LET.... MY.... PEOPLE.... GO !!

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“Let My people go, that they may serve Me”

L E T.... M Y.... P E O P L E.... G O !!

“Let my people go, that they may serve Me”

Larry Jones (larryjones.ca)

Introduction

In the days of Pharaoh God's people were the “children of Israel”; today God's people are adopted, blood-washed, born-again saints whose names are recorded in “the book of life”. Most of these saints are under the supervision of licensed and salaried evangelical pastors.

The children of Israel did not serve God; they served Pharaoh. Evangelicals do not serve God; they serve evangelical leadership. As Moses challenged Pharaoh's right to rule, I challenge Pastor Whoever's right to rule. (More accurately, God through Moses challenged Pharaoh and Christ through Larry Jones challenges evangelical leadership.)

Evangelicalism is a religion. Religion (dictionary.com): a “set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects”, and “often containing amoral code governing the conduct of human affairs”. My definition of religion: “a set of 'commandments and doctrines of men' (Col.2:22)”. Another definition: “Bible-plus”. And another: “Bible-minus”.

When Lord Jesus said on that memorable day, “It is finished!” the only true religion (“the law of Moses”) came to an end *and He never initiated another*. Lord Jesus has no interest in tweaking any religion birthed of man's need to do something. Evangelicalism is the chief religion of Christ's church-on-earth and competes, quite successfully, for the affection and loyalty of His saints. A

return from the lordship of man to the lordship of Christ must be preceded by a disgust for religion (and I will do my best to generate that repulsion).

This book confronts evangelical religionists: “Let people go, that they may serve .” A fair challenge from you to me: “What are your qualifications for challenging a religion endorsed by millions of local pastors and every public heavyweight?” My response....

I have been a christian for fifty plus years. The fact that I never attended seminary or Bible college does not make me less qualified but more so. (Evangelical schooling produces disciples of evangelicalism, not disciples of Jesus Christ.) Another qualification: Unlike all your peers (and all other christian associates?) I am not attached to a religion, directly or indirectly. And another: Jesus is my “first love”.

Paul to the Corinthians: “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.” The Phillips says it this way: “Don't have more than two or three preachers the others think over what has been said.”

That's what you want from *your* audiences, isn't it? You simply want them to evaluate your sermons. For many years I have appraised your evangelical teachings and now it's your turn to asses my non-evangelical teaching.

Let it be fully understood that though *Let.... My.... People.... Go !!* is directed to the entire evangelical leadership, every christian that can be defined as an evangelical will be greatly enriched by truths embodied in these pages. Nonetheless, I address my opinions, observations and remarks to every salaried pastor of every evangelical denomination, to every (so-called) reverend and to every denominational officer throughout the vast worldwide realm of evangelicalism.

I do not (dare not!) pass judgement on religionists, but only the religionist's religion. That does not mean I will soften my “hard saying”. You are going to hear things you have never heard before in explicit and straightforward speech.

Although I ache for your freedom and urge you to return to your “first love”, you are not my chief concern. You are quite secondary to the multitudes of (what I call) pew-people, the millions upon millions whom you have coerced to adopt various “commandments of men”. And my concern for (the so-called) laity is secondary to that of the damned, those right now travelling on that “way that leads to destruction” – those at the mercy of evangelicals, most of whom are keeping the good news of Christ's salvation to themselves.

This analysis of the religion you caress so lovingly just might result in multitudes being redirected from eternal agony to eternal elation.

Perhaps it will cause you to recall Christ's mostly-forgotten Great Commission. Jesus says to you the same words He long ago directed to two fishermen, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Evangelicalism is Christ's enemy and you are this religion's ambassadors. Your doctrines restrict and

incapacitate those you influence. Jesus: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Do you have the necessary courage to listen, to evaluate, to challenge your beloved traditions? If so, you are rare. If so, brace yourselves for ill-treatment from your peers who do *not* have “ears to hear”. And if so....

If so, Jesus will once again become your “first love”. He promises you will bear “much fruit”. You will lay up an abundance of “treasures in heaven”. You will become “fishers of men”. The judgment seat of Christ will not be an embarrassment. There will be an increase of every good thing, including “the fruit of the Spirit”, humility, understanding and wisdom.

A.W. Tozer

To add impact to *Let.... My.... People.... Go!!* I will feature A.W. Tozer (1897-1963) in every other chapter, up to and including chapter 28.

Every *even* chapter (2, 4, 6, 8, etcetera) will contain standalone, robust

excerpts from several of his books – writings that have dramatically enhanced the christianity of myriads.

A.W. Tozer saw what I see. His ability to enunciate the flaws of evangelicalism far surpass mine. (I suppose I am somewhere between one-tenth Tozer and one-fifth Tozer.) Since Tozer was an evangelical pastor of evangelical churches and wrote and spoke to enormous evangelical audiences, perhaps readers will be more persuaded by a reputable insider than an unknown outsider.

Wayne Jacobsen

Wayne is a seventy-year old *ex*-pastor whose writings will answer many of the silent questions that must be tumbling around in your insides.

Perhaps all you pastors can identify with his frustrations leading to him becoming an ex.

You can become acquainted with Wayne’s heart and insights through his podcast *TheGodJourney.com*. He has authored and co-authored several books (including *The Shack*), and the one I highlighted in my book is *Finding Church*. I wish every born-again, blood-washed saint would read *Finding Church*. Chapters 30, 32, 34 and 36 are short chapters featuring pithy standalone excerpts/quotations.

Please Note....

*** Of necessity, I write in generalities. This book is directed to the fullness of evangelical leadership, and not every perspective, which I assess to be true of the majority (average, typical), is true of all.

*** Except as otherwise noted, Bible quotations in the odd-numbered chapters are from the NKJV. To locate the verse of any quotation, use a searchable online Bible (such as Bible Gateway).

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"The Son of Man must be lifted up"

Chapter one

Let....My....People....Go !! is my seventh book. Let me tell you about number one....

Forty-five years ago the Lord said, "Write a book". I prayed "in the spirit" for about two months before writing one word, asking the Lord to give me the interpretation throughout my writing.

A Catholic No More was directed to born-again catholics, those who found Jesus in that dramatic worldwide visitation of the Holy Spirit in the 60s, 70's, and 80s, the majority making a foolish decision to remain within catholicism. Much of what I wrote was far beyond my understanding, truths that (I later learned) equally apply to evangelicals. Do you, Pastor Whoever, "have ears to hear"?

The following quotations are from the preface of my first-ever writing, all a consequence of "interpretation of tongues". Are these excerpts from *A Catholic No More* really of the the Holy Spirit? You be the judge....

Excerpt: *Today the same enemy has raised the same army of spokesmen to wrestle the same Word from the same church.*

Comment: Can you grasp the significance? Could this quotation be truth? The "same enemy" is none other than the devil, the one Jesus

called "a liar and the father of lies" (AMP). You are "the same army of spokesmen" that "wrestle the same Word from the same church".

Preposterous? Ridiculous? Impossible? No, no and no! The evidence is obvious to anyone "who has ears to hear" and eyes to see and courage to challenge "the tradition of the elders".

Excerpt: *The Adders and Subtracters have paved various ways. Negotiators and Compromisers seat each other in places of prominence.*

Comment: Adders and Subtracters? Negotiators and Compromisers? Who are these villains who would dare malign God's Bible? Answer: You are! The evidence of adding to Scripture can be found in your own terminology. Isn't *church membership* an add-on to the Bible? And *Reverend*? And *home church*? And dozens of etceteras? Doesn't that make you an Adder to God's Bible?

You subtract from Scripture by what you do not teach and do not emphasize. You don't admonish your congregation to be led individually by the Holy Spirit. You rarely mention the upcoming judgement seat of Christ. You almost never mention Christ's Great Commission. You don't admonish them to “Preach the word!”.

Your people are not followers of Christ, no more than you are. Like you, they follow christians (who follow christians). Under your leadership their loyalty has been transferred from Scripture to evangelical tradition. You have made religionists out of God's people.

Negotiators? Compromisers? Yes and yes. Where there is meager respect for New Testament teachings and precedents, men must negotiate with men to create a workable order. The local church is not a holy thing rooted in God's Word but rather a political domain whereby the licensed compete for power and significance. Everything must be negotiated, including the pastor's (non-biblical) salary. Specific roles of all pastors within church hierarchy must be negotiated. Potential

candidates for the (non-biblical) board-of-elders (or board-of-whatever) must be made to understand that unity has precedence over transparency, loyalty to custom over integrity to Bible precedents. And on and on and on.

Compromisers. It has been said that compromising is like drinking salt water; the more you drink the thirstier you become. Evangelicalism comes in many packages, each a product of compromises stacked atop compromises.

Excerpt: *But unfortunately there is no Paul – at least I haven't heard of him/her. Indignation is scarce. Men are not men and women are not women.*

Comment: You and Paul have almost no similitude. Sorry, but you just don't. Paul was not licensed, salaried or titled. Paul strove to be a “burden to no one”; you are a constant (and the largest) financial burden to your congregation. Paul emphasized “Jesus Christ and Him crucified”; you emphasize “commandments of men”. Paul was content with “having food and clothing”; your (impressive?) salary can and does purchase a number of nonessentials. Paul worked (“These hands have provided for my necessities”); you do not work with your “hands” to provide for your necessities (and that of your family).

Excerpt: *Negotiators and Compromisers seat each other in places of prominence. The lordship of Christ in heaven, the lordship of christians on earth.*

The powerful pulpit is a place of prominence. Denominational offices, pastoral ministry, board-of-elders – all places of prominence providing esteem and admiration and envy. Internal politics determine who is seated where.

Excerpt: *Where is the retaliation?*

Comment: *A Catholic No More* was Christ's counter to man's “commandments of men” forty-five

years ago; *Let....My....People Go*

!! is Christ's response today. But why so very little similar fury from evangelical Bible scholars whose knowledge of Scripture so much surpasses mine? There are no nice answers....

There is no retaliation because there are no Pauls. Paul "withstood to his face because he was to be blamed." (Galatians, chapter 2) This is the story....

"Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy."

Peter seriously trespassed against the Lord Jesus (and against the gentile christians) before many witnesses. And yet the "certain men came from James" did not confront Peter for his treachery. Nor did the Jewish converts. Nor did Barnabas. Why, why, why? The answer is simple....

Fear of man. Christians fear christians. Peter feared "those who were of the circumcision". Jewish christians feared Peter. Barnabas feared exclusion. You must realize that....

What was in them (fear of man) is in you. Your fear of man outweighs your fear of God. You fear disfavour, you fear exclusion, you fear persecution. And you fear disruption to your livelihood (your salary). Fear of man explains why you promote "commandments of men". Fear of man prevents you from being a disciple of Christ. Fear of man keeps you silent instead of confronting evangelical treachery.

Your submission to man makes you a man-pleaser. A man-pleaser cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ. (Paul: "If I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.")

Paul was both right and rare. Confronting Peter was the right thing to do. And confronting accepted malpractice is rare. To go along rather than stand against takes more courage than most have. The solution to cowardice is fervent repentance unto the "head of the church" and fervent petitioning for courage.

********** Now I have a story to tell....

I was present at the very first gathering of (what was later referred to as) the People of Faith prayer group at our catholic parish (in Kelowna, BC, Canada.) This goes way back to 1973. The very small gathering was soon a very large gathering of born-again catholics who discovered Christ, a result of a wondrous outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We were a tiny part of (what has been termed) the *Catholic Charismatic Movement* that was sweeping our North American continent and many other locations.

Five years later I (finally!) made a decision to remove my family from catholicism. The prayer group leaders (the core group), wanting to assure the very nervous bishop that they opposed my conduct, made a concerted decision to oppose me by restricting my involvement in the prayer gatherings. I

asked for and received permission to challenge the core group's decision. Much of my twenty minute response to my friends way back then can be equally applied to the entirety of evangelical leadership.

Their mistake of giving secondary prominence to God's Bible is likewise your mistake. Although their collection of “commandments of men” differ from yours, both are exceedingly harmful. Both are traitorous to Jesus, to His (and our) Father and to “the Spirit of truth”.

My prayer is that you will give adequate consideration to the following excerpts from my response to the *People of Faith* core group, delivered in person (very nervously), almost fifty years ago. (Jesus: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”)

Excerpt: *1 Thess.5:19: Quench not the Spirit. The people who quench the Spirit are not sons of the Father doing the Father's business, but sons preoccupied with doing someone else's business, SERVING ANOTHER MASTER. saying things the Father did not tell them to* say.... doing things the Father did not tell them to do SAYING AND DOING THINGS CONTRARY TO HIS WORD. As sons, it is our business to do the Father's business. Anything else, to put it bluntly, IS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. I suggest that the common denominator to every quenching of the Spirit is a disobedience to, or misunderstanding of, or a disregard for His Word.

Excerpt: *James 1:22: But be ye DOERS of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

Excerpt: *And after the gospel of Jesus Christ has been watered down, diluted with worldly sayings and opinions, altered, neglected, ridiculed and compromised. the result is a gospel different from the gospel that*

Jesus, Paul and Peter taught.

Excerpt: A*s His children, we should make a conscious effort to say only words that line up with His words. That's what a loyal son does. A loyal, committed son does not say words that are contrary to the Father, does he? Again, James 1:22: “But prove yourselves DOERS of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”*

Excerpt: *He doesn't need you or I to break down the walls to* negotiate.... to appease. to compromise and to compromise and to compromise again.... in the name of order in the name of submission in the name of love.

Excerpt: *We are not to limit our obedience to God by what another individual says or by what any church says. But we are to limit our obedience to man when it is conflicting with the Word of God. 1 John 5:3: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” Luke 16:13: “No servant can love two masters.” Acts 5:29: “But Peter and the apostles said 'We must obey God rather than men.' ”*

Chapter two

A.W. Tozer will be featured every second chapter of *Let.... My.... People Go !!*, chapters 2, 4, 6, 8, etcetera, up to and including chapter 28. This precious brother was born in 1897 in Pennsylvania, USA and born the second time in 1915. His earth years ended in 1963. His many books are still available because they are relevant and challenging to all generations. Suggestion: read and heed, read and heed, read and heed.

Keys To the Deeper Life, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 1: An unofficial hierarchy decided what Christians are to believe. Not the Scriptures, but what the scribe thought the Scriptures meant became the Christian creed. Christian colleges, seminaries, Bible institutes, Bible conferences, popular Bible expositors all joined to promote the cult of textualism.

Chapter 1: The result over the last 20 years has been a religious debauch hardly equaled since Israel worshiped the golden calf. Of us Bible Christians it may truthfully be said that we “sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

Chapter 1: Religious leaders have adopted the techniques of the advertisers: boasting, baiting, and shameless exaggerating are now carried on as a normal procedure in church work.

Chapter 1: We must cleanse the temple of the hucksters and the money changers and come fully under the authority of our risen Lord once more.

Chapter 1: If we are alert enough to hear God's voice we must not content ourselves with merely “believing” it . . . Commands are to be obeyed.

Chapter 2: Significant, isn't it, that of all who hold the evangelical position, those Christians who lay the greatest store by Paul are often the least Pauline in spirit. There is a vast and important difference between a Pauline creed and a Pauline life.

Chapter 2: Tens of thousands of believers who pride themselves on their understanding of Romans and Ephesians cannot conceal the sharp spiritual contradiction that exists between their hearts and the heart of Paul.

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Chapter three

Evangelicalism and catholicism have more in common than both evangelicals and catholics care to admit. Both religions are majorly complex, both are hierarchical, both are divided into the ministerial (clergy) and the laity.

Evangelicalism shuns new covenant, New Testament simplicity, favouring instead a complexity comparable to the old covenant, Old Testament. The earliest church was Bible; today's churches are Bible- plus. You are Bible-plus ministers overseeing the people you have made into Bible-plus congregations. (I remind the reader *Let....My....People Go !!* is directed to the *entirety* of evangelical leadership.)

How did this religion get so convoluted, so foreign to New Testament writings?

An ongoing need for (Bible-plus) ministers necessitates (Bible-plus) seminaries. which necessitates (Bible-plus) salaried teachers and staff, lands and buildings. buildings that necessitate maintenance and occasional renovations. And it doesn't end there. The (Bible-plus) graduates require submissive congregations to pay their (Bible-plus) salary. The congregation requires a (Bible-plus) building (edifice?).... and (Bible-plus) board-of-elders and (Bible-plus) denominational overseers. All this complexity necessitates (Bible-plus) bookkeepers, (Bible-plus) secretaries, (Bible-plus) janitors.

And the complexity of your evangelical religion goes deeper yet. Let's look at the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada....

Wikipedia: “As of 2020, *Evangelical Fellowship of Canada* had 43 Christian-denomination evangelical members, 66 organizations, 38 educational institutions and 600 member local churches in Canada. It claims to represent nearly 2 million Christians.”

In turn EFC is interconnected with the *World Evangelical Alliance* (WEA). Google: “The Evangelical Alliance works across 79 different denominations of Christianity, 750 organizations, and has 3,300 member churches The Evangelical Alliance has historically *supported* ecumenism – the principle of unity between different church doctrines – with the Roman Catholic Church.”

Let....My....People....Go !! is an attempt to reveal that which should have been obvious to you many years ago – your evangelical religion is Bible-plus (and therefore Jesus-plus). Now I introduce you to David....

