Synod of Canterbury Convocation authorized The Jerusalem Bible, which was published in 1966 with the imprimatur of Cardinal Heenan.

In 1973 the Ecumenical Edition of the Revised Standard Version was published. Also called the “Common Bible,” a copy was presented personally to Pope Paul VI by Bruce Metzger, Herbert May, and others. Metzger described this as follows: “In a private audience granted to a small group, comprising the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras, Lady Priscilla and Sir William Collins, Herbert G. May, and the present writer, POPE PAUL ACCEPTED THE RSV ‘COMMON’ BIBLE AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN FURTHERING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AMONG THE CHURCHES” (Metzger, “The RSV-Ecumenical Edition,” Theology Today, October 1977).

The Bible Societies translation projects today are “interconfessional.” In 1987 a formal agreement was made between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Societies that the critical Greek New Testament will be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible, Rome, 1987, p. 5). ■

## ***NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS***

□ ***THE AGE OF MUSIC*** - If ever there were an age when God’s people need to take heed to the issue of music, it is today! This could be called “the age of music” because technology has made it ubiquitous. Moderns typically are immersed in music every day of their lives.

This is a brand new thing in human history. There was no music on demand from Eden until the 20th century, except for kings and the most wealthy who could afford to have musicians on their payroll. The music revolution began with the phonograph. It was invented in 1877 by Thomas Edison and he rightly predicted, “The phonograph will undoubtedly be liberally devoted to music.” Twenty years later he observed that “people are willing to pay to be amused more than anything else.”

How right he was! Modern communications technology has made this the age of amusement, and music is at the very heart of the amused culture. By the turn of the 20th century, record companies were popularizing the use of music recordings. The explosion of commercial radio in the 1920s hastened the popularity of listening to music and increased record sales. In 1920, “Crazy Blues” by Mamie Smith sold one million copies. Music pieces began to be written to fit the time available on a record. The result was the three-minute pop song. It was the first time in history that an individual could listen to whatever music he pleased and the first time that an individual could immerse himself in music in isolation. It was the dawn of the age of “me.”

RCA’s 45 rpm vinyl record of 1949 was another major step in the music revolution. The players were small and more portable than anything that had previously existed, and some featured tall spindles that would automatically play stacks of records one after the other. It was the inexpensive, portable 45 that propelled the rock & roll revolution of the 1950s. It was the record of the rock party, the record shop, and the ubiquitous jukebox. In 1955, Bill Haley’s “Rock Around the Clock” sold 3 million copies. When I began my personal venture into the world of rock in about 1962, the 45 was still a prominent technology of the pop culture. The popularity of 45 rpm records peaked in 1977 with 200 million sales.

Beginning in the 1950s, television furthered the music listening craze, particularly of pop music, with shows such as American Bandstand. The handheld, battery-powered transistor radio of the 1950s took portability of music to a new level. The Sony Walkman of 1979, that played the compact cassette tape, was revolutionary in making “my music” available 24/7, even while walking, running, etc. The iPod digital music player (2001) and then the iPhone (2007), with its instant connection with the internet, took this to an even higher level. The iPhone plugged the listener into the vast world of streaming services and on demand music such as iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon.

The technology-empowered music revolution is the heart and soul of the global pop culture with its licentious “me first” philosophy.



❑ **NUMBER OF ACADEMICS PUNISHED FOR SPEECH SOARS OVER LAST THREE YEARS** - The following is excerpted from “Academics,” The Post by UnHerd, Apr. 21, 2023:

“Attempts to sanction academics for their speech have soared over the last three years, a new report has found. Research by FIRE (Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression) shows that the number of college and university scholars subjected to attempted punishment in the past three years (509) almost matches the corresponding number for the 20 years prior to 2020 (571). The astronomical rise coincides with Donald Trump’s election and the #MeToo movement, which sparked a surge in sanction attempts. Between 2017-2019, there were 252 sanction attempts, compared to a total of 319 over the previous 17 years. But these figures are dwarfed by what the report describes as a ‘tsunami of sanction attempts’ shortly after George Floyd’s murder in 2020. In 2020 alone there were 151 sanction attempts, with 87 occurring in response to race-related expression (58%).