David is the president and chief executive officer of EFC. While every evangelical leader can be termed Bible-plus, David can be labelled Bible-plus-plus-plus. In his bio are listed a number of qualifications: “a PhD in Western Christian thought”, “a BRE in theology”, “completed a graduate program in bioethics ”, studied “theology of forgiveness and reconciliation, political theology,

ecclesiology , pneumatology ....

Roman Catholic-Evangelical dialogue", "executive publisher of the EFC's bi-monthly magazine", "member of the editorial board of Canadian-American Theological Review", "served as president of the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association", "executive member of the International Council of the World Evangelical Alliance", "a board member for the Christian Higher Education Canada".

Are you impacted by the simple reality that Paul - who was (and is) more beneficial to the church of Christ than a thousand Davids combined - was not so 'qualified'? Did you notice missing from David's qualifications was Paul's "demonstration of the Spirit and of power"? (Would such manifestations actually disqualify a person from this favoued posting?) Was it David's plus-plus-plus and his proven loyalty to "commandments of men" that landed him the top position at EFC?

Roger, also a Bible-plus-plus-plus. is the "Prayer Ambassador" for EFC. (I won't itemize his many qualifications.) Several years ago Roger was an associate pastor of *New Life Church* in my city of Kelowna, B.C., and, as a visitor, I sat under his preaching ministry several times. I recently came across a Facebook advertisement, posted by Roger on behalf of EFC, promoting an "Ignite prayer and worship seminar" in our city. This surprised me because, it seems to me, this good brother should be fully convinced that evangelicalism just doesn't work....

Many years ago Roger was preaching at a *New Life Church* conference that attracted people from other cities. Roger called to the microphone a pastor from another city to share with the large audience the amazing touch of the Holy Spirit he experienced the previous day. This fellow, I could easily discern, was an altogether person, no flake in him whatsoever. Down he went under the power of the Holy Spirit, stretched out on the floor. Get the picture: Roger preaching to a large audience, this visiting pastor (about forty years of age) stretched out on the floor near Roger's feet, motionless. Twenty minutes or so passed and he hadn't moved a muscle. Finally we could all see him slowly struggle his way to hands and knees, trying to stand. Roger simply waved his hand in his direction saying, very casually, something like "Another touch, Lord" and the fellow was flattened and motionless once more.

These "signs and wonders" were common during that mighty visitation of the Holy Spirit at *New Life Church* stretching over a number of years. Roger probably saw more manifestations of the Holy Spirit than a hundred typical evangelicals combined. What was the reaction of other Kelowna evangelical assemblies to these unusual manifestations of the Holy Spirit (assemblies that Roger so vigorously propagate today)? The backlash was ugly and rigorous and constant. Also....

Roger's *New Life Church* always seemed to be in turmoil, so much so that they called in outside help to try to rectify leadership disputes.

Being an insider (all of you pastors are insiders), this brother is quite knowledgeable of dissensions and chaos common throughout evangelicalism. Instead of me, he should be writing *Let....My....People Go !!* And yet this Bible scholar enthusiastically endorses and promotes a religion that has zero

compatibility with the Bible, a religion that holds hostage millions of Christ's born-again saints.

My brothers-in-Christ, you are David and you are Roger! No, perhaps not as 'successful' and influential, but equally tethered to a set of "commandments and doctrines of men" diametrically opposed to Jesus Christ. You are as faithful to your religion as catholic priests are to theirs. You both, pastors and priests, have convinced your respective congregations that they need you, but in fact you need them. They are your financial security.... they are your prominence. they supply purpose and significance. without them you would be ordinary, just one of the guys.

You know what they don't know and what they need to know about the reality of evangelicalism. You are insiders behind the veil that hides the mistakes and conflicts and grudges so very predominant in every religion. Everyone of you is more qualified to write *Let....My....People Go !!* than I am.

Your congregations are actually of the opinion that their church structure is somehow based on the Bible, and that your dedication to the "head of the church" is exemplary; never would you distort God's Word to satisfy selfish motives; never would you impose on them "commandments of men".

Evangelicals would accomplish so much more good fruit if they simply stopped being disciples of evangelicalism and instead became disciples of our Lord Jesus. You may be the only ones who could set them free, but will you? Or is the cost more than what you are willing to pay?

********** And now I have another story to tell....

Several years ago I wrote a series of articles under the heading, 333 Words *Exactly!*, a caption that I thought would assure the reader that this was a short article, not lengthy and burdensome. I posted these articles on my Facebook pages and also on my website. The following is the second 333 Words article, addressing it to evangelical leadership in my city of Kelowna....

333 WORDS.... EXACTLY!

An open letter to adherents of the **Kelowna Ministerial Association**:

Paul taught the Corinthians, "Let two or three.... speak and let the others judge." (NKJV). Please give my proposal prayerful consideration. Thank you....

Whereas there is a division within Christ's church whereby members are segregated into either the clergy (ministerial) and laity (laymen, laywomen); and

Whereas such division has no New Testament precedent; and

Whereas this practice is contrary to the words of the Lord Jesus, "All of you are equal as brothers and sisters." (NLT); and

Whereas your denominational/associational licenses and ordination certificates are strong symbols propagating such division, I offer the following proposal:

In the near future, after ample discussion and debate, agree to meet as a group in a public place (such as Kelowna City Park or Prospera Place) for the purpose of publicly disposing all such certificates, this preceded by a public announcement of your intention especially directed to those under your influence.

Consider disposing your certificates by casting them in a fire visible to all, or inserting them in a shredder, or simply tearing them before the audience and, more important, before our Lord Jesus. And further, select one to vocalize sincere repentance unto the Lord Jesus, expressing the group's regret for its part in the rendering of His church into two segments.

Please do not be slighted by this proposal, unusual but, from a biblical perspective, reasonable. Instead consider....

Consider: The red words in your Bible give no hint His twelve were to be so endorsed.

Consider: Saul was certified *(Acts 9)*; Paul was anointed. Consider: Christ appealed to His works for endorsement, not a certificate.

Consider: Differences of conclusions, within your ranks, regarding various Bible texts nullifies the argument that the practice of licensing protects the purity of the Word.

Faith moves God. Brothers, accepting this proposal could release the power of God in our city. Contemporaries elsewhere would know

immediately of your brave deed, and some would follow your brave, godly example.

Respectfully, Larry Jones

Chapter four

A.W. Tozer's written words, if regularly supped, will draw you closer to our Lord Jesus. You will be stronger, healthier and more fruitful than the one who feeds on words that exalt christians rather than Christ and/or those whose commitment to Lord Jesus is less entire than this brother. Seriously.

Keys To the Deeper Life, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 1: It is my considered opinion that under the present circumstances we do not want revival at all. A widespread revival of the kind of Christianity we know today in America might prove to be a moral tragedy from which we would not recover in a hundred years.

Chapter 2: It is not intellectual knowledge about God that quenches man's ancient heart-thirst, but the very Person and Presence of God Himself. These come to us through Christian doctrine, but they are more than doctrine. Christian truth is designed to lead us to God, not to serve as a substitute for God.

Chapter 2: We should press on to enjoy in personal inward experience the exalted privileges that are ours in Christ Jesus; that we should insist upon tasting the sweetness of internal worship in spirit as well as in truth; that to reach this ideal we should if necessary push beyond our contented brethren and bring upon ourselves whatever opposition may follow as a result.

Chapter 2: The quality of evangelical Christianity must be greatly improved.

Chapter 2: If... your soul cries out to God, for the living God, and your dry and empty heart despairs of living a normal Christian life... then I ask you: Is your desire all absorbing? Is it the biggest thing in your life?... If your heart cries “Yes” to the questions you may be on your way to a spiritual breakthrough that will transform your whole life.

Chapter 3: For some time it has been evident that we evangelicals have been failing to avail ourselves of the deeper riches of grace that lie in the purposes of God for us. As a consequence, we have been suffering greatly, even tragically.

Chapter 3: Religious work can be done by natural men without the gifts of the Spirit, and it can be done well and skillfully. But work designed for eternity can only be done by the eternal Spirit. No work has eternity in it unless it is done by the Spirit through gifts.

Chapter five

Regarding evangelicalism, a very logical question I have never heard asked: “Is it working?”

You owe it to your people to ask yourselves this obvious question, “Is it working?” Is evangelicalism, your cherished religion that long ago replaced Jesus as “first love”, accomplishing the purposes of Christ throughout your congregations and your cities?

While considering this pointed question give regard to the maxim, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” If it's not working will you nonetheless do “the same thing over and over”?

A brother once compared the local church to an oil producing factory. The factory always managed

to produce sufficient oil to keep its machinery running, but scant leftover oil to export elsewhere. The local church spends most of its energy and abilities to keep its spiritual machinery running, but scant leftovers to be a blessing to the world for whom Jesus died.

Evangelicalism is a poor investment. Scant blessings flow beyond your church walls to your city and beyond. The bulk of the enormous amount of money collected is swallowed up by your salary and the housing people call "our church". In short, your assembly generously donates to itself. These are the spiritual factories evangelicalism has created and maintains.

You justify your salary by making disciples, this (supposedly) in response to the command of Jesus, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." But are the disciples you are making disciples of Christ Jesus or disciples of the awful religion you have imposed on them?

Your congregation is your mirror. They are what you, more than others, have made them to be. Examining them is examining you....

First question: **Do your people speak Christ?**

Jesus taught, "Out of the abundance of his heart the mouth speaks." What's in comes out. Rarely – almost never – do your people speak the name of Jesus in conversation, even with other christians. Someone seated in a booth near two evangelicals sipping coffee and chatting would *never* overhear the name of Jesus. Change the two to a dozen and the same applies. Your name might be spoken, perhaps often, but not His.

Second question: **Are your people led by the Holy Spirit?**

Jesus: "He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak." Being sensitive to the Holy Spirit is being sensitive to the "head of the church". Obeying Him is obeying Him. Well, if its not Lord Jesus whom they obey, who is it? Jesus taught, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me." We obey the one we love and we love the one we obey. Conforming to your long list of spoken and unspoken "commandments of men" is conforming to you and the religion that has endorsed you.

Next question: **Are your people bearing "much fruit"?**

Jesus taught that the christian who stops bearing fruit will be removed from Him. ("My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away.") So yes, they do bear fruit. But do they bear MUCH fruit? Our Teacher: "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear MUCH fruit." Little fruit disappoints; abundant fruit glorifies. Only those who keep Jesus "first love" bear much fruit.

Another question: **Are your people following Christ or christians?**

Followers of Christ within gospel churches are rare. Do they assume that following you is somehow following Jesus?

And another: **Are your people laying up "treasures on earth" or "treasures in heaven"?**

You have, by example and implication, given them permission to accumulate and hoard stuff. Their storage rooms bulge with unused and forgotten and expensive things and more things. Their homes are well- furnished and their wardrobes extensive. But all this stuff is costing them eternal rewards. Those who hoard now will "suffer loss", *eternal* loss, later.

Last question: **Do your people "Preach the Word"?** (Paul to Timothy: "Preach the Word!")

A few do but most don't. Facebook and other social media outlets attest to that. Your people talk about their cat, their dog, a favourite recipe, what a great church service it was, pray for me because I've got a dental appointment coming up, etcetera, etcetera. Many suspect you would frown upon them publicly preaching the Bible to which you are quick to respond, "I have *never* told my people not to preach!" True, but you also never *encouraged* them to preach, not to the secular world and not to His church. (Bonhoeffer: "Not to speak is to speak.")

Now let's examine *your* spiritual condition to determine if your congregation really does mirror you. I will ask the very same questions, but exchange "your people" with "you". ("You" being the entirety of worldwide evangelical leadership.)

First question: **Do you speak Christ?**

It's almost impossible to totally sidestep Jesus Christ when giving a forty-five minute sermon to a christian audience, but you do come close. Lots of *God* but very little *Jesus*. "Praise the Lord!" occasionally, but "Praise the Lord Jesus!" never. (And almost zero *Father* and *Holy Spirit*.) Plenty of *I* and *me* and *we* and *them* but little of Him. (You can confirm or disprove this by simply listening to your past messages.) And Jesus is almost non-existent in casual conversations. When someone mentions the name of Jesus I notice. (As the song says, "There's just something about that name.") Over fifty years of christianity and many exchanges with past and present pastors, I cannot recall *one* occasion when Christ was mentioned.

Second question: **Are you led by the Holy Spirit?**

The answer to this question is a big, fat, emphatic NO WAY!! If you were led by the Holy Spirit you wouldn't be preaching every sunday; the pulpit would be shared by many. And when you did preach, Jesus would be exalted, not ignored. ("He will glorify Me.") You have long ago become a calendar christian – dutiful, punctual, professional, fully institutionalized. Sameness is lord – sweet, satisfying, serene sameness.

Next question: **Are you bearing "much fruit"**

Why do you seldom mention "the judgement seat of Christ" where it will be revealed the exact amount of "gold, silver, precious stones" as well as "wood, hay, straw" that you have accumulated throughout your entire christianity? Is it because you know in your heart-of-hearts that your

“treasures in heaven” are scant? Do you dread giving the account of your christianity to Judge Jesus knowing that you have influenced Jesus' brothers and sisters to embrace “commandments of men”?.... knowing you hadn't come close to “finishing course”? that you long ago abandoned “first love” and enthroned denominational lords in His place?

Another question: **Are you following Christ or christians?**

Surely it is obvious it isn't Jesus Christ you are following.

And another: Are you laying up “treasures on earth” or “treasures in heaven”?

Hmmmm. Are church buildings “treasures on earth”? Did an efficient air conditioning system and the repaving of the parking lot have priority over Christ's Great Commission? Are your salaries spent on earthly possessions or “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”? Will you hear those words, “Well done, good and faithful servant”?

Last question: **Do you “Preach the Word”?**

Jesus to the Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” Is your word (the words you preach) the same word which Jesus was referencing? Jesus: “Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man.” Are your sayings Christ's sayings? Paul to Timothy: “Preach the word!”. Do you preach the same word as did Paul and Timothy? Psalm 12:6: “The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” Has the religion you propagate added to or subtracted from God's “pure words”? Jesus: “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” Aren't all Bible-plus teachings “commandments of men”?

So, again, “Is it working?” Are the purposes of Christ being accomplished through your religion? Are your audiences disciples of Christ or disciples of christians? Is Christ's Great Commission being obeyed or ignored? Is there any similarity between early church christianity and your christianity?

I repeat the maxim, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” Insanity is evangelical leadership – in dire need to be discipled (by Jesus Christ through His Holy Spirit) – attempting to disciple others. Insanity is adding to and subtracting from God's infallible Bible while considering oneself a fearless defender of that Bible. Insanity is doing everything wrong and expecting good results.

********** And now another story....

Several years ago I experienced a “suddenly”. (As you know, the Bible speaks of many suddenlies.) Suddenly I was made aware, fully aware, that I have a sick soul. And this unexpected revelation didn't bother me, not the slightest. Now I realize why I think nasty thoughts, and why forgiveness is such a challenge, and why I spew ugly words during occasional temper tantrums, and why I am so slow to learn, and why I can be such a jerk sometimes.

At that same moment I was made aware that *everyone* has a sick soul, to one degree or another. Sin has done that. How I compare with others, I don't know or care. Hopefully most are not as flawed as I am; I suppose that somewhere on this planet there could be a few christians even more impaired. This I know: the only flawless Man to walk on planet Earth was a person by the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The rest of us are, at best, wannabes.

This sudden awareness made me fully realize how completely unworthy and unequipped I am to pass judgement on others. How can someone so spiritually sick criticize the spiritually sick? More specifically, what qualifications do I have to pass judgement on you? None whatsoever! (Jesus: "Judge not, that you be not judged." Jesus: "Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned." James: "Do not speak evil of one another.")

But we are to judge evangelicalism and every -ism that defies the lordship of Christ. You have heard it said, "Hate the sin, love the sinner". We should also "Hate religion, love the religionist".

I have very harsh criticism toward the religion you have adopted as lord and provider and guide. But is harsh improper? Does Jesus disapprove? Let's consider God's Bible....

The Bible, like every book, has a tone. (I simply don't know a better word than *tone* to describe the overall temperament and tenor and mannerism of Scripture.) That tone, it seems to me, is serious and incisive. (A.W. Tozer was one of few who communicated in a resembling tone.) Most authors and preachers have acquired an apologetic, hesitant, accommodating mannerism; tact takes precedence over candidness.

Jesus was a serious Man who spoke unapologetically. Hear His tone: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?".... "I have this against you".... "Do you also want to go away?". "Because of your unbelief".... "You have left your first love" "First remove the plank from your own eye". "You devour widows' houses."

Now let's listen to Paul, the NT's most prolific writer: "Is Christ divided?". "Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?".... "If you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing".... "What communion has light with darkness?". "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

Yes, I write with a candidness you are not accustomed to. I stand firmly against the religion you so professionally propagate, that religion that regularly challenges the lordship of our Christ and robs from His Great Commission. My precious brothers-in-Christ, if my words offend, let them offend!

Chapter six

A.W. Tozer's words were the outpouring of a worshipper. His god was God. He deliberately *set* his love upon the Father, His Son and the most Holy Spirit, and did his utmost to convince his audiences to do likewise.

Keys To the Deeper Life, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 3: For a generation certain evangelical teachers have told us that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the death of the apostles or at the completion of the New Testament. This, of course, is a doctrine without a syllable of biblical authority back of it. Its advocates must accept full responsibility for thus manipulating the Word of God. The result of this erroneous teaching is that the spiritually gifted persons are ominously few among us.