A sanction attempt constitutes anything from open letters and petitions to outright termination of employment. Its targets are varied, but among the most prominent are the humanities disciplines (402 attempts) and white and/or male scholars. Nearly four-fifths (845) of sanction attempts involved white scholars (78%), compared to 92 involving black scholars (9%), the next highest group. ... ‘Cancel culture is particularly pernicious when it targets people charged with discovering and disseminating knowledge,’ said FIRE Director Komi Frey. ‘Vocal, dogmatic minorities on the left and the right are trying to restrict the range of acceptable ideas in institutions of higher education, and this should alarm us all. You do not need to agree with a scholar’s teaching, research, or extramural speech to recognize that censorship is not the answer.’”

❑ **CHRISTIAN TEACHER FIRED FOR OPPOSING HOMOSEXUAL BOOK HAS WON HER CASE** - The following is excerpted from “Christian Substitute Teacher,” CBN, Apr. 28, 2023: “A Christian substitute teacher has been reinstated to her job and awarded \$181,000 in damages and attorneys’ fees after a Georgia school district settled her lawsuit Monday. The district has also publicly apologized to her. Last August, Lindsey Barr was fired by Bryan County Schools officials as a substitute teacher after she raised concerns about a book that was going to be read to her three children at McAllister Elementary School during a library read-aloud program.

The book titled *All Are Welcome*, contains several illustrations of same-sex couples parenting and expecting children. The book caused Barr concern because it contained depictions that conflicted with her sincerely held religious views on marriage and family. She believes the book is inappropriate for young children and that it appeared to be part of an effort to indoctrinate young children into a progressive ideology. Barr brought her concerns as a teacher and parent to the school principal and asked that her own children be excused from this reading time. The very next day, she was unable to access the Bryan County Schools portal she used to accept substitute

teaching assignments. Five days later, she was informed by the school that they had terminated her ability to substitute at any Bryan County School. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys representing Barr first sent a demand letter last September explaining that her termination was in direct violation of the U.S. Constitution and urging the district to reinstate her as a substitute teacher. When district officials refused, the law firm filed a federal lawsuit arguing, “The First Amendment clearly prohibits BCS from engaging in viewpoint discrimination, or the punishment of speech where the opinion or perspective of the speaker is the rationale for the punishment.”

... As part of the settlement agreement, Dr. Paul Brooksher, superintendent of Bryan County Schools, issued a letter to Barr announcing the reinstatement of her teaching position. ... ADF Senior Counsel Tyson Langhofer, director of the ADF Center for Academic Freedom, [said], ‘Terminating a teacher for engaging in First Amendment protected expression creates an atmosphere of fear and sends a message to the teacher and others in the community that, if they criticize the school’s approach to cultural or political issues or express viewpoints contrary to the school’s preferred viewpoints, they will face consequences. That’s unlawful and why we had to file suit in Lindsey’s situation. The settlement the school district agreed to is a victory for Lindsey, the families of Bryan County Schools, and every parent’s fundamental right to speak out concerning their children.’”

❑ **UK CHRISTIANS ARRESTED, FIRED FOR STANDING ON BIBLICAL TRUTH** - On Feb. 19, Edwards decided to address what he sees as a shift among British evangelicals. On Twitter, he wrote that homosexuality was “invading the church” and that “Evangelicals no longer see the severity of this [because] they’re busy apologising for their apparently barbaric homophobia, whether or not it’s true.

A firestorm ensued. Within a few days his superiors suspended him, then fired him on March 8 from his position at Cliff College, an affiliate school of the Methodist Church in Britain where he’d served for seven years. Cliff College has a rich history; Samuel Chadwick, the renowned evangelist and pastor, once served as principal. Billy Graham preached at the college in 1954, and the late revivalist and author Leonard Ravenhill was once a student there.

In documents Edwards was able to review, college officials even suggested that his tweet might warrant a referral to the United Kingdom’s anti-terrorism office, called Prevent.

Edwards, who is married with five children, says he isn’t sure if the anti-terrorism watchdog was seriously considered or merely a scare tactic, but he is now without a job and had received an eviction warning from his landlord when Decision spoke with him. Edwards’ case is among a raft of similar religious discrimination and free speech cases in the U.K. over the last several years.

❑ **LUTHERAN SEMINARY CHAPEL SINGS BUDDHIST WORSHIP SONG ABOUT BEING ONE WITH THE EARTH** - During a recent seminary chapel service at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, the seminary worshiped to a

Buddhist worship song about becoming one with the world.