Chapter 3: We need men with the gift of knowledge. In their place we have men with scholarship–nothing more.

Chapter 3: Clearly, however, we have yet to see what God would do for His Church if we would all throw ourselves down before Him with

an open Bible and cry, “Behold Thy servant, Lord! Be it unto me even as Thou wilt.”

Chapter 4: A church without the Spirit is as helpless as Israel might have been in the wilderness if the fiery cloud has deserted them. The Holy Spirit is our cloud by day and our fire by night. Without Him we only wander aimlessly about the desert.

That is what we today are surely doing. We have divided ourselves into little ragged groups, each one running after a will-o'-the-wisp or firefly in the mistaken notion that we are following the Shekinah. It is not only desirable that the cloudy pillar should begin to glow again. It is imperative.

Chapter 4: Complete and ungrudging obedience to the will of God is absolutely indispensable to the reception of the Spirit's anointing.

Chapter 4: Before there can be fullness there must be emptiness. Before God can fill us with Himself we must be first emptied of ourselves. It is this emptying that brings the painful disappointment and despair of self of which so many persons have complained just prior to their new and radiant experience.

There must come a total of self-devaluation, a death to all things without us and within us, or there can never be real filling with the Holy Spirit.

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Chapter seven

Unity. Let's consider unity. Okay?

Evangelicalism is a concoction of hundreds of denominations each emphasizing its own peculiar cluster of traditions. Because most denominations are territorial, there are ongoing eruptions of hostility between them. Your religion (like all religions) abounds with evidence that Jesus is not at its helm.

1. John 1:7: “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.” It is equally true that those who do not “walk in the light” “have fellowship with one another”; the lukewarm prefer each other's company.Because you abide in your religion and I (seriously try to) abide in Jesus, we could never have fellowship. Unity would be highly undesirable for both. I wouldn't want your company and you wouldn't want mine.The *Evangelical Fellowship of Canada* (EFC) emphasizes unity: “Uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus.” EFC is connected to the *World Evangelical Alliance* (WEA) that also emphasizes unity: “Evangelicals united globally for Gospel transformation”. They got it all wrong. The emphasis should not be unity with each other but unity with Jesus. “If we walk in the light as *He* is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.”Unity outside of Christ is undesirable and bears bad fruit. Jesus' allegory of the vine (“I am the true vine”) and its branches (“you are the branches”) denotes *healthy* unity. And branches firmly attached to the vine are compatible with each other; they are compatible because of their healthy relationship (not with each other but) with the vine.
   The EFC recently held *Ignite* gatherings – seminars and prayer meetings – in four Canadian cities. In Kelowna the event drew about 135 leaders who were served a free dinner, and 350 for “public prayer and worship”. The emphasis seemed to be twofold, spiritual awakening and unity.

   Is it fair to ask why Kelowna would be in need of spiritual awakening when we have (at least) 135 evangelical spiritual leaders, most of whom are salaried? Is this an admission that these leaders have not been doing what they are paid to do? And if so, can we come to any other conclusion except these spiritual leaders are responsible for Kelowna's spiritual lethargy? (Who else could it be?)

   And why the push for unity? Consider: Why would a baptist who renounces “speak with new tongues” want to be united to a pentecostal? (“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”) What commonality does calvinism have with arminianism? (“Can two walk together,

unless they are agreed?") Why would cessationists (those who believe Jesus stopped doing "signs and wonders") want to associate with continualists (those believing Jesus continues performing "signs and wonders")? Why would the few who never abandoned "first love" want to fellowship with the majority who have? Why would the passionate want to be united with the lukewarm? ("Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?")

And consider: Isn't the exclusion of (supposed) non-leaders from the dinner blatantly divisive? How can some christians be invited to a meal and other christians uninvited? Does Jesus smile upon this partiality?

A leader is one who leads. In the secular world there are all kinds of leaders – good and bad, competent and incompetent, sincere and insincere, beneficial and harmful. In Christ's church there are also all kinds of leaders – good and bad, competent and incompetent, sincere and insincere, beneficial and harmful.

A leader who is a disciple of Christ bears good fruit. A leader who is a disciple of a religion bears bad fruit. Jesus: "You will know them by their fruits." Disciples of evangelicalism have a diploma posted in their office; disciples of Christ are credentialed by obedience to God's Bible, "the fruit of the Spirit", and their enthusiasm for His Great Commission. A major step toward unity of the brethren would be the credentialed discarding their credentials. (Do you really think Jesus wants some of His saints credentialed and others not credentialed?)

Question: So what should EFC be doing if not promoting spiritual awakening and unity among evangelical churches?

Answer: Nothing. EFC gives unwarranted credibility to evangelicalism the same way popery gives baseless credibility to catholicism. The EFC should disband.... close shop.... dissolve terminate.

Question: What about the WEA that has regional and national alliances throughout the world?

Answer: The WEA should likewise disband.... close shop.... dissolve.... terminate. As catholics would be less catholic if popery were suddenly terminated, evangelicals would be less evangelical if WEA would terminate itself.

To bear "much fruit" you do not need evangelicalism. Don't need Christ- plus and Bible-plus. In the next chapter I will very clearly show you a simple route that will take you from unsuccessful to successful, from little fruit to "much fruit". But first another story....

****

A jehovah's witness, a young man, knocked on our door and soon we were in a debate. My christianity, he said, couldn't possibly be true because we were so divided in doctrine; the jehovah's witnesses, however, were united, no division whatsoever, and this was ample proof

they were God's true agent on earth. I knew much about the history of his religion and asked, “Has there been times when jehovah's witnesses were united on matters they later realized were false?” Listen to his response....

“Yes, but it is better to be united in error than divided over truth!”

This same absurdity is fully entrenched in EFC, WEA, and throughout your entire religion. It is error – “commandments of men” – that unites you to each other. Remove these untruths from your christianity and you would cease being an evangelical.

Do you want more truth? Ask Jesus, “the way, the *truth*, and the life” for truth. Those wanting truth ask; those who don't don't.

Chapter eight

A.W. Tozer and I will have a one-on-one meeting in heaven. I know this because I asked Lord Jesus to arrange it. (“Ask, and you will receive.”) Though I hold him in high esteem, I won't be nervous because no one in heaven is nervous.

Keys To the Deeper Life, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 5: Every kind of personal religious project these days is being made an object of prayer. Some of these projects are unscriptural, or at least extrascriptural, and many of them have no higher motive than to relieve the promoter of the unpleasant task of earning an honest living and to enable him to float about the world at the expense of the hard-pressed saints.

Chapter 5: The world situation as God sees it presents two major goals to be reached by praying people, two objects at which to aim our prayers. One is that the glory of God be seen again among men, and the other that the church be delivered from her present Babylonian captivity.

Chapter 5: The second object at which our prayers should be aimed is the restoration of the spiritual life of the church. We must continue to pray that she should cease her disgraceful fornication with the world and return to her first love and her true Lord. Her living has degenerated, her tastes have declined, her standards have sunk to the bottom. Nothing short of a radical reformation can save her. Only those with anointed eyes are able to see her plight and only those with Spirit-filled hearts can intercede for her effectively.

Chapter 5: We must reckon ourselves dead to gain and glory and allow ourselves to become inextricably involved with the cross of Christ and the high honor of God. Then our prayers will be something like this: O God, let Thy glory be revealed once more to men: through me if it please Thee, or without me or apart from me, it matters not. Restore Thy church to the place of moral beauty that becomes her as the Bride of Christ: through me, or apart from me; only let this prayer be answered. O God, honor whom Thou wilt. Let me be used or overlooked or ignored or forgotten.

Chapter 7: The strong emphasis on dispensationalism, for instance, which started out to "rightly divide the word of truth" ended up by creating an army of cookie-cutter believers, all repeating each other without any independent thought and without much need for the illumination of the Spirit.

Chapter nine

John chapter 15, verse 5, if heeded, will bring improvement to every aspect of your life. I repeat.... *every* segment of your life, *every* issue, *every* concern, including....

Including the welfare of your congregations, including your desire and ability to do good works, including "the fruit of the Spirit", including increased knowledge and understanding of spiritual matters, including increased physical and mental and emotional well-being, including a better account at the upcoming judgement seat of Christ. Also your respective marriages could be enhanced, your children's future less problematic, and unsaved friends and relatives more likely to become born-again citizens of God's wondrous kingdom. Jesus: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." Within this verse is a powerful promise that can revolutionize your christianity. I highlight this promise by withdrawing inapplicable words. First....

Let's set aside Christ's beautiful metaphor, "I am the vine, you are the branches." This is what we are left with....

"He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." Next we can remove "for without Me you can do nothing." (Without being relationally attached to Jesus you can do nothing. Nothing means nothing.) Now we are left with....

“He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit.” Now let's consider “and I in him”. If you abide in Jesus, Jesus abides in you. It's automatic. (“He who loves Me. I will love him.”) To the degree you abide in Him, He abides in you. So let's set aside those words “and I in him”. This is the awesome promise we are left with....

“He who abides in Me. bears much fruit.” To bear much fruit you simply abide in Jesus. That's a promise from Christ Jesus to you. Said another way....

“He who abides in bears much fruit.” “ who abides in bears much fruit.”

There are degrees of abiding, just as there are degrees of loving and believing. I conclude that only those abiding *primarily* in Jesus will bear “much fruit” and those having a feeble relationship will bear *little* fruit. So Christ's promise to you is: “He who abides in Me *bears much fruit!”* Are you impacted by this astounding promise?

There are two terms you must comprehend to get the full impact of this promise given to you by none other than Jesus Christ: 1) “much fruit” and 2) “abide”. First, “much fruit”....

“Much fruit” is good fruit. Good fruit is everything that is good. Love, joy, peace are good fruit, as are kindness, goodness, faithfulness. The rescuing of people from eternal damnation is *very* good fruit. Treasures in heaven, a good account at the judgement seat of Christ, inclusion at “the marriage supper of the Lamb” – these are all consequences of abiding *primarily* in Christ.

Next we look at the word *abide.* To abide means to dwell, to occupy, to take up residence. To abide does *not* mean an occasional visit. To abide in Jesus means to live in constant awareness that He is 'here' (present, wherever you are at any moment).

Now let us consider what Lord Jesus did *not* say.....

Jesus did *not* say, “If you preach from My Bible every sunday you will bear much fruit.”

Jesus did *not* say, “If you are submissive to denominational lords you will bear much fruit.”

Jesus did *not* say, “If your people live uprightly they will bear much fruit.”

Jesus did *not* say, “If your people faithfully attend church they will bear much fruit.”

Implying your congregations have need of you (or your colleagues) and the religion you represent is declaring, “He who abides in Me bears much fruit” is not true. John 15:5 tells them they don't need Christ-plus (you being the plus); they need Christ *alone*. Your responsibility (and my responsibility) is to tell them that. A faithful disciple of Christ points christians to Christ. If you don't emphasize that Christ alone is their sufficiency it is because you are not His disciple and He is not your Lord.

Psalm 91 confirms the promise within John 15:5: (“He who abides in Me.... bears much fruit”)....

Psalm 91:1: “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High.” Jesus is “the secret place of the Most High”.

Psalm 91:9: “Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place.” Making Jesus “your dwelling place” equates to “He who abides in Me”.

Psalm 91:14: “Because he has set his love upon Me.” Love is something that can be set (placed, planted). Loving Jesus is abiding in Jesus.

Loving Jesus primarily is abiding in Jesus primarily.

There are many promises throughout Psalm 91 for those who “dwell in the secret place of the Most High” including “no evil will befall you”, “He will give His angels charge over you”, “I will be with him in trouble”, “with long life will I satisfy him”. All these promises are good fruit, “much fruit”.

Still not convinced that “He who abides in” Jesus is all that is required to “bear much fruit”? In addition to Psalm 91, Scripture validates this many times in many ways....

Dozens of times the Bible admonishes us to trust in the Lord. One example of many: “Blessed is the man who trusts in Him.” *Trusting* in the Lord is *abiding* in the Lord and the christian who does so is “blessed”. Being blessed is being fruitful (bearing much fruit).

My brothers-in-Christ, in your here-and-now you are bearing *scant* fruit. (Religionists are simply unable to bear “much fruit”.) Your meager fruit is evidence of a weak connection of the branch to the vine, christian to Christ. To move from scant fruit to much fruit (from weak connection to strong connection), religion must go. You must cease being a religionist (one who lives by and propagates “commandments of men”).

Before you is a better life than that which you are now living. Not just better but *much* better. This better life is attainable. Sadly, few achieve the achievable. An exchange is required, and few have the courage to exchange soothing life-as-is for an uncertain and challenging Christ-centered life.

So there you have it. Jesus' promise to you – the entire evangelical leadership, every pastor throughout evangelicalism – is “He who abides in Me (primarily) bears much fruit”. Understand that abiding in Christ is obeying Christ. Obeying another is abiding in another. So. where will you go from here? Who will you serve. Jesus or another?

Fifty plus years of christianity has taught me that most of you will not repent and return to “first love”. Power has corrupted you. Access to and control of the mighty pulpit, your salary, the appellations, the attention – these Bible-plus perks have scraped away most of your humility. No longer are you just one of the guys; your evangelical credentials give you status and status has empowered you. Your company is cherished, your wisdom sought.

And how can you betray the denomination that stationed you, the seminary that schooled you, the religion that credentialed you? And how can you care for your family without that beloved bi-weekly paycheck? And how could you endure the persecution from ardent religionists that will certainly ensue?

For most, the cost of returning to the lordship of Jesus Christ is more than they are willing to pay. For them, evangelicalism will remain "first love"; "commandments of men" will continue to dominate their christianity. This is not just sad, but sad times a thousand.

********** Another story....

When very young in the Lord Jesus I was surprised and delighted to discover a gathering of fellow born-again catholics. While singing onto Jesus, "Though none go with me still I will follow, no turning back, no turning back", the Holy Spirit dropped in me a strong and certain impression: *There will be a day I will be able to prove the words I just sang.* ("Though *none* go with me still I will follow.") In other words, there would be a time when all the people in my circle of acquaintances would cease following Jesus! This included a number of born-again catholics and evangelicals. Would I continue to follow Jesus "though none go with me"?

This experience really scared me. All christians I knew will cease following Jesus? Does that include the tv preachers I listened to? Would they also stop following Him? How could it be? So I shelved the whole matter. What else could I do?

It took me about five years to (finally!) get the understanding. It became obvious that christians were not following Christ but following christians (who were following christians, who were following christians). *None* were following our Lord Jesus. Even today, about forty-five years later, I could count on one hand (even if I had a few missing fingers) the christians who I could define as genuine followers of Jesus Christ.

Chapter ten

A.W. Tozer was both a student and a teacher, a student primarily and a teacher secondarily. That's the valid order. It makes the 1963 Tozer much more knowledgeable and wiser than the 1919 Tozer. My strong recommendation of his Godly insights – which I hold higher than all other public persons – might imply that I am in agreement with the entirety of his writings. I am not. Mostly, yes. Totally, no. Nor do I assume that he would be in complete agreement with *Let.... My.... People.... Go !!* Mostly, yes.... I suppose. Totally, no I suppose.

Keys To the Deeper Life, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 7: The emphasis has been away from the “deeper life,” the Spirit-filled life, the life hid with Christ in God. The spiritual content of evangelicalism has been lowered. But, encouragingly, some people are growing discontented and are demanding bread instead of stone. If there are enough of such people and if they speak out, it could mean healthy revival in the church of Christ.

Chapter 7: Too many of us play at Christianity. We wear salvation as a kind of convention badge admitting us into the circle of the elect, but rarely stop to focus our whole lives seriously on God's claims upon us.

Chapter 7: Throw yourself out recklessly upon God. Give up everything and prepare yourself to surrender even unto death all of your ambitions, plans and possessions. And I mean this quite literally. You should not be satisfied with the mere technical aspect of surrender but press your case upon God in determined prayer until a crisis has taken place within your life and there has been an actual transfer of everything from yourself to God.

Chapter 7: Determine not to defend yourself against detractors and persecutors. Put your reputation in God's hands and leave it there.

Chapter 7: Although we still condemn worldliness, we have refined it to mean something different from what it meant a generation ago. We are so afraid of being narrow that we have opened our doors to worldliness.

Chapter 7: Rather than be mistaken about the operations of the Spirit, they have chosen to have none of His operations at all. They have allowed themselves to be “dispensationalized” into a state of spiritual vacuity. We must revolt against this Babylonian Captivity. We must have courage to disagree even with big names and famous men.

Chapter eleven

Your salary (salary: a fixed compensation periodically paid to a person for regular work or services” – dictionary.com) is the subject of this chapter. Is your salary Bible or Bible-plus? The sad truth is it.... just.... doesn't matter.

I quote something I wrote many years ago, and have often repeated: “Evangelicalism only makes sense to the person who understands that there is no conformity between

evangelicalism and the Bible." To religionists, what the Bible says matters little. And to religionists, what *Jesus* (our Lord and Redeemer and Teacher and Shepherd) said matters little. Gospel churches castigate catholicism for placing tradition over the Bible even though they do the same thing with equal gusto.

Now back to your salary....

Your salary is just one of many examples of evangelical leadership straying from Scripture. (Jesus: "You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.") I know you are quick to retaliate, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." But the wages Jesus was referencing was "eating and drinking such things as they give". Check it out.

And I am sure the words of Paul quickly come to mind: "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.' " Again, this is referencing food and drink. Paul is saying, "Don't refrain the ox from eating so that it can keep treading out the grain. Be sure the preacher has nourishment so that he can keep on preaching." Well how about....

1 Corinthians 9:14: "Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel." Paul was referencing "the Lord" Jesus (Mt.10:10): "a worker is worthy of his food". Well how about....

1 Corinthians 9:4: "Do we have no right to *eat and drink?* Do we have no right to take along a believing wife?" Again, this is referencing food, not only for themselves but for their wives (should they choose to marry).

The apostles lived by *contributions*. Repeat, *contributions*. The word *salary* cannot be found in the entire NKJV Bible or any other accepted translation (including ASV, ESV, KJV, NIV, WYC).

Logical question: If the word *salary* cannot be found in Scripture, why do pastors receive a salary?

Answer: "Evangelicalism only makes sense to the person who understands that there is no conformity between evangelicalism and the Bible." Your Bible-believing churches aren't. And now a few more questions....

Question: What importance does Pastor Typical of Typical Evangelical Church give to Paul's words to Timothy, "Having food and clothing, with these we will be content"?

Answer: None.

Question: Does Pastor Typical heed the words of Jesus, "Freely you have received, freely give"?

Answer: No.

Question: Is Pastor Typical impacted by Paul's statement, “I present the gospel of Christ without charge”? Answer: Not the slightest.

Question: Does Pastor Typical “lay up treasures on earth”?

Answer: In abundance.

Jesus lived by contributions. (“Many women followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him.”) Like Jesus, the apostles who received contributions were on the go. Peter left. Paul and Barnabas travelled. Timothy went. However pastors (unlike evangelists and apostles) are stationary and have no need of contributions; they can work to supply their own needs and that of their families. (The same as I and many others do.)

There is an enormous difference between living by contributions and living by salary, and the effect it has on your congregations.

First, contributions....

A contribution is a donation directed toward any person or cause the contributor so decides. The contributor always has decisions to make (instead of having others decide for him), how much to give and where his donations are to be directed. The recipient may be anyone within, or without, the congregation – those in need or anyone doing the Lord's work. Dispensing one's donations through contributions gives all active christians equal opportunity to be supported.

If your congregations were encouraged to prayerfully contribute, evangelists would be better financed. Supporting the evangelist is evangelizing; evangelizing is a means of fulfilling Christ's Great Commission.

Now the salary....

A salary is a contract between an employer and an employee. Although you disdain being considered an employee, that's what you are by definition – and your employer is the congregation.

The salary gives you special status, elevating you above all others. The salaried become the leaders, decision-makers, teachers, shepherds (all the roles Jesus wants to have with everyone in your congregations).

Your salaries have bought you power and power corrupts. As power corrupts the unbeliever, so it does the believer; to think otherwise is supreme naivety. Speaking of naivety....

In their book, *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*, (Johnson and VanVonderen) – which I highly recommend – the authors describe the naivety of congregationists who accept the advice of pastors without hesitation; the trust they have in pastors surpasses that which they have in

financial advisers, etcetera. Pastor Whoever must be right because he's the pastor; hearing from a pastor almost equates to hearing from God. This is the illicit and dangerous power you wield over your people.

The pulpit gives you this power. Every sunday you grow in stature and credibility as you display your spiritual wares before the audience whose trust you have captured. It's your salary that procured the pulpit. It's your salary that negates “one another” ministry. (“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another.” “Exhort one another daily.” “Edify one another.” “Teaching and admonishing one another.” “Serve one another.” “You can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.”)

A sobering thought....

The cost of your salaries is more than money; the cost of your salary is *souls.* Much of the money spent on your salaries could and should be directed toward Christ's Great (and mostly neglected) Commission.

After much consideration, I estimate the cost of winning one soul in third world countries could be less than $20. If your monthly salary is $6000 and the cost of procuring one soul costs $20, the cost of your salary is 300 perishing people.... per month!. every month! (I know that hurts, but something has to wake you up!)

Wisdom is asking yourself (before your summons to the judgement seat of Christ), “Who gave me permission to accept/demand a salary?” You know it wasn't Jesus. And you know the Bible gives no such permission. Your salary, my brothers-in-Christ, is “the tradition of the elders”. Your religion, evangelicalism, gave you this permission.

********** Another story...

I was the last relative to see Granny before she died and went to hell. My wife's grandmother was not a nice person – mean, highly prejudiced, abusive, selfish. So there we were, Granny and me, in a hospital room.

Granny was dying. Granny was in torment. It was horrid.

A year or so previous this frail little lady was laying in bed, all were anticipating her death. I went into her bedroom fully aware of the everlasting torment that awaited her, and asked Lord Jesus to please give her another chance. He did, Granny recovered. but she never changed, not the slightest.

Now loudly moaning and groaning and absolutely terrified in the hospital, she was no longer cognizant of this life, but (it seemed to me) quite conscious of the monstrous realm where the demons were taking her. Perhaps an hour or two of this non-stop torment passed when, inexplicably, a nurse came into the room and wheeled Granny into a back room. When my wife

and her mom finally arrived, they got the news that Granny had died.

While evangelicals give little consideration to that horrid place the Bible calls hell from which Jesus saved them, the reality of hell burns in His bosom. Hell is why He came. Hell explains Calvary. Hell is why Jesus talked so forcefully, so sternly.

At this moment, forty-plus years later, Granny is still crying out in torment. ("I am tormented in this flame.") She never experienced one moment of reprieve. Not one. I wish every evangelical, for just a minute or two, would see and smell and hear and feel Granny's eternal habitation. Perhaps then they would take Christ's Great Commission seriously. Perhaps then they would detest, as I do, wasteful and treacherous evangelicalism.

Chapter twelve

A.W. Tozer died at the age of 66, about 13 years younger than I now am. "Why so young?", I have often wondered. It seems he literally worked himself to death. Should he have eased up.... and lived longer and bore more good fruit and wrote more books? *Hmmm.* Perhaps I will ask him when I get up there.

Total Commitment To Christ, A.W. Tozer

Page 4: We who are of the evangelical faith should not preach Christ plus science, or Christ plus philosophy, or Christ plus psychology, or Christ plus education, or Christ plus civilization, or Christ plus anything – but Christ alone and Christ enough.

Page 7: We cannot live by our feelings or on threads of popular notions about Christ. There are a great many false ideas about Christ these days, and we must show them for what they are and then point people to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Page 11: If I am going to follow Christ in complete and total commitment, I must do it by a continuous act of my will. Christians who try to live on impulse and inspiration, who hope to sail to heaven over the billowing sea of religious feeling, are making a bad mistake. Christians who live on their feelings and emotion are not living very well and are not going to last very long.

Page 13: Our attachment to the Person of Christ must exclude all that is contrary to Christ. These are the days when we are trying to be 100 percent positive, but the Scripture says of Jesus, You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness (Psalm 45:7). That was said of

Jesus Christ Himself, who is higher than the highest heavens and is separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26). If He had to hate in order to love, so do we.

Page 14: I came to the conclusion a long time ago that I can't get along with everybody. In an effort to please everybody, you will succeed in pleasing nobody. I don't want watered-down Christianity. I want to be able to say no. I say no to the devil and no to Kruschev. I say no to the Pope and no to everybody who has anything to say that is contrary to the Lord. I adore Him, and I am attached to Him with an intellectual attachment that is theological, with a volitional attachment that is final, and with an exclusive attachment that would exclude everything that is contrary to Christ.

Total Commitment To Christ is public domain

Chapter thirteen

From the book of Exodus....

“The children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.”

“They set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses.”

“The Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage–in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them was with rigor.”

“And the Lord said: I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.”

“Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

“Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and tell him, “Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: 'Let My people go, that they may serve Me.' ”

Pharaoh validates the aphorism, “Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Not only did he brutalize “the children of Israel”, he defied God's sent-ones, Moses and Aaron, several times. Power corrupts to the degree of power acquired, perhaps not always, but

usually. Little power, little corruption; much power, much corruption.

The (Bible-plus) senior pastor has corrupted himself more fully than his (Bible-plus) assistant pastor who has been corrupted much more than the fledgling (Bible-plus) youth pastor. By *corruption*, I am not suggesting theft or illicit sex, but rather having given oneself over to "commandments of men". If you agree all "commandments of men" are corrupt, you are conceding that corruption blankets the entirety of evangelicalism.

The people you govern have much in common with the enslaved Israelites who could not determine for themselves the outcome of their future. Like the Israelites of old, evangelicals are subject to "commandments of men", not a few but many.

It was the threat of painful, physical reprisals that kept the Israelites subservient to their Egyptian masters, whereas your people are free to walk away at will. Or are they? The penalty for an evangelical withdrawing from your dominance can be severe. Suddenly he is excluded. Suddenly warmth is withdrawn. Suddenly his reputation is tarnished – now he is a troublemaker, a dissident, a rebel, a divider.

The spiritual stronghold you have over yours is less powerful than the military stronghold Pharaoh had over his, but firm nonetheless. A spiritual stronghold is not a prison cell or a pair of handcuffs. It is a mindset that took years to develop. A stronghold has a strong hold on one's outlook and conclusions and attitude. A stronghold keeps the catholic catholic, the mormon mormon, the evangelical evangelical.

The spiritual stronghold that has imperceptibly overtaken your congregations keeps them compliant to your (non-biblical and counterfeit) authority. You have brought much harm to your people with the enormous influence this bogus authority has given you. Surely the anemic state of Christ's church-on-earth, most of which is under your collective management, is evidence that something is terribly wrong.

And surely you must consider yourselves responsible. (Who else could be?)

Your governance is the reason Typical Christian is functioning at a small percentage of his potential. He is not serving Christ, but serving you and the religion you have imposed on him. You are his Pharaoh. You charge your people lots of money to make of them disciples of Christ, but you have no ability whatsoever to do so. only disciples of Christ can make disciples of Christ. Under your management your congregations have been made disciples of evangelicalism. Their continued bondage to you and your religion will result in sparse "treasures in heaven".

Under your tutelage your people have become incapacitated, not fully but considerably. Jesus is no longer their "first love" because He is not yours. They bear fruit but not "much fruit". ("By this My Father is glorified, that you bear *much* fruit.") Corruption (giving oneself over to

“commandments of men”) has become an entrenched way of life. What Paul dreaded for his beloved Corinthians – “I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted” (NLT) – has come to pass, with rare exceptions.

To your congregations you have become much bigger, spiritually speaking, than you are. Sunday after sunday after sunday after sunday you have made yourself seen and heard. The pulpit has inflated you.

Every time they call you “Pastor” (“Shepherd”) a piece of their loyalty shifts from Jesus – “that great Shepherd of the sheep” – to you. The control you have over their christianity is only slightly weaker than the control priests have over catholics.

Understandably you find this hard to believe. “How can so many of us be wrong?” Doesn't catholicism, anglicanism, mormonism and many etceteras convince you that, yes, so many can be wrong? Don't the words of our Teacher - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” - tell you that multitudes can walk in united error and united hypocrisy? It is your duty to cross-examine, via Scripture, every evangelical tradition and teaching you have absorbed from Bible school, and passed on to your congregations.

Jesus: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear”.....

“On a high mountain” the Father spoke to Peter, John and James: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” That's all I am suggesting: “Hear Him!” Spend much time considering the red words in your Bible. And then scrutinize the entire New Testament. (“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”) You must choose which words you will preach and obey, Bible words or Bible-plus words.

Freedom is available. “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” With truth comes freedom. If you want truth, ask “the truth” for truth. (“I am the way, *the truth* and the life”.) Yes, “Ask, and you will receive.” Do you have the courage to pray for truthregarding your religion? “Ask, and you will receive.” Want truth regarding denominations and Bible colleges and credentials? “Ask, and you will receive.” Want the truth about your salariy and all money matters? “Ask, and you will receive.”

Truth may not come instantly, but it will come. Jesus: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him.” The reason you have such a huge depository of *un*-truths infecting your heart is simply because you had preferred untruth over truth. (It was untruth that got you the powerful pulpit, your substantial salary, recognition, significance.)

Your people, millions upon millions of Christ's blood-washed saints, must be set free. Their only hope is the lordship of Jesus Christ. To recapture “first love” they must be set free from the religion that stole their “pure and undivided devotion to Christ”. Can.... you.... see that?

Very (very!) important....

Because you are the ones who have ensnared their love and loyalty, because they are relationally tethered to you, because you are their chief influence, you are the ones most able to set them free!

The Father to you: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Jesus to you: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” The Holy Spirit to you: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

****

I was one of about fifty or so pew-people listening to a pentecostal pastor during a sunday evening service. Bible in hand, he declared (paraphrasing) “Confusion comes when you mix words of the Bible with other words!” Throughout his sermon he repeated it again. and again. and again. “Confusion comes when you mix words of the Bible with other words!” Finally I got it. *Hmmm. So that's why I was so confused.* And now I understood why so many of my born-again, catholic friends suffered from confusion. they tried to consolidate the Bible and their catholic traditions. (Looking back, I see the irony of an evangelical preacher, himself an avid Adder and Subtracter, scolding others for combining Scripture and tradition.)

I was deeply moved, and before going to bed I recommitted my life to Jesus Christ. Rededicating myself to Jesus is something I often did (and do), but that night I did something I had never done. I committed myself to the Bible (as I progressively understood it). From this time onward I would always choose Bible words over traditions of men. In the presence of the Father, Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit I solemnly signed the last page of the Bible, directly under Revelation 22:21.

Evangelicals cannot do what I did. If they solemnly (repeat, *solemnly)* signed the Bible as a declaration of obedience to the Bible they would *immediately* cease to be an evangelical. And they would *immediately* become Christ's disciple. (Should a pastor make such a commitment to God's Bible he would soon be unemployed.)

Chapter fourteen

A.W. Tozer's God-given insights, and his ability to skillfully articulate those insights, will eternally enrich the one feeding on his writings. Tozer points to Christ. Not to christians. Not to a

religion. Not to a cause. Not to a doctrine. Not to men. Not to himself. But to "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Total Commitment to Christ, A.W. Tozer

Page 1: In the first chapter of Colossians, we read this about Jesus Christ: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church.

Page 2: Before we talk about our union with Christ and our conscious and willing attachment to Christ in total commitment, we must look at who Christ is and what His relation is to the redeemed company we call the Church.

Page 3: The whole Church of God rests upon the shoulders of His Son. I think we might be able to go around the world and simply cry, "Christ is enough!" Yes – Jesus Christ is enough.

Page 3: There is a weakness among us in evangelical circles; we put a plus sign after Christ. We have Christ plus something else. It is always the pluses that ruin our spiritual lives personally, and it is always the additions that weaken the Church.

Page 5: Our relation to Him is all that matters. A true Christian faith is an attachment – a devotion – to the person of Christ.

Page 14: I don't believe anyone can love until he is able to hate. I don't think that anyone can love God unless he hates evil. I don't think he can love righteousness unless he hates sin.

Page 22: We are to be joined to Jesus Christ, intelligently joined by knowing who He is. We are to be volitionally joined to Him and not try to live on our feelings, although thank God, there will be a lot of feeling going on with it! We are to be exclusively attached, excluding everything that is contrary to Him. We are to be inclusively attached, taking in everything that He surrounds Himself with. We are to be irrevocably attached, being expendable and not going back. Are you committed to Christ?

Chapter fifteen

Insanity is collecting large amounts of money every sunday while assuming zero resemblance to the pharisees who were lovers of money. (“The Pharisees. were lovers of money.”)

Love-of-money, like a creepy morning mist hanging over a dismal swamp obscuring morning sunlight, obscures God's grace and truth and every good thing. Love-of-money cripples the lover of money, corrodes contentment, degrades love for Jesus. Love-of-money costs eternal rewards.

Unlike the morning mist that eventually lifts, love-of-money has taken up (under your leadership and by your example) permanent residence in the heart of Typical Evangelical. His speech gives him away. What he has bought, intends to buy, hopes to buy, saves to buy monopolizes his conversations. And money concerns, not spiritual matters, are the main topic of church board meetings, affecting decision-making and direction.

Question: How can a 'Bible believing' church collect money every sunday when there is no Bible precedent? Answer: It can't. To again quote myself, “Evangelicalism only makes sense to the person who understands that there is no conformity between evangelicalism and the Bible.”

The New Testament speaks of one collection only. This single collection was for hurting saints elsewhere, not for themselves. (Paul: “I will send your gift to Jerusalem.”) Adversely evangelical assemblies have been coerced to donate frequently, not to others but almost entirely to themselves, covering the cost of your salaries, accommodations and other church expenditures. This, you assure them, is investing in God's work.

The real crime is not how often you collect, but *what* you collect. Yes I am referencing the awful, devastating, larcenous, non-biblical, evangelical tithe you collect every sunday morning without fail (immediately following praise and worship onto Jesus!).

I know there is an ongoing debate as to the validity of demanding ten percent of the evangelical's income. I have studied and written about the evangelical tithe more than most of you. I have heard and considered both sides of the argument, and have concluded there are *not* two sides, only one. It was the love-of-money that seriously twisted Scripture in an attempt to make it say what it doesn't say. Perhaps, just perhaps, it would be wisdom to give serious consideration to my perspective before you “appear before the judgment seat of Christ”.

You have a duty – both to the One you call “Lord, Lord” and to your people – to consider a number of questions....

***** If Jesus wanted new covenant christians to tithe their income why didn't He say, “I want My new covenant people to tithe their income”?