The Plum Village Song, “*We Are All the Leaves of One Tree*,” originates from a Buddhist monastery in France and carries a message that amounts to nothing more than earth worship. The song’s lyrics metaphorically compare humanity to leaves on a tree, asserting an interconnectedness that is opposed to sound Christian doctrine. Rather than acknowledging the individuality and unique value of each person, the song promotes a collective identity and an ideology of universal unity that undermines the Christian concept of uniqueness in Creation and individual salvation, and personal relationship with God.

*“We are all the leaves of one tree,  
Flowing in the same timeless breeze.  
Different colors, shapes, and forms,  
Yet together, in this world we’re born.”*

*“Rooted in the earth, we all belong,  
Connected by a thread that’s strong.  
Branching out, reaching far and wide,  
One tree, united, side by side.”*



## **Five Ways To Identify A Gospel-Compromising Woke Church**

In an era of swirling cultural currents and shifting societal sands, the faithful are urged to stay vigilant. The temptation to forsake the timeless message of the Gospel for fleeting trends is ever-present, and one such movement, laden with anti-gospel and anti-Christian undertones, has been gaining traction. Dubbed the “woke” church, this movement poses a threat to the purity of biblical teaching. Those who wish to preserve the sanctity of their congregations must be on guard and learn to recognize the markers of this insidious trend.

The woke church movement and its numerous figureheads often resort to guilt tactics to manipulate their congregants. By insinuating that those who resist their social justice narrative are complicit in perpetuating oppression and inequality, they create a culture of conformity within the congregation. Accusations of being “racist,” “sexist,” “misogynist,” or “homophobic” are intended to silence dissent and shame believers into adopting the woke agenda.

Faithful believers must remain discerning and steadfast in their commitment to biblical truth as they navigate the treacherous waters of today’s ever-changing cultural landscape. By intertwining their understanding of God’s Word with a focus on the eternal hope and unchanging message of Jesus Christ, they can guard their hearts and minds against the corrupting influence of this heresy. Recognizing the markers of this insidious trend is essential for preserving the sanctity of the congregation and standing firm in the gospel’s timeless message. While there are many more, here are five things to look for in these churches and their leaders.

## **LANGUAGE -**

Firstly, pay close attention to the language employed from the pulpit. Woke churches often adopt a lexicon laden with terms like “intersectionality,” “systemic oppression,” and “white privilege,” which can be traced back to Marxist ideologies. While these terms may appear innocuous at first glance to the undiscerning, in reality, they are Trojan horses for introducing divisive, subversive ideas into the church. For instance, a sermon may prioritize dismantling patriarchal structures, subtly discrediting the biblical concept of male spiritual leadership, rather than extolling the virtues of humility and servanthood exemplified by Jesus. Or, a pastor might address topics like microaggressions and cultural appropriation, steering the congregation away from the weightier matters of faith, hope, and salvation.

Other phrases you may hear in a woke church include “social constructs,” “toxic masculinity,” and “implicit bias.” Although these ideas may seem relevant to current cultural conversations, their origins in Marxist thought make them ill-suited for being embraced by Christianity. Even the use of such terminology often leads to congregants feeling overwhelmed by an ever-growing list of sociopolitical concerns, rather than being uplifted by the life-giving message of redemption through Christ’s sacrifice.

Ultimately, while it is true that injustice exists in this world, the focus of biblical teaching should be on the regenerating power of the gospel and the grace of Christ on the cross for all believers. The good news of Jesus Christ and his unyielding mercy for His sheep ought to take center stage in the church, eclipsing any sociopolitical buzzwords that may harbor ill intentions. By placing the teachings of Christ above all else, believers can foster unity and genuine compassion for one another, instead of unwittingly succumbing to the subtle influence of these ungodly political and social ideologies.

## **The Authority of the Word of God -**

Secondly, observe the church’s approach to the authority of Scripture. A hallmark of the woke church is its propensity to cherry-pick verses or interpret them in ways that align with a predetermined sociopolitical agenda. When Scripture is twisted or contorted to fit a narrative that prioritizes worldly issues over divine truth, the congregation is led astray. For instance, a woke church might emphasize passages like Luke 4:18-19, which describes Jesus’ proclamation of freedom for the oppressed, while ignoring the true context of this passage in its historical setting and neglecting the broader context of his mission to save souls through his redemptive work on the cross.