***** When Jesus complimented “the church of Ephesus” (Revelation chapter 2) for certain good works (“I know your works, your labor, your patience”, etcetera) why didn't He commend them for faithfully tithing their income? or reprimand them for not tithing?

***** Also, why didn't Jesus praise the commendable “church in Smyrna” for tithing their income?. or reprimand them for not tithing?

***** When Jesus told “the church in Pergamos” “I have a few things against you” (including embracing “the doctrine of Balaam”, sexual immorality, etcetera) why didn't He also scold them for not tithing their income? (Does anyone believe this church tithed?)

***** Why didn't Jesus either commend the other four churches – Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodecia – for tithing their income? or rebuke them for not doing so?

***** Jesus said to the Pharisees: “You pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to *have done* (past tense), without leaving the others undone.” Why the past tense? Why didn't Jesus say, “These you ought to *do*” (present tense)? Is it because in just a few days after speaking these words Jesus terminated the old covenant (including the requirement of tithing) by the sacrifice of Himself?

***** If the Corinthians were “cursed with a curse” for not tithing their income – as many of you have likewise taught your people – why didn't Paul strictly admonish them to tithe?

***** Also, why didn't Paul instruct the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians to tithe their income?

***** Why didn't John and Peter and James instruct their people to tithe ten percent of their income?

***** Why wasn't tithing one's income one of Paul's requisites for eldership (1 Timothy chapter 3)?

***** Paul to the Corinthians, “Each one must do just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion.” (NASB). You have convinced your people they are required by God to tithe their income; is this not putting them “under compulsion”?

**** Paul to the Corinthians: “He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” Don't these words sufficiently cover the matter of giving? Why a need to teach from the Old Testament? Is it because the New Testament doesn't say what you want it to say?

***** Acts 15:28: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” You know that tithing of one's income was not on this short list of

“necessary things” that “seemed good to the Holy Spirit”.

***** Hebrews 8:10: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.” Why did the Lord never put tithing of income in our minds and hearts?

***** Why is the *one statute* evangelical leadership has dragged from the mosaic law to the new covenant just happen to be tithing? Could the motive have been love-of-money?

***** Why is there so much agreement among yourselves regarding tithing of income but division over many other doctrines? Coincidental?

***** Paul said to Peter, “You being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles, and not as the Jews.” Can we safely conclude from these words of reprimand that Peter, who “live in the manner of Gentiles”, did not tithe?

***** A yes or no question: Can we depend on “All Scripture” that is “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” to guide us how much to give and where to direct our giving?

***** Paul to the Galatians: “I testify to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.” Is it equally true that “every man who . is a debtor to keep the whole law”?

It must be said that there is no harmony between the mosaic tithe God assigned to the Israelites and the evangelical tithe you assign to your congregations. None. The mosaic tithe did not include the tithing of income. (Jesus the carpenter and Peter the fisherman *could not* tithe their income to the Levite priesthood.) Also, the mosaic tithe was directed to the Israelites only, and was limited to produce from agriculture.

It seems most of you no longer point to Malachi to enforce the tithing of one's income; finally you have come to realize that refusing to bow to the awful evangelical tithe is not robbing God and will not bring a curse. Billions of dollars had been collected by intimidating congregations with a rebuke given by God to old covenant jews: “You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me.” Lately, it seems, your favorite justification for burdening your people with the evangelical tithe is taken from the book of Hebrews....

The writer of Hebrews attempts to magnify our High Priest, the Lord Jesus. Jesus was not like all other priests who were descendants of Levi. Jesus was a priest, the only priest, of “the order of Melchizedek”. To tell of the greatness of our High Priest Jesus, the writer of Hebrews tell of the greatness of Melchizedek. (“Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God.”) To strengthen our comprehension of Melchizedek's eminence the writer informs us....

Melchizedek was so great (and thus Jesus was so great) that Abraham gave to him a tenth of the captured plunder from a defeated foe. It's a beautiful story about the magnificence of our High Priest Jesus, not a teaching on tithing! Repeat: Hebrews chapter 7 is NOT a teaching on tithing!

You do not speak of this beautiful story to exalt our High Priest, but rather to squeeze from your people a large portion of their livelihood. Your twisted logic to your congregation is this: "Since Abraham on *one occasion* gave ten percent of his *plunder* to Melchizedek, you therefore are obligated to *regularly* give ten percent of your *income* to your (Bible-plus) home church." How could any rational person not immediately detect the shallowness and deception and utter criminality of this scam?

Throughout this book I remind the vast array of evangelical pastors (etcetera) that you all are, at this very moment, walking toward the judgment seat of Christ. Soon you will be there.... the two of you face to face you and Judge Jesus. Perhaps you should start preparing your defense for all the illicit collections that have zero Bible precedent. An imaginary story....

Years ago a brother-in-Christ received a very large sum of money from a deceased uncle. Immediately he quit his job, moved his family to a more respectable neighborhood and treated himself to all the delights the wealthy enjoy. All was bliss until he was informed his uncle was a pimp, a narcotic smuggler and a swindler of aged pensioners. Suddenly this brother is confronted with the reality that the wealth he inherited was dirty money. If he had been self-afflicted with "unbelief and hardness of heart" the bad report wouldn't bother him. But if his heart was tender and upright everything he had purchased with that dirty money would now feel so. *contaminated*.

Do you think the Lord Jesus ("the Holy One of God") considers all things purchased by the tithes you collect every sunday – not millions but billions of dollars – as equally *contaminated*?

****

My second book is a rather small volume, *Financing the Great Commission*. At the time of writing we attended *Kelowna Christian Center.* In the book I challenged (what I now call) the awful evangelical tithe. The tithing of income was heavily promoted at KCC by the senior pastor who had ambitious plans for his church. Somehow a copy of my book got into the Bible college that occupied space within KCC. My book caused serious turbulence....

Soon the assistant pastor from KCC was warning the aged couple – who were helping me put together my book – of the errancy and peril of my writing. Fortunately their scholarly son had read *Financing the Great Commission* and scoffed at his effort to castigate it. A few days later the assistant pastor was exiting a grocery store as I was entering. Seeing me, he was livid, and excitedly defended his calling into the ministry.

Financing the Great Commission is a biblically sound exegeses regarding the christian's responsibility to prioritize the financing of Christ's Great Commission. (The legitimacy of the book can be sustained or refuted by anyone reading the book posted on my website, www.larryjones.ca) I was particularly naive and couldn't understand the backlash from respected church leadership that offered no correction or opinion (and certainly no compliment). I became a marked man.

It was the love-of-money and the threat of weakening the flow of money that blinded these brothers to the truths my writings contained. I have since learned that truth, more than error, generates outrage.... "commandments of men" more than "commandments of God" determine the mood and direction of every evangelical assembly. those challenging the 'wisdom' of salaried pastors immediately garner suspicion anyone daring to put their insights in print will immediately be confronted with serious indignation. (Jesus: "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.")

Chapter sixteen

A.W. Tozer did not want followers. He wanted his audience to follow Jesus. (Jesus: "Come, follow Me.") He pointed to Christ, not christians.... not methods.... not religion.... not Christ-plus not church.... not ministry. No, no, no. Tozer pointed to a Person. a very special Person the very Son of God.

Man – The Dwelling Place of God, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 6: Christianity today is man-centered, not God-centered. God is made to wait patiently, even respectfully, on the whims of men.

Chapter 8: To love God with all our heart we must first of all will to do so.

Chapter 9: The complacency of Christians is the scandal of Christianity.

Chapter 9: They read the lives of the great saints whose fervent desire after God carried them far up the mountain toward spiritual perfection; and for a brief moment they may yearn to be like these fiery souls whose light and fragrance still linger in the world where they once lived and labored. But the longing soon passes. The world is too much with them and the claims of their earthly lives are too insistent; so they settle back to live their ordinary lives, and accept the customary as normal. After a while they manage to achieve some kind of inner content and

that is the last we hear of them.

Chapter 9: Set your face like a flint and begin to put your life in order. Every man is as holy as he really wants to be. But the want must be all-compelling.

Chapter 9: Get Christ in the focus of your heart and keep Him there continually. Only in Christ will you find complete fulfillment.

Chapter 9: There is every reason why we should all go forward in our Christian lives and no reason why we should not. Let us go on.

Chapter 14: God being who He is must always be sought for Himself, never as a means toward something else.

Chapter 14: God is never found accidentally. “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13).

Man- The dwelling Place of God is Public Domain

Chapter seventeen

The collection every sunday morning gathers more than the people's money, much more. I will explain....

Jesus: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The Amplified says it this way: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

One's income is one's treasure, not fully but certainly significantly. It costs much of our lives to earn that precious paycheck or profit. It is indeed a treasure, for most of us more than it should be. Jesus taught us our hearts follow after that treasure; where it goes we go.

Christians depositing ten percent (or whatever) of their income sunday mornings are depositing a piece of their heart. Since it is you who receives their money, it is you and the religion you represent that occupies a large portion of their heart. Every sunday there is a small loyalty shift from Lord Jesus to you. Small times 52 equals significant. Significant times, say, 5 years equals substantial.

Capturing their hearts is capturing their loyalty. That's how you got your power. First their money, then their loyalty, then their obedience to your “commandments of men”. You have

become their little Moses. They are not handcuffed; they are spirit-cuffed.

They do not serve Jesus Christ. Jesus has long ago become a fanciful Lord only. He has been dethroned. Seated in His rightful place is *you!*

You call the shots. You make the decisions. Your acquired authority does not diminish when your people drive out of the parking lot but accompanies them at home, at the workplace, while on vacation.

Your power cannot be exaggerated. Your people fear you. Without your approval and permission they won't do anything that has resemblance to spiritual ministry. They don't preach, they rarely finance Christ's Great Commission, their social media postings are irrelevant.

You have created a bunch, you control the bunch and you have enormous leverage over the bunch. (If the word *bunch* sounds unflattering it is because it is so intended.) No one dares challenge your (supposed) authority because that would threaten their hard-earned social acceptance. Because you are (obviously) God-appointed, obeying you is obeying God.

The following scenario has taken place thousands of times in your evangelical assemblies.....

A new convert, upon invitation, visits your church for the first time. You have trained your people to shower newcomers with warmth and enthusiasm, and the newbie is delighted. What does he do? He looks around, trying to discern how to fit in. Being the novice, he assumes everyone knows more than he does and is so much closer to God. But he assumes incorrectly....

Have you ever, when a little kid, put a flashlight in your mouth in a dark room to see your skin glows? Spiritually speaking, christians glow, some brightly and some dimly. (Jesus: “You are the light of the world.”) Christians are the moon reflecting the light of the sun, Jesus. (Jesus: “I am the light of the world.”) It is the wealth of our relationship with Jesus that determines our brightness. If the new convert could somehow see the glow of everyone in the church would he be impressed or depressed?

He wouldn't understand why the light of most is so faint. Only a few, very few, shine brightly. And what about you, preaching at the pulpit? He would be shocked that you, the one every calls *Pastor*, emanate a light dimmer than most. He wouldn't realize that your commitment to “commandments of men” has caused your light to be seriously weakened. And there are a few other surprises....

Some in the congregation have no light whatsoever, even though they sing reverential songs and shout an occasional *Amen!* These are the unsaved, common to every evangelical assembly, that everyone assumes are saved. But the biggest surprise is his own light his light is the brightest!!

A typical new convert, he can't stop talking about Jesus. *Jesus touched me! Jesus saved me! And Jesus loves you and everybody! Hey, I want* you to read this tract about Jesus! He assumes people attending church have a similar enthusiasm for Christ. Surely they will go forth from sunday service telling others about the heaven that awaits them and the awful hell from which Jesus saved them.

And he would be startled to discover that you want his money, not just an occasional donation but a regular and substantial cut of any wage he earns or profit he makes. Yes, you certainly want to be his guide and teacher and mentor. but you also want his money. Church affairs, especially your (Bible-plus) salary, are enormous. And then there's the vision for your church that you have convinced the congregation is God- given. Also, you know that a pastor's salary is usually proportional to money collected, so you exploit every possible potential; new converts are no exception.

“Now it's time to collect tithes and offerings” you dutifully announce. “Ushers, please pass out the envelopes.” *Tithes and offerings? What's that?* In time he would be educated in the evangelical way. He would learn his financial responsibility, and reminded of it quite often. He senses the only way to maintain his welcome and approval is to do what the bunch does, say what they say, and don't do what they don't do.

Okay, okay! If God wants my ten percent He can have it. “Remember”, you add insult to injury, “God loves a cheerful giver.”

It's hard to stand alone, to foster convictions that don't have the endorsement of most. The influence the majority has over the individual is potent, both in secularism and christianity. To get along you must go along. Unity is good, dissension is bad. Agree, submit, be cheerful – this is the ways and means of every religion.

As the sundays pass, your new convert doesn't notice his light dimming, his enthusiasm lessening, his conversations less Christ-centered. And he doesn't notice his loyalty being redirected from Jesus to you and the religion you fondly embrace. In just a few months he stopped following Jesus and became a follower of christians. That's how you got your power. That's how christians became evangelicals.

****

A while back I had a small brochure delivered throughout Kelowna via the *Kelowna Daily Courier*, our city newspaper. The title: *DOES JESUS WANT US TO TITHE? A Challenge to Evangelical Christians.* (It's almost impossible to communicate with christians in one's city. Pastors are never going to give anyone access to their beloved and prized pulpits except, very occasionally, to one of their own. So the secular media is the only means of access.)

First, I compared the mosaic tithe (imposed upon the Israelites) to the evangelical tithe

(imposed by evangelicals onto evangelicals):

mosaic tithe

directed to Israelites only
established by God
Israelites never tithed income
only farm produce was tithed
money was not acceptable
instantly enforced by God
used to support priesthood
never used to build
well-documented in Bible

evangelical tithe

directed to evangelicals
established by evangelicals
only incomes are tithed
only incomes are tithed
only money is acceptable
evolved over time
used to cover pastor's salary
used to build and maintain
no Bible support whatsoever

Did Jesus endorse the evangelical tithe?

Jesus must loathe the evangelical tithe. Evangelicals have done what all religion do and what God strictly forbids: add to (i.e. alter, modify) God's Word.

Does Jesus want us to give generously?

Jesus is generous and He wants us, as His ambassadors, to mirror Him. We cannot be too liberal. But generosity must be guided by wisdom and obedience. Billions are invested weekly, by evangelicals, in religious works that actually stifle the purposes of Christ Jesus expects us to give in a manner conducive with NT teaching. This would include, especially, financing His Great Commission.

But who covers the pastor's salary?

No NT person was salaried. Although Jesus did say, “the laborer is worthy of His wages”, He was referring to “eating and drinking such things as they give” – contributions. All preachers, including Lord Jesus, depended on contributions.

Don't we need to work together?

A church signboard read: "We can do more together." It should have read: "We can waste more together." Every religion and government testifies to this ugly reality. One man submitting to the governance of the Spirit will accomplish much more than ten submitted to the governance of man.

How do we give to Jesus?

We give to Jesus by submitting to the Holy Spirit whom He has sent to us. Jesus promised, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." *All* truth includes guidance in giving. The Spirit governs only those asking to be governed.

What will the "JS of Christ" be like?

Looking around (it's okay to look around), we can see most are not prepared to meet their Judge. The Bible teaches the disobedient and careless will "suffer loss", loss of eternal rewards. For most, it seems, christianity is merely a collection of real estate and things, "treasures on earth", a compilation of "wood, hay, straw".

Financially, how can I prepare for the JS?

Start over Repent of surrendering your donations to man. Consider opening a special bank account. Call it a JESUS ACCOUNT Be alert that His primary concern is the proliferation of His gospel. A JESUS ACCOUNT, responsibly managed, will assure "treasures in heaven".

Chapter eighteen

A.W. Tozer lived a christianity more successful than most. Though having succumbed to heart failure sixty years ago, his easily accessible writings still edify millions. What is the secret to his "much fruit" garnered from several generations and nations? Answer: Relationship, relationship, relationship. (Jesus: "He who abides in Me.... bears *much* fruit.")

Man – The Dwelling Place of God, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 23: If the spiritual view of the world is the correct one, as Christianity boldly asserts that it is, then for every one of us heaven is more important than earth and eternity more important than time. If Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be; if He is what the glorious company of the

apostles and the noble army of martyrs declared that He is; if the faith which the holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge is the true faith of God, then no man has any right to dedicate his life to anything that can burn or rust or rot or die. No man has any right to give himself completely to anyone but Christ nor to anything but prayer.

Chapter 23: The man who believes he was created to enjoy the fleshly pleasures will devote himself to pleasure seeking; and if by a combination of favorable circumstances he manages to get a lot of fun out of his life, his pleasures will turn to ashes in his mouth at the last. He will find out too late that God made him too noble to be satisfied with those tawdry pleasures he had devoted his life to here under the sun.

Chapter 24: After more than thirty years of observing the religious scene I have been forced to conclude that saintliness and church leadership are not often synonymous.

Chapter 24: Were the church a pure and Spirit-filled body, wholly led and directed by spiritual considerations, certainly the purest and the saintliest men and women would be the ones most appreciated and most honored; but the opposite is true.

Chapter 24: The noisy, the self-assertive, the entertaining are sought after and rewarded in every way, with gifts, crowds, offerings and publicity. The Christ-like, the self-forgetting, the other-worldly are jostled aside.

Chapter 24: The whole short-sighted philosophy that ignores eternal qualities and majors on trivialities is a form of unbelief. These Christians who embody such a philosophy are clamoring after present reward; they are too impatient to wait the Lord's time.

Chapter nineteen

More money matters....

Your people live far below their potential. It simply is not true that, as a church signboard declared, “We can do more together”. An individual who submits to the “Spirit of truth” will accomplish much more than if he didn't.

It's impossible to submit to both the Holy Spirit and religion. One cannot follow two. That's why he needs to be set free from you and the religion you endorse. He must learn to determine for himself how and where to direct his money. So. on behalf of all the multitudes of people you influence, I ask that you hear me....

Today the gospel message of Jesus Christ is going forth, via Facebook, from my residence in Kelowna, BC, Canada to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia. Some things just need repeating: *Today* the gospel message is going forth from my computer in the Bengali language to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia! By the end of the day I will have reached 13,000 people. That's more than 300,000 per month. No, certainly not all will have read my gospel message, but there are positive indicators that many have.

The cost to me is less than $9 per day. That's less than $300 per month. Many of your people invest more than $300 monthly into your church. I am not suggesting that the Holy Spirit will lead every christian submitted to His governance in the same way He has guided me. But He will, in time, lead everyone to be a soul winner. (Jesus: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.") I submit to you – all evangelical salaried leaders – my gospel message (that many people are reading in their own language at this very moment)....

W H E R E W I L L Y O U L I V E ?

This message is directed to those who do not know where they will live after they die. Perhaps you will respond, "I won't live anywhere after I die! How can I? I will be dead!" But the Bible teaches you will never die. Never, never, never. Your body will die but you will live.... somewhere.

When you were conceived in your mother's womb you were destined to live forever. Your birth date is not the day you came out of the womb; your birth date is the day you were conceived. Your real birthday is actually about nine months prior to the date on your birth certificate.

Again, your life began at conception and, again, you were destined to live forever. Those who died in their mother's womb because of miscarriage or abortion are quite alive today yes, as alive as you are.

Every person killed by accident, disease, murder or suicide is a living person. Every soldier killed in action in each and every one of history's wars resides somewhere.

You have never seen yourself. The mirror only shows the earth-suit that contains you. The invisible you lives inside that earth-suit, a body designed by God enabling you to survive and thrive on this planet. The Bible teaches us that God created you through Jesus Christ, His Son.

The Bible says, "All things were made through Him , and without Him nothing was made that was made." Jesus made everything and everybody. Jesus made you. You are Christ's creation.

Can you comprehend that, according to the Bible, you were designed by God and created by His son Jesus to live on planet earth for a short time? And can you comprehend that when life on earth comes to an end you will live somewhere else? The most important question you can ask yourself is "WHERE will I live?" If you bear with me for just a little while you will fully understand that you can determine WHERE you will live your eternity.

The Bible teaches us there are two locations where every person will live forever and ever and ever. Yes, two locations. Not three or four or five or ten. Two. The Bible teaches you will spend the remainder of your eternity in one of these two locations. These two locations are opposite to each other in every way. Will you give this matter serious consideration? (Jesus: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”)

The Bible teaches that you are both loved and hated. You have a Friend and you have an enemy. Yes, you are thoroughly loved and yes, you are thoroughly hated. “Hated? me?” Yes you. The devil (a fallen archangel who rebelled against God) hates Jesus and everyone Jesus loves. Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” The devil's hatred for humanity is evidenced for all having eyes and ears. He loves perversion and hates righteousness. He loves destruction and hates harmony. He loves sorrow and hates laughter. You must fully realize that satan has a vast army of underlings – fallen, creepy angels – some of who have been assigned to destroy you and your loved ones. The Bible says we “wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness.” If that doesn't scare you it should. Keep all this in mind as I reveal the two mentioned locations.....

There is a HEAVEN to gain and there is a HELL to shun. Heaven is where Jesus lives. Heaven is where His Father lives. Heaven is where the angels live. Heaven is where millions, perhaps billions, of people (saints) live. If you reach heaven you will never want to leave. You will never be sick, bored, disappointed, fearful, threatened, intimidated, assaulted or weary. You will be very, very, very happy.

All those who do not attain heaven will go to hell. If heaven is not your eternal home hell will be. (Love tells the truth.) The Bible calls hell the “lake of fire” and “the second death”. The instant you arrive you will be overwhelmed with remorse. deep, painful, everlasting remorse. You will never be hopeful, peaceful, relaxed, appreciated, befriended, healthy, painless or rested. You will be very, very, very UN-happy.

Hopefully you are now convinced that, according to the Bible,... You will live eternally.

You will reside in one of two locations. You are both loved and hated.

The location where you will live, heaven or hell, is up to you. You decide. Both Lord Jesus and satan can and do influence you, but only you decide who to follow, who to heed, who to obey.

Now let's talk about Jesus....

The Bible tells us that Jesus entered humanity through the body and the obedience of a virgin. Jesus, “the only begotten Son of God”, became a man because only the death of a man, a sinless man, could be just and adequate payment for man's sins. Only such a sacrifice could satisfy God's righteousness which decrees that sin must be nullified by the death of a sinless

man. Jesus, who “was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin”, became that sacrificial offering. Jesus explained it this way....

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son , that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” That is the gospel, the good news (news that is very, very, very good). It is important to know that Jesus died for you PERSONALLY. The apostle Paul wrote, “I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved ME and gave Himself for ME.” Like Paul you can declare, “the Son of God. loved ME and gave Himself for ME.” Jesus continued to say....

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” (Jesus came to rescue you, not to condemn you.) “He who believes in Him is not condemned.” (You will not be condemned to hell if you entrust yourself to Jesus.) “But he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (If you refuse to believe in, trust in, rely on Jesus you will be condemned.) “And this is the condemnation” (judgement is based on this fact), “the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (If your love for sin is greater than your love for truth and goodness you will reject the light and suffer the consequences.)

Now let's talk about the Holy Spirit....

Jesus called Him “the Spirit of truth”. His importance cannot be overstated: men were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the Bible. the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead that resurrection morning.... nobody comes to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ without His intervention.

Before returning to His Father in heaven, Jesus said of His replacement, the Holy Spirit, “When He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness.” These words reveal that the Holy Spirit was and is convicting you of your trespasses against a holy God. He is constantly nudging you to Christ and Christ's great salvation. So far you have stubbornly resisted that prodding. (Love tells the truth.)

So let's recapitulate what the Bible teaches.... You will live eternally.

You will reside in one of two locations.

You are both loved and hated.

There is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun.

Both the Holy Spirit and the devil are influencing you. You alone decide your eternal location.

Sadly, most people will choose hell by not choosing heaven. Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me.” Refusing Christ is refusing heaven; refusing heaven is choosing hell. Again, most people have chosen, choose and will continue to choose hell.

Both Jesus (through the Holy Spirit) and the devil (through his vast army of deviants) contend for every person's eternity. The devil wins many; Jesus wins comparatively few. Does this surprise you? Why, you may ask, does the devil win so many? The answer is simple: the devil fights dirty and Jesus doesn't. Your enemy lies, cheats, coerces, confuses, manipulates, threatens and entices.

The Bible teaches that you are now travelling on one of two roads, one leading to happiness and the other leading to remorse. Because you have refused the beseeching (wooing, beckoning) of the Holy Spirit, you are at this very moment on the road to hell. Should you die suddenly you will go straight to that awful place Jesus warned us about.

The Bible teaches the Holy Spirit “bears witness” to truth. (“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit.”) While the lies of the devil – passed on to you through the media, books and magazines, acquaintances and teachers – have power, truth has more power. The Holy Spirit, right now, “bears witness” that the words you are reading are true words, Bible words. But nonetheless....

Nonetheless most reading these Bible words will not embrace them. Tomorrow perhaps. Of course, 'tomorrow perhaps' probably means never. (Love tells the truth.) Why would one embrace Jesus Christ tomorrow if he/she rejected Him in the past and rejects Him today? And who can guarantee a tomorrow?

And now let's talk about you....

Will you be your best friend or worst enemy? Will you enrich yourself immeasurably or harm yourself immeasurably? Jesus Christ extends to you an invitation to a life superior (very, very, very superior) to the one you are now living; will your response be YES, JESUS or NO, JESUS? (He considers a non-reply a refusal.) Remember, neither Jesus nor the devil designate your eternal home; you do.

Should you be one of the few reading these Bible words who will make a decision for Christ as your Lord and Saviour (and Teacher and Shepherd and King) I strongly suggest you make my website - www.larryjones.ca - a component (factor, inclusion) of your new life in Christ. Because....

Because I have had fifty plus years to learn from my mistakes. And because unlike almost every christian preacher/teacher I am not attached to a religion. (I am not a religionist.) And because I have not been indoctrinated by a seminary or Bible college. And because Jesus Christ is my “first love”. (I love Jesus more than money, religion, family, ministry and fellow christians.) And because I strongly endeavour to be led by “the Spirit of truth” in all of my writings (including this posting). And because I want to influence you to always be faithful to Christ and never succumb to religionists (those who have given themselves over to “commandments of men”). And because there will be times when my library of books, articles

and videos will be needed encouragement. And because I will never hint for financial support (and I have nothing to sell). So.... I suggest you keep my website close-at-hand by storing it in your memory. To help you memorize, repeat it out loud a few times, larryjones.ca.... larryjones.ca..... larryjones.ca Will you do that?

And now let's talk about SINCERITY....

Jesus hates insincerity and Jesus hates lukewarm. (Jesus: "I wish you were cold or hot.") Jesus is passionate about you and would be slighted if you are apathetic to Him. He gave you His all; hopefully you will give Him your all. Your commitment to Christ must be SINCERE. If you decide to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior do so earnestly. Okay?

The instant you make a SINCERE decision for Christ there will be several occurrences – a long list of incredible, amazing happenings: you will INSTANTLY pass from death to life (Jesus: "I have come that they may have life").... your name will be recorded into the "Book of Life".... you will be delivered from "the god of this age" (satan) you will be transferred from the road to hell to the road to heaven. And more....

You will INSTANTLY become an adopted son/daughter of the living God ("we should be called the children of God"). you will actually become a new creation ("old things have passed away; behold all things have become new") you will be an heir of God ("heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ") you will become justified, as if you have never sinned ("You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus"). you will actually become "the righteousness of God" in Christ Jesus". Jesus will become your shepherd ("The Lord is my Shepherd"), your teacher ("One is your Teacher, the Christ"), your protector ("I will never leave you nor forsake you") and the Holy Spirit will take up residence within your earth-suit ("your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit").

But there is a price attached to this great salvation God has provided for you. (Love tells the truth.) Christ is free and Christ costs. "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." Friends may not admire or appreciate the new you. Brace yourself for exclusion, criticism, even ridicule. (Jesus: "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.")

So now you have a decision to make: YES, JESUS or NO, JESUS.

(I strongly suggest you read this message again. And again and again. Print it out and keep it nearby. Okay?)

To date I have posted this message in 7 languages, reaching about 100 countries. The next languages could be urdu, japanese, and german. In the past 4 months I have reached over 2 million people with the gospel of Jesus Christ, some days investing $9 and other days $14. (Again, I am not saying 2 million read it, but simply that it appeared on their computer, cell phones, etc. Also, a percentage of people reached are repeats.) It is my intention to post this message, through Facebook or other social medium platforms, every day for the rest of my life.

Why not?

When I get to heaven I will meet many thousands (millions?) of people who will recognize me as one who helped influence them to escape the eternal anguish of hell. We will rejoice together – laugh and sing and jump up and down and enthusiastically praise Jesus.

My computer skills are more limited than most; what I do most in your assemblies can do, even those who may have to seek professional help to get started, as I did. Also, I want you to know I am not an evangelist (that is, an Ephesian 4:11 evangelist – one given a special gifting to evangelize). And yet Jesus calls me to evangelize, just as He calls all His redeemed ones to evangelize.

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At the end of the last chapter I wrote about the brochure I had delivered through Kelowna's newspaper, *Does Jesus Want Us To Tithe?* In that brochure I wrote about our dear brother-in-Christ, William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army and titled that part of the brochure....

FINANCING THE GREAT COMMISSION

William Booth (1829-1912), founder of the Salvation Army, had a vision. He writes, "I saw a dark and stormy ocean." There were "multitudes of human beings shrieking and cursing and struggling and drowning" in the terrifying water. And he saw "a mighty rock" rising out of the turbulent seas. Around the base of this rock island was "a vast platform" where christians were gathered.

Booth was puzzled and distressed because even though some were earnestly involved in rescuing the terrified people, most christians "did not seem to have any care, that is, any agonizing care about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their eyes." They were so involved with their "professions and money saving and pleasures and families and community and gatherings and religions" they had almost no concern.

Their prayers were directed, not for the miserable drowning people within view and hearing, but toward themselves.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this vision is a sad synopsis of the spiritual condition of the world we live in! WE are the christians socializing and playing church on that "vast platform" overlooking lost humanity! This is what religion has made of us! This is evangelicalism! This is your local church! The bulk of evangelicals' giving is spent on buildings and salaries, Christ's GREAT COMMISSION getting leftover change. This is immoral!

Paul wrote (Rom.1:14): "I have a great sense of obligation to people." When we were first "born of the Spirit" a similar "sense of obligation" pressed upon our hearts. Do you remember? But somehow this concern and duty switched from the unsaved to the saved, from them to us.

Buildings and salaries trumped the gospel. And our hearts became crusty.

But it doesn't have to be that way for you! You can do better, much better! You don't have to follow the crowd. Love people but don't follow people. Follow Christ, not Christians. Perhaps you have swallowed the lie that you are incapable of dispersing your own givings. “You need us!” it is implied. But in truth Jesus is ALL you need. Since you are accountable to Jesus.... since you will be judged by Jesus doesn't it make good sense to manage YOUR resources YOUR way YOURself?

You can be one of the relative few on that “vast platform” rescuing those drowning in that “dark and stormy ocean.” Seriously consider a JESUS BANK ACCOUNT whereby you regularly make deposits. How regular? How much? That's between you and Jesus. To whom do you write checks, etcetera? That's between you and Jesus. This account will revolutionize your christianity.

Consider: *Had you opened a JESUS ACCOUNT five or ten years ago, regularly FINANCING THE GREAT COMMISSION, multitudes would have had their names added to the “book of life”, saved from that place we get squeamish talking about.*

Consider: *Though you can't get your money back, you can start over. Wisely managing a JESUS ACCOUNT, your future will be bountiful.... hundreds, perhaps thousands in heaven rejoicing with you for the part you played in their salvation.*

Chapter twenty

A.W. Tozer admired Paul greatly. Actually, the two had much in common. Both hungered for more of Jesus (“That I may know Him”).... both bore much fruit (“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit”).... both were very bold.... both are now in heaven both await “the judgment seat of Christ”.

Man – The Dwelling Place of God, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 25: I don't know about you, but the only way I can keep right with God is to keep contrite, to keep a sense of contrition upon my spirit.

Chapter 26: Let a man question the inspiration of the Scriptures and a curious, even monstrous, inversion takes place: thereafter he judges the Word instead of letting the Word judge him; he

determines what the Word should teach instead of permitting it to determine what he should believe; he edits, amends, strikes out, adds at his pleasure; but always he sits above the Word and makes it amenable to him instead of kneeling before God and becoming amenable to the Word.

Chapter 27: When pleasing men means displeasing God it is an unqualified evil and should have no place in the Christian's heart. To be right with God has often meant to be in trouble with men. This is such a common truth that one hesitates to mention it, yet it appears to have been overlooked by the majority of Christians today.

Chapter 27: All great Christian leaders have been dogmatic. To such men two plus two made four. Anyone who insisted upon denying it or suspending judgement upon it was summarily dismissed as frivolous. They were only interested in a meeting of minds if the minds agreed to meet on holy ground.

Chapter 29: Christless Christianity sounds contradictory but it exists as a real phenomenon in our day. Much that is being done in Christ's name is false to Christ in that it is conceived by the flesh, incorporates fleshly methods, and seeks fleshly ends. Christ mentioned from time to time in the same way and for the same reason that a self-seeking politician mentions Lincoln and the flag, to provide a sacred front for carnal activities and to deceive the simplehearted listeners. This giveaway is that Christ is not central: He is not all and in all.

Chapter twenty-one

In the last chapter I wrote about my daily postings in Facebook whereby I reach thousands daily with the gospel message. I concluded, “What I do, most in your assemblies can do.” In fact, that is not true. I should have written....

“What I do, most in your (thousands and thousands of) assemblies can do IF they were set free from your religion and IF they returned to “first love” and IF they were so called by the Holy Spirit.”

Evangelicals lost their ability to bear “much fruit” the moment they became evangelicals. Yes, they can and do bear *little* fruit but far less than their potential. To bear much fruit they must repent of evangelicalism (“commandments of men”) and every other idol, and again place their christianity under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

My gospel message (last chapter) was birthed through relationship. Jesus: “He who abides in Me bears much fruit.” Evangelizing is “much fruit”. Only those abiding *primarily* in Jesus have the heart and ability to evangelize. Those abiding in Jesus secondarily bear little fruit. (Jesus: “Without Me you can do nothing.”)

I want you to understand my understanding. Millions of christians under your oversight have the ability to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ without leaving their home! Many (most?) have more computer savvy that me and most have more money, but they can't do what I do! They can't evangelize! They can't bear much fruit! Why? Because Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing.” (Without being firmly fastened to Jesus, christians cannot bear “much fruit”.)