Another example could be the selective use of Paul’s exhortation in Galatians 3:28, where he states that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus. In the hands of a woke church, this passage may be employed to promote a radical egalitarianism that undermines biblical teachings on the distinct roles and responsibilities of men and women, as well as the importance of respecting authority structures ordained by God.

These churches may also reinterpret passages like Matthew

25:31-46, which recounts Jesus' parable of the sheep and the goats, to advance a social justice agenda at the expense of a proper understanding of the gospel. By focusing solely on the aspect of caring for the poor and marginalized, the woke church may sidestep the essential call to personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the means of attaining eternal life.

And arguably one of the most misused passages in the Scripture by church leaders with a social agenda, the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) might be manipulated to advocate for open borders and unrestricted immigration, disregarding the wisdom of maintaining national security and the biblical call for obedience to civil authorities (Romans 13:1-7).

Ultimately, the authority of Scripture must be upheld and respected in its entirety, not distorted to accommodate a particular sociopolitical agenda. When believers stand firmly on the inerrancy and sufficiency of God's Word, they guard against the subtle snares of deception that can lead the congregation away from the truth of the gospel and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

### ***Sin and Repentance -***

Thirdly, scrutinize the church's teaching on sin and repentance. Woke churches are often characterized by a subtle shift in emphasis from personal sin to collective guilt. Instead of preaching the need for individual repentance and reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ, these churches may lay the blame for societal ills on entire groups of people, promoting a victim mentality that absolves individuals of their responsibility to turn from sin.

For example, during the Black Lives Matter (BLM) riots, some woke churches might have focused on the historical injustices faced by marginalized communities, attributing blame to particular racial or socioeconomic groups for the unrest. By fixating on these issues, they may have overlooked the deeper spiritual maladies afflicting all of humanity – the sin and brokenness that can only be healed through the redeeming work of Christ.

Another example could involve a church sermon that highlights the concept of generational sin or curses, suggesting that certain individuals are inherently more culpable for the world's problems due to the actions of their ancestors. This line of reasoning fosters a sense of collective guilt, which can deter people from seeking personal repentance and forgiveness in Christ.

Likewise, some woke churches may magnify the issue of income inequality, attributing the struggles of the poor to the greed and avarice of the wealthy. This narrative breeds resentment and envy, causing division and overshadowing the biblical message of contentment, stewardship, and the transformative power of God's grace to overcome sin in every aspect of life.

In contrast, Scripture calls for each person to examine their own hearts and turn away from their sinful inclinations,

embracing the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. By focusing on individual repentance and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the church can foster a culture of grace and forgiveness, rather than perpetuating the cycle of blame and victimhood. The true remedy for society's ills lies not in the condemnation of entire groups, but in the salvific sacrifice of Christ on the cross which brings reconciliation and healing to a lost and dying world.

### ***Sanctity of Human Life -***

Fourthly, examine the church's stance on the sanctity of human life. Woke church leaders are often more inclined to focus on social justice issues while downplaying the importance of defending the unborn, the sanctity of marriage, and biblical sexual ethics. We see this regularly with some of the progressive leaders throughout Evangelicalism, even in the Southern Baptist Convention. In their quest for societal transformation, these churches lose sight of the eternal consequences of ignoring God's design for humanity.

One example of this is the way some will often elevate the economic condition of classes of people to the same level as the lives of the unborn, often referring to it as being "pro-life from the womb to the tomb." This ill-intentioned platitude denigrates the pro-life movement and guilts people into accepting their social agenda. By conflating issues like poverty and socialized healthcare with the moral imperative to protect the unborn, they dilute the urgency of defending the most vulnerable among us.

Similarly, woke churches may advocate for a redefinition of marriage that strays from the biblical model of a lifelong union between one man and one woman. In their pursuit of cultural relevance, they might embrace alternative family structures that deviate from God's design, forsaking the sacred institution that serves as a reflection of Christ's relationship with His church.

Moreover, some woke churches might compromise on biblical sexual ethics, justifying behaviors that Scripture clearly deems immoral and fostering an environment ripe for socio-economic conditions that would lead people to compromise on the sanctity of life, to begin with. They may argue that such concessions are necessary to create an inclusive and welcoming environment, but in doing so, they prioritize the approval of the world over the convictions of faithful Christians.