The evangelical valiantly tries to bear much fruit but his efforts always lead to frustrating failure. And he cannot identify the problem. He would be insulted by the suggestion that his relationship with the One he calls “Lord, Lord” is feeble. Let's look at it....

Jesus: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.” Do you agree that love is abiding? And do you agree loving Jesus is abiding in Jesus? If so, you must concede that the one who loves Jesus is “he who has My commandments and keeps them”. And will you also concede that the depth of our love for *anyone* can be measured by our obedience to that person (persons)?

Jesus: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” The evangelical's ministry will not bear “much fruit” unless his prayers are answered, and his prayers will not be answered if it is not Christ's words that abide in him. (“And My words abide in you.”)

John: “He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked.” Jesus walked in obedience to His Father's words. He did what the Father asked Him to do and spoke the words of His Father. Just as obedience explains His success, disobedience explains the evangelical's failure.

The evangelical way is little, not much, fruit. I will give two scenarios of evangelicalism at work: first a local endeavor that I think rightly depicts the evangelical way in my city of Kelowna, and second, a very large scenario that involves many thousands of salaried evangelicals throughout North America and beyond.

First, the small picture....

There was a sign outside a nearby pentecostal church that read something like this: “Prayer for Healing, Thursdays 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.” A small group of evangelicals from various assemblies gathered every thursday evening to pray for those in need of healing. Since most (everybody?) have several physical disorders, minor or major, one would think they would be swamped. Were these evangelicals successful? Can evangelicals combine their faith to bear

much fruit? Is it true that “we can do more together”?

Soon the weekly gatherings reduced to biweekly. The sign became weathered. Few (very few?) were getting healed so they finally shut it down, but didn't remove the sad sign. Though the sign said “Prayer for healing, Thursdays 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm”, there were no prayers for the sick on thursdays or any other day. Finally someone removed the sad, weathered sign.

Did these evangelicals bear fruit? Undoubtedly. Did they bear much or little fruit? They bore little, not much. (Jesus: “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear *much* fruit.”)

Second, a big picture....

As you know there is at this time an onslaught of perversion sweeping Canada, the United States and other countries, debauchery far surpassing anything in recent world history. This is happening, mostly, on your watch. Yes, on your watch....

You are the leaders (man-appointed, not Christ-appointed) of Christ's church-on-earth. And the church you oversee is responsible for the condition of the secular world. (For the devil to have his way in the world he must first get by Christ's church.)

But is the church *really* responsible for the state of the world? It is hard to come to any other conclusion than yes, yes, yes! If evangelicals had been investing in Christ's Great Commission as earnestly as in their religion most of the world would be christian instead of pagan. If evangelicals had been taught to embrace John 15:5 they would be “fishers of men”. If evangelicals lived in a war zone instead of a playground the “god of this age” would not be able to plunder our land at will.

****

Many years ago I had a very absurd thought, a notion so impossible that I dared not share it with anyone: a newspaper-sized paper that emphasized Kelowna's need for Jesus Christ and His awesome salvation. In my untamed imagination this paper would use subjects of interest to point to Jesus and be delivered door-to-door.

It took a year or two for the absurd to evolve into reality. The first of ten issues of *The Main Issue* (Jesus being the main issue) I titled *Evolution vs Creation,* a controversy of interest to most. The second, *Jehovah's Witnesses: Christian Or Cult?* was also a relevant subject because JWs regularly go door-to-door with their false gospel. The third: *The Bible: Just Another Book?* The fourth: *Heaven and Hell.* Etcetera, etcetera.

Question: How could a young father of three teens – who had no experience producing or distributing such a paper, who didn't own and never used a computer, who had no money – successfully accomplish such an enormous feat? Answer: He couldn't. But.... to quote Jesus.... “With God all things are possible.” And....

And although I, at that time, regularly attended an evangelical church, I managed to stay detached from evangelicalism. And, unlike most, Jesus was my “first love”. And I never sought advice or permission from any one, but deposited myself onto the governance of the Holy Spirit.

In the ninth edition I wrote....

IS THERE SOMEONE OUT THERE??

The next issue of The Main Issue will be the tenth and final publication.... The Main Issue has always been about Jesus The purpose of this article is to find out if there is a group, a church or even an individual that feels led of the Lord to carry on the work of reaching the lost in Kelowna through the newspaper media. How good it would be if there was a persistent voice from the body of Christ – monthly or bi- monthly, year after year – expressing the gospel message.

It has been said that freedom of the press is limited to those who own a press Generally, I feel, the media leads people away from Christ, away from their salvation freely paid for. The power of the press should also be in the hands of the redeemed. There ought to be a voice, a persistent voice crying in the wilderness of humanistic, ungodly voices, pointing the way of salvation.

A paper the size of The Main Issue is affordable for even a small congregation. There is so much talent in most assemblies, talent that could be used to present Bible truths in a compelling manner. One can write, another is an artist, someone has computer skills, one has the finesse to do layout, another can oversee finances. One has an idea, another a testimony, another a prophetic word. A congregation has the the manpower to man phones, answer letters, do follow-up, make visits. And in an assembly there is much prayer power. Sitting in my small office, I wonder, “Is there someone out there?”

Of the 40 to 50 churches in Kelowna and area there was not one response to this suggestion to do as I did. Not one. Every third month or so, over a period of about four years, this non-salaried, non-credentialed, non-charismatic nobody reached our city with the gospel of Christ more effectively than all churches combined – through (and only through!!) the power of the Holy Spirit. Why was there (why is there) almost zero interest in reaching the lost?

I confess I was critical. I was critical because I did not understand what I understand today. None of these churches were *capable* of “laying up treasures in heaven”. They each could provide for themselves accommodations, finance a pastor, produce a worship team, maybe a yearly public pageantry, but little more. Scant treasure, yes; abundant treasure, no.

Chapter twenty-two

"A.W. Tozer did not have a seminary degree. He did not have a college degree. He did not even have a high school diploma. Like Peter and John, though, he had wisdom from above, and people noticed that *he had been with Jesus* (Acts 4:13)." (Quoted from Total Commitment to Christ.)

Man – The Dwelling Place of God, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 32: We are under constant temptation these days to substitute another Christ for the Christ of the New Testament. The whole drift of modern religion is toward such a substitution.

To avoid this we must hold steadfastly to the concept of Christ as set forth so clearly and plainly in the Scriptures of truth. Though an angel from heaven should preach anything less than the Christ of the apostles let him be forthrightly and fearlessly rejected.

Chapter 34: The mind should be an eye to see with rather than a bin to store facts in. The man who has been taught by the Holy Spirit will be a seer rather than a scholar.

Chapter 37: Little by little evangelical Christians these days are being brainwashed. One evidence is that increasing numbers of them are becoming ashamed to be found unequivocally on the side of truth. They say they believe but their beliefs have been so diluted as to be impossible of clear definition.

Chapter 38: This yen to confer has hit the church also, which is not strange since almost everything the church is doing these days has been suggested to her by the world. I observe with pained amusement how many water boys of the pulpit in their effort to be prophets are standing up straight and tall and speaking out boldly in favor of ideas that have been previously fed into their minds by the psychiatrists, the sociologists, the novelists, the scientists and the secular educators.

Chapter 38: The desire to be liked even if not respected is a great weakness in any man's character, and in that of a minister of Jesus Christ it is a weakness wholly inexcusable. The popular image of a man of God as a smiling, congenial, asexual religious mascot whose handshake is always soft and whose head is always bobbing in the perpetual Yes of universal acquiescence is not the image found in the Scriptures of truth.

Chapter twenty-three

In your preaching/teaching, why do you ignore “the judgment seat of Christ”? You know it's coming. You know it's more certain than christmas or easter or your next birthday. And yet you evade the subject. Why?

I think I know....

Foreboding: *to have a strong inner feeling or notion of (a future misfortune, evil, catastrophe, etc.); have a presentiment of. (Dictionary.com)*

The christian has a stronger sense of foreboding than non-christians. Jesus: “He will tell you things to come.” One might conclude “things to come” would certainly include the upcoming “judgment seat of Christ”. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” *and* all relevant truth. Thus the foreboding. And thus your silence.

In my opinion, the judgment seat of Christ is going to be a bust (embarrassment, major disappointment) for every evangelical, especially evangelicals who have assumed leadership over other evangelicals. Said another way....

In my opinion, the judgment seat of Christ is going to be a bust (embarrassment, major disappointment) for every religionist, especially religionists who have assumed leadership over other religionists. (Remember, I define a religionist as one who has given himself over to a religion. And I define religion as adherence to an assortment of “commandments of men”.)

Because your encounter with Judge Jesus is both certain and crucial, I present to you Bible truths regarding that encounter your respective Bible colleges evidently haven't taught you....

2 Corinthians 5:10: **We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

You *must* stand, individually, before Judge Jesus. Him and you. There may be an audience, perhaps a huge audience, but you will be alone with Jesus.

The Amplified says it this way, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be repaid for what has been done in the body, whether good or bad .”

ERV: “We must all stand before Christ to be judged. Everyone will get what they should. They will be paid for whatever they did – good or bad – when they lived in this earthly body.”

This is a good time to come to a conclusion as to what Jesus considers “good” and what He considers “bad”. Surely it is not difficult to classify what you do and teach as being either “commandments of men” or “commandments of God”.

Matthew 6:19: **Do not lay up or yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.**

When the Truth speaks (Jesus: "I am the truth") His saints ought to listen. Yes, ought to but, generally speaking, don't. Because christians experience healing and strength, we are quite capable of laying up for ourselves "treasures on earth" if we so choose. The number of shoes in the closet is one of many indicators of obedience or disobedience to Matthew 6:19.

Matthew 6:20: **Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**

I conclude our "treasures in heaven" will be revealed at the judgment seat. That's where "each one may receive the things done in the body." These "treasures" will be eternal ("where neither moth nor rust destroys"). Our heavenly treasure will be relative to our dedication/obedience to Jesus.

The more of Jesus here, relationally speaking, the more of Jesus there. Our reward will be more of Jesus. Our loss of reward will be less of Jesus. All in heaven will be happy, but some happier than others.

Will there be a hierarchy of saints in heaven or will we all be of equal ranking? Let's look at....

Luke 19:16,17: **Then came the first, saying, "Master, your mina has earned ten minas." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities".**

Are faithful servants here going to be given "ten cities" (or whatever) there? And then there is....

2 Timothy 4: 8: **There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

A crown denotes authority, doesn't it?

(Question: What is "that Day"? The words "the righteous *Judge*" suggests "that Day" references the judgment seat.)

Revelation 4:10: **The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.**

The twenty-four elders are saints privileged to abide in the awesome presence of Lord Jesus in the throne room; were these twenty-four elders those who most seriously abided with Christ when here on earth?

John 15:5: **Without Me you can do nothing.**

Without a strong attachment to Jesus we cannot expect to be joyful at the judgment seat.

1 Corinthians 11-13: **For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.**

“The Day” is that day we must give an account to Jesus. We all have accumulated “gold, silver, precious stones”. And we all have accumulated “wood, hay, straw”. All our works, which are being meticulously recorded, will be before each one of us. There will be a fire. (Will Jesus be carrying a torch?) Before our eyes the wood, hay and straw will be consumed, exposing the gold, silver and precious stones.

1 Corinthians 3:14: **If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.**

The religionist (one who has given himself over to a religion) will receive a reward, but that reward will be much less than that of the disciple (one who has given himself over to Jesus Christ).

1 Corinthians 3:15: **If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss.**

Everyone of us will suffer loss because everyone of us has laid up “treasures on earth”.

Mark 12:42: **Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites.**

You know the story of the widow who gave her last. I am sure that Jesus (Judge Jesus) not only notices how much we give but also how much we keep for ourselves.

Luke 6:38: **Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.**

We decide how much “it will be given unto” us. Give little, receive little. Give abundantly, receive abundantly.

Luke 18:28: **Then Peter said, “See, we have left all and followed you.”**

Jesus: “When the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.” Yes, we reap what we sow.

Hebrews 4:13: **All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

“Give account” indicates a conversation. The CEB says “the one to whom we have to give an answer”. And the ERV says, “to him we must explain the way we have lived”. Try to imagine what that conversation with Judge Jesus will be like.

James 3:1: **My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.**

The Amplified says it like this: "Not many should become teachers , my brothers and sisters, for you know that we will be judged by a higher standard "

Philippians 4:16,17: **For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.**

The Amplified expresses 4:17 this way: "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I do seek the profit which increases to your account ."

Our heavenly account is like our bank account; sometimes the balance is higher, sometimes lower. A deposit (obedience, generosity, kindness, etcetera) enriches our account; withdrawals (boasting, disobedience, selfishness, etcetera) reduce our balance. (Suggestion: Give strong

consideration that your constant salary is a constant and substantial withdrawal.)

Titus 1:11 (AMP): **They must be silenced, because they are upsetting whole families by teaching things they should not teach for the purpose of dishonest financial gain.**

In Paul's day many false teachers taught "things they should not teach". Today many false teachers teach "things they should not teach", often motivated by "dishonest financial gain". For example....

The awful evangelical tithe that almost every one of you imposes upon your people is nothing less criminal than theft. You embezzle the very people you claim to shepherd. Jesus: "And many such things you do."

Now back to foreboding....

Is the reason for your foreboding regarding the upcoming, momentous judgment seat of Christ, and your silence on the matter, simply because you are not prepared to meet your Judge? Suggestion: ask the One you call, "Lord, Lord" how to be better prepared. ("If any of you lacks wisdom , let him ask of God.")

****

My friend Richard, though certainly not catholic, often accompanied me while attending the *People of Faith* thursday evening gatherings.

Richard was outgoing and often engaged catholics in conversation. One evening I overheard him say, "David Wilkerson said that God will use the man who meets with Him every day." Although not speaking to me, I paid attention. Weeks passed, and I overheard Richard saying to another, "David Wilkerson said that God will use the man who meets with Him every day." *Hmmm. Is the Holy Spirit speaking to me?*

A few weeks later I again overheard my friend say a third time, “David Wilkerson said that God will use the man who meets with Him every day.” *Yes, the Lord really is speaking to me.*

David Wilkerson's meeting time with the Lord, if I remember correctly, began at midnight. God used him mightily, calling him to leave his family and congregation and drive to Brooklyn, New York to make inroads into teenage street gangs. His book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, gives an account of the amazing work of the Lord in those gangs and has sold over 15 million copies in 30 languages. David founded *Teen Challenge* (now *Adult and Teen Challenge*) which helps multitudes conquer drug addiction. There are about 1,500 such centers throughout the world. David's “much fruit” borne over several decades resulted from a healthy relationship with Lord Jesus. which he credits, in large part, to his daily one-on-One meeting times. So....

So I made a firm decision to meet with Jesus first thing every morning for two hours. And God has used this non-credentialed nobody in most unusual ways. I have since increased my two hours to three (in response to a definite leading of the Lord) and with that increase comes more plentiful fruit.

Chapter twenty-four

A.W. Tozer's written words, if regularly supped, will draw you closer to our Lord Jesus. You will be stronger, healthier and more fruitful than the one who feeds on words that exalt christians rather than Christ and/or those whose commitment to Lord Jesus is less entire than this brother. Seriously.

The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer

Preface: This book is a modest attempt to aid God's hungry children so to find Him. Nothing here is new except in the sense that it is a discovery which my own heart has made of spiritual realities most delightful and wonderful to me. Others before me have gone much farther into these holy mysteries than I have done, but if my fire is not large it is yet real, and there may be those who can light their candle at its flame.

Chapter 1: Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking.

Chapter 1: David's life was a torrent of spiritual desire, and his psalms ring with the cry of the seeker and the glad shout of the finder. Paul confessed the mainspring of his life to be his burning desire after Christ. “That I may know Him,” was the goal of his heart, and to this he sacrificed everything.

Chapter 1: I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted.

Chapter 3: The world is perishing for the lack of the knowledge of God and the church is famishing for want of His Presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and that God is in us. This would lift us out of our pitiful narrowness and cause our hearts to be enlarged. This would burn away the impurities from our lives as the bugs and fungi were burned away by the fire that dwelt in the bush.

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Chapter twenty-five

Let....My....People Go !! is undoubtedly the most difficult book you have read and I have written.

I do not say this lightly: I am of the opinion that our Lord Jesus is giving a strong rebuke to the entire realm of evangelical leadership. Most of Christ's church-on-earth is under your dominance. He is saying to you as God said to Pharaoh, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

When writing, I repeatedly asked the Father and His Son to author Let....My People Go !! through the Holy Spirit. All impurities are due to my interference and/or my insensitivity to the guidance of “the Spirit of truth”.

You may consider my words as being unduly harsh, but that's only in comparison with most other writings, not the words of Jesus Himself. (For example, seven times Jesus repeatedly said, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”)

Please consider: It was money and power that made the pharisees pharisaical. And please consider: You have the money and you have the power. And please consider the famous quote: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

As weeks roll into months and months into years your people drift further and further from Jesus while their relationship with you and the religion you represent tightens.

Remember the words of Jesus, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” Who are these “little ones” we dare not cause to stumble (mislead, cause injury)? Are they not Christ's spiritual lambs?

The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming! Doesn't it make sense to review your christianity now before that day of accountability?

2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. for correction.” To self-correct you must examine your christianity under the light of Scripture. Make sense?