In contrast, a biblically grounded church must recognize the importance of upholding God's design for human life, marriage, and sexuality. By adhering to these principles, believers demonstrate their allegiance to the Creator, acknowledging that His ways are higher than our own. It is only through faithful submission to God and obedience to the divinely created order that true healing and sanctification can take place.

### ***Outreach and Evangelism -***

Lastly, be mindful of the church's outreach efforts. While community engagement is a laudable goal, woke churches often direct their resources toward advancing a secular agenda under the guise of fighting injustice. As believers, our primary mission

is to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations, not to serve as foot soldiers in a temporal crusade for social change.

For instance, a woke church might organize a protest against a perceived social injustice, devoting significant time and resources to this endeavor. While standing against injustice is a noble pursuit, when such activism supersedes the imperative to share the good news of Christ's love and redemption, it risks leading the church astray from its core mission.

Another example could involve a woke church partnering with secular organizations that promote values or ideologies contrary to biblical teaching. In their eagerness to effect societal change, they compromise their witness by aligning with groups that undermine the gospel, and biblical values such as the sanctity of human life, the family unit, or God's design for human sexuality.

Woke churches may also prioritize the establishment of social programs and initiatives that, while providing what may appear on the surface to be valuable assistance to those in need, ultimately neglect to address the spiritual hunger that can only be satisfied by the gospel of grace. By focusing solely on meeting physical needs, these churches miss the opportunity to share the eternal hope and spiritual sustenance found in Jesus Christ.

It is essential for churches to remain vigilant in their outreach efforts, ensuring that their primary goal is to proclaim the gospel and make disciples, as instructed by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). While engaging with the community and addressing tangible needs can be a valuable expression of Christ's love, it must not be allowed to overshadow the ultimate mission of the church – to bring the life-changing message of God's grace and forgiveness to a lost and hurting world.

In navigating these treacherous waters, we must remember that our ultimate allegiance is to the Lord and His Word. By keeping our eyes fixed on the cross and our ears tuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit, we can discern between truth and deception, ensuring that our churches remain beacons of hope in a dark and desperate world.

**PASTOR'S NOTE:** One more "giveaway", and probably the easiest to ascertain, is the type of MUSIC they use. If the church in question is using worldly "contemporary Christian" music, that is an AUTOMATIC sign that that church is in trouble! Even if they haven't "gone woke" YET, the music will tell you the direction they are going - it's only a matter of time before they get there. ■

### ***THE MIRACLE BOOK***

The Bible is referred to in many different ways. We speak of it as God's Word, the Good Book, the Holy Scriptures, and the Sword of the Spirit. It is also known as the Book of books and the Living Word. Some call it simply THE Book, for nothing else seems necessary. It stands alone, towering above all other writings.

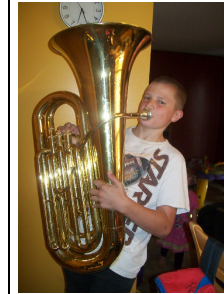
Of the many titles given to the Bible, however, the one that is

the most appropriate is ***God's Miracle Book***.

This is true for a number of reasons:

1. It is miraculous in its origin -- coming to us by divine inspiration.
2. It is miraculous in its durability -- outlasting the opposition of its critics and surviving the attempts of its enemies to exterminate it.
3. It is miraculous in its results -- transforming the lives of those who read and believe it.
4. It is miraculous in its harmony -- agreeing in all its parts, even though written over a period of 1600 years by about 40 different penmen.
5. It is miraculous in its message -- telling of many occasions when God supernaturally intervened in the affairs of men to accomplish his redemptive purposes.
6. It is miraculous in its preservation -- maintaining its accuracy and reliability down through the centuries.

Yes, the Bible is God's Miracle Book!



### ***GUESS WHAT, MOM?***

A middle school band teacher said that part of her job was to match students to instruments by testing them on various mouthpieces. While most children demonstrate aptitude on more than a single instrument, there was one boy who was having difficulty on everyone he tried, and he was becoming disheartened.

Finally, he found success on a tuba mouthpiece. He was so happy that he asked to call his mother.

"Mom, guess what!" he exclaimed, " - I tested positive for tuba!"

### ***Have The Graduates Learned THIS Lesson?***



"JUDGMENT ALSO WILL I LAY TO THE LINE,  
AND RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THE PLUMMET" - ISAIAH 28:17