I read these words of Jesus this morning: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” What are Christ's words that “will by no means pass away”? Lord Jesus: “Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man.” The “sayings” of Christ, what do they include? Jesus to His Father: “Your word is truth.” What “word” was Jesus referencing? Surely your answer to these questions must be, “all Scripture”. To determine the degree of success or failure as overseers you must bring all details under the scrutiny of that Bible you have repeatedly declared to be God's infallible word. Amen?

This shouldn't be difficult (although it might prove painful). Simply question all details relative to your oversight of your congregations and then try to find chapter and verse to justify these specifics. For example....

Is being attached to a denomination (association) Bible or Bible-plus? Is that diploma displayed on your office wall Bible or Bible-plus?

Is the Bible college that credentialed you Bible or Bible-plus? Is the title “Pastor” Bible or Bible-plus?

Is your salary Bible or Bible-plus?

Are the collections you take sunday mornings Bible or Bible-plus?

Is teaching fellow saints to surrender ten percent of their income Bible or Bible-plus?

Is control of a pulpit Bible or Bible-plus?

Is your board-of-elders Bible or Bible-plus?

Is dividing your congregation into ministerial (clergy) and laity Bible or Bible-plus?

Is refusing to earn wages from manual labor, etc. Bible or Bible-plus?

It's the pluses added to the Father's "word", Christ's "sayings", that should make you nervous about your upcoming account to Judge Jesus. Building on a plus is not building on Christ's words but words of another. Every plus in your ministry will cause you to "suffer loss".

Those losses are *eternal* losses.

I keep repeating, "The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming!" because it is, and because you live your christianity as if it isn't. I suggest that those courageous enough to self-audit would ask yourselves some thorny questions regarding the people you oversee (see Hebrews 13:17).....

Are the people for whom you must give an account followers of Christ or followers of christians?.... Do your people exalt Jesus Christ?. Do your people rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them through their christianity?. Are your congregations laying up, primarily, "treasures on earth" or "treasures in heaven"?. Are they sufficiently cognizant of the upcoming judgment seat of Christ? Do they preach, privately and publicly, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified"?.... Do they evangelize?....

Do they support evangelists prayerfully and financially Are they taking Christ's Great Commission seriously?

Fully understand that your congregations are either your validation or your repudiation.

Now I want you all to do a little supposing....

Suppose a catholic priest approached you saying he had recently received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and you discern he has truly been "born of the Spirit". He shares with you the conflict he has trying to consolidate the Bible with catholicism, and he asks for your advice. What advice would you give him?

Hopefully you would respond, "Flee catholicism! Exit! Run, don't walk! Vamoose! Skedaddle! Get out now!"

Because you and catholic priests have so much in common I give you the same advice: "Flee evangelicalism! Exit! Run, don't walk! Vamoose! Skedaddle! Get out now!"

Lord Jesus hates evangelical "tradition of men" as much as catholic "tradition of men". Lord Jesus hates people calling you *Pastor* (*my shepherd*) as much as He hates people calling priests *Father*. Lord Jesus hates evangelical array of "commandments of men" as much as He hates catholic array of "commandments of men". Lord Jesus hates your disrespect for the Bible as much as He hates priests' disrespect for the Bible.

Paul to the Corinthians: “I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted.” (NLT) Has “your pure and undivided devotion to Christ corrupted” by religion, by power, by love-of-money? If you really want to know ask Lord Jesus. Are you prepared to “appear before the judgment seat of Christ”? If you really want to know ask Him. Does Jesus want you to forsake all “tradition of the elders”? If you really want to know ask Him.

To be prepared for Christ's judgment seat you must apply John 15:5 to the remainder of your christianity-on-earth. (“He who abides in Me.... bears much fruit.”)

My brothers-in-Christ, before you is, potentially, a better life, “much fruit”, a wealthy eternity. Will you seize this better life?

****

Several years ago I did a most unusual research. I wanted to verify what I had long suspected: Evangelical churches are not Christ-centered but man-centered. As you read this article keep in mind that anyone can do the research that I did, and I encourage everyone to do it.

I live in Kelowna, B.C., Canada, a mid-sized city with a number of evangelical churches – a few quite large, some quite small, and most somewhere in-between. (Just like your city?) I chose what I perceived to be the five largest churches and listened to three messages (that they each had released for public consumption). Pencil in hand, I noted every time the preacher-guy used the words 1) *Jesus* (Christ, Son, etcetera), 2) *God* and 3) *church*.

Jesus taught us “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Do you agree that if the “heart” of an individual or a group of christians is similar to the “heart” of New Testament writers the ratios between 1) *Jesus*, 2) *God* and 3) *church* would be similar? And do you agree that a major discrepancy indicates something is seriously wrong with that individual or that group?

Before going further I want to disclose what the ratios of *Jesus*, *God* and church are to each other in the New Testament, excluding the gospels.

(Are you still with me?) The ratio between *Jesus* and *God* is close to 1 to 1. (For every time Jesus is cited God is likewise cited once.) The ratio of *Jesus* and *church* is approximately 13 to 1. (For every 13 times *Jesus* is mentioned *church* is mentioned only once.)

Now let's look at the ratios of Kelowna's five largest evangelical churches....

The ratio between *Jesus* and *God* is approximately 1 to 3. (For every time Jesus is mentioned God is mentioned 3 times.) The ratio between *Jesus* and *church* is approximately 1 to 1 1/2. (For every time Jesus is mentioned church is mentioned one-and-a-half times.)

Question: Why do Kelowna's salaried preachers speak God 3 times to every single time they speak the name of Jesus? My answer: Speaking *God* does not bring serious conviction of wrongdoing. Speaking “the name which is above every name” does bring conviction. There is

power in that name!

Question: Why do Kelowna's salaried pastors speak *church* more than they speak *Jesus*? My answer: *Church* takes up much more space in their hearts than does Jesus. Love for church (oneself, christians, christianity) outweighs love for Jesus Christ. Their speech gives them away.

If Kelowna is emblematic – and I believe it is – *every* city's evangelical churches are also more man-centered than Christ-centered. No, evangelical churches are not CHRIST-less, but they certainly are CHRIST-impoverished.

Chapter twenty-six

A.W. Tozer's voice needs to be resurrected because because our times are more perilous than his because the masses have departed farther from “first love” because Christ's Great Commission is less compelling.... because pagans perish in much greater number because the grip of love-of-money has tightened because the judgement seat of Christ is closer.

The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer

Preface: There is today no lack of Bible teachers to set forth correctly the principles of the doctrines of Christ, but too many of these seem satisfied to teach the fundamentals of the faith year after year, strangely unaware that there is in their ministry no manifest Presence, nor anything unusual in their personal lives. They minister constantly to believers who feel within their breasts a longing which their teaching simply does not satisfy.

Preface: I trust I speak in charity, but the lack in our pulpits is real. Milton's terrible sentence applies to our day as accurately as it did to his: “The hungry sheep look up , and are not fed.” It is a solemn thing, and no small scandal in the Kingdom, to see God's children starving while actually seated at the Father's table. The truth of Wesley's words is established before our eyes: “Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is, at best, a very slender part of religion. Though right tempers cannot subsist without right opinions, yet right opinions may subsist without right tempers. There may be a right opinion of God without either love or one right temper toward Him. Satan is proof of this.”

Chapter 5: Why does God manifest His presence to some and let multitudes of others struggle along in the half-light of imperfect Christian experience? Of course, the will of God is the same for all. He has no favorites within His household. All He has ever done for any of His children He will do for all of His children. The difference lies not with God but with us.

Chapter 5: We read our chapter, have our short devotions and rush away, hoping to make up for our deep inward bankruptcy by attending another gospel meeting.

Chapter 5: It will require a determined heart and more than a little courage to wrench ourselves loose from the grip of our times and return to Biblical ways. But it can be done.

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Chapter twenty-seven

THE RIVER CHURCH in Tampa Florida is a megachurch with a staff of about 20-25 pastors. The building, housing a congregation of thousands, could be described as colossal, grandiose, luxurious, lavish. Less flattering adjectives could be extravagant, unnecessary, non- biblical.

Two questions:

1. Is *The River Church* building what Jesus would consider a "treasure on earth"?
2. How was the construction of the building financed?

Hopefully answering these two questions would be answering two more questions:

1. Are *your* church buildings "treasures on earth"?
2. How was the construction of *your* church buildings financed?

Regarding the first question, I think about my friend Richard's vision of the "Judgment seat of Christ" (chapter 33) whereby the Lord was saying to "a great multitude", "I told you not to lay up treasures on earth." Richard: "Jesus was emphasizing the *I.* It was like He was saying, 'Yes, I know you heard many voices saying different things. But *I*, Me, the Eternal One, *I* told you not to do it!' "

If you consider church buildings "treasures on earth" instead of "treasures in heaven" you are challenging the totality of evangelicalism. Can you see that? How can an expensive stately house be considered an earthly treasure but not an expensive stately church building? If all the thousands of churches throughout evangelicalism can be defined as earthly treasures they must all be contrary to the supreme will of God.

Jesus taught us, "Every tree is known by its own fruit." "Treasures on earth" are not good fruit.

And now the second question. I think I know how the construction of *The River* building was

financed. It was financed the same way your church building was financed (or the same way the rental of a building is covered). Before submitting my perception as to how *The River* was financially undergirded, I want to assure you I do not consider this assembly less fruitful and less spiritual than other evangelical assemblies. The opposite is true. Proportionately they bear more fruit than most assemblies.

So here we go....

In 1994 the senior pastor, Rodney, gave a message before taking a collection, based on the account of Elijah and the impoverished widow in 1st Kings, chapter 17. It was an evening service so his appeal was for offerings, not tithes. Tithes were collected in the morning, but ten percent of the donors' income was not satisfactory. Rodney wanted more.

You know the story of the prophet and the widow. There was a famine in the land yet she shared her last meal with Elijah and then was prepared to die with her son. Because of her generosity God mightily blessed her. Our generosity, Rodney taught, will also release God's provision on us (to which I reply, "Amen and amen!")

Certainly God favors sacrificial giving. God is generous and expects His kids to be generous. We should all give more than we do. We have no right to live in luxury among so many people on their way to hell.

However Rodney was not being a faithful servant teaching his congregation the benefit of faith and generosity but rather prepping them for the collection. This is so unlike Paul.

Can anyone imagine Paul using the account of Elijah and the widow to collect money to meet his needs? Or to build an edifice? Paul never sanctioned a collection except on one occasion – for needy christians in Jerusalem. Paul: "Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ." Imitating Rodney (and imitating all evangelical pastors) is not imitating Paul and is not imitating Christ. Paul to the Corinthians (AMP): "I will not burden you because I do not want what is yours , but you."

Implication. There is such a thing as 'power of implying'. When Rodney said (in a highly, well-timed elevated tone), "Many times in order to come into a place of provision it takes a step of obedience where you are willing to do your part and you're willing to give your part." Part of what? This brother never specified, but the heavy inference of "give your part" is donating money to be placed under his supervision (the details of spending never to be disclosed). It is implied that each in the audience has a God-ordained part ("*your* part") in his ministry.

Is this really how the "head of the church" wants each of His saints to live out his/her life on earth? Should we keep step with Jesus or with each other? Are we to follow Christ or christians? Doesn't Lord Jesus have a personal and unique plan for each of us? If so, shouldn't the financing of that plan be our main priority?

Jesus: "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." The Holy Spirit

guides us “into all truth” *individually*. The Holy Spirit guided Jesus individually. (“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.”) He guided Peter individually. (“The Spirit told me.”) Paul “was compelled by the Spirit”. “The Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away.” John: “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.” “The Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David.”

New covenant saints are to be lead by the Holy Spirit. As such we are to give what, where and when the Spirit so directs. In his determination to collect Old Testament “offerings” Rodney did not exhort his people to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Can you see that when a pastor doesn't encourage his people to submit to the Spirit he is actually teaching them *not* to? Repeat: When a pastor fails to exhort his congregation to give only as the “Spirit of truth” so directs he is actually teaching them to *ignore* the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

During his fifteen minute talk leading to a very hefty collection – it was obvious from the enthusiasm engendered that the collection would be substantial – Rodney said, “Tradition is good as long as there's life. If the tradition brings death throw it out.” That sounds good but it's not good. Such a notion will seriously tarnish one's allegiance to Scripture. Traditions that work, or seem to work, are not our standard. Our Bible teaches, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable.” Traditions are Scripture-plus....

Scripture-plus is Christ-plus the plus of Christ-plus is disloyalty to Christ disloyalty to Christ is disloyalty to His (and our) Father.

It was tradition that gave Rodney (and each of you pastors, etcetera) permission to replace the leadership of the Holy Spirit to build a building.... to collect a salary.... to be titled. to be the chief spokesman to impose your vision on others.

We can say by saying and we can say by implying. In my opinion Rodney was saying through implication: “As your God-appointed pastor I say to you that God wants you to contribute to this ministry this evening. If you do so He will release great provisions on you and yours.

If you do not you will be robbing yourselves of God's blessing. You may ask the Holy Spirit *how much* to give but you are not to seek His guidance as to *where* to give. Obviously you are to give to this church. Is this not your home church? Jesus knows you are less capable than I am of discerning His will in matters concerning your finances.”

If you are of the opinion that I have a paltry opinion of Rodney, you judge amiss. This brother has for years bravely withstood harsh, unreasonable criticism throughout evangelicalism for the many “signs and wonders” transpiring in his meetings. (Question: Isn't the *lack* of “signs and wonders” non-biblical?) He was arrested because he refused to close down his church during covid. God has used this brother to draw multitudes of perishing people to His Son. My respect for Rodney is so high I actually believe he would not scoff at my perspectives should he ever come across them. However....

However, such manipulation of Scripture to extract money from his trusting congregation to finance the construction and maintenance of *The River Church* is simply wrong, wrong, wrong. Now let's jump to 2018 to listen to Rodney's "special guest" Jonathan....

Jonathan was called in to give a teaching on tithing at Rodney's mega- church. Jonathan is not just good as a communicator, but *very* good.

Undoubtedly this talented brother would have been successful at any career he had chosen to pursue. And I am sure he is in demand from many churches to give the same teaching on tithes and offerings to bolster their financial base.

In my opinion his teaching on tithes and offering, though seemingly well accepted at *The River*, is a false teaching that bears horrible consequences to both the tither and the world Jesus died for.

Before beginning his twenty-five minute talk on tithes and offerings prior to the collection, Jonathan encouraged the huge audience to support Rodney who is "a gift to earth from heaven". Regarding Rodney, he says "the Bible says, 'I will bless those who bless thee.' " Who is "thee"? "Thee" was Abraham but today "thee" is Rodney. God will bless those who bless Rodney, God promises. So, Jonathan continues, "take what God has put in your hand and use it to see accomplish what God has given him to do."

Jonathan is saying (without saying it), "Don't be guided by the Holy Spirit in your giving. Use common sense to determine the most practical manner to invest in God's kingdom." But in reality *every* person is "a gift to earth from heaven" with *enormous* potential. In my opinion, *everyone* in Jonathan's audience has both a relational ministry (ministering to acquaintances) and public ministry (ministering publicly to many). We are to bow to the lordship of Christ as to who to support at any given time, and not be guided by our inferior intellect. Christ guides only those who choose to be guided, this through the most Holy Spirit.

We must all decide who is the lord of our lives, who is our captain, our shepherd, our guide. Is it 'me' or is it Jesus? Is it christians or is it Christ? No man except "the Man Christ Jesus" should have a stronghold over our christianity. Jesus alone should have a strong-hold on our heart, our affection, our loyalty, our finances, our schedule, our ministry. Jesus (repeat Jesus!) is the "head of the church." Jesus (repeat Jesus!) is "the Lord of the harvest".

I am not capable of exaggerating the strong hold you professional religionists have on a congregation. You (perhaps well-intentioned) brothers assume your people are not capable of being governed by the Holy Spirit. They are not to rely on the Holy Spirit as to who to financially support but on your wisdom and experience. But I say, "Cursed is the man who trusts in man."

Jonathan, like thousands of pastors worldwide, directs his audience to Hebrews Chapter 7.

“Some people say tithing is Old Testament but”, he says, “Hebrews is in the New Testament and this is actually a ten-verse revelation on the tithe taught in the New Testament.” Wrong again!

Hebrews chapter 7, verses 1 to 10 is *not* a teaching on tithing, though it mentions the words *tithe* and *tenth* a combined eight times. He could have said, equally incorrectly, these verses are a revelation about Abraham because his name is also mentioned eight times. He could have said the same about Melchizedek; his name is mentioned ten times.

Hebrews 7:1 to 10 is a teaching on Jesus our High Priest! Repeat: Jesus, not tithing, is the subject of Hebrews chapter 7 (as previously stated in chapter fifteen). It's a wondrous story....

To usher in the new covenant a new priesthood had to be established. This High Priest (of the new priesthood) could not “be called according to the order of Aaron” as was the Levite priesthood. Our High Priest, the Lord Jesus, had become our “High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek”.

The writer of Hebrews (was it Paul?) tells of the greatness of Melchizedek. Why? Because he wants to demonstrate the greatness of Jesus our High Priest who was of “the order of Melchizedek”.

Melchizedek, as great as this man was, is only a side issue. The real subject is Jesus Christ!

To underscore the greatness of Melchizedek the writer tells us to “consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils .” The writer is not giving a lesson in tithing! He is simply accentuating the greatness of Melchizedek.

Nobody reading this chapter would conclude that because on *one* occasion Abraham gave a tenth of his *plunder* to Melchizedek we are to regularly give a tenth of our *income* to the local church. God gave no person the authority to make such a claim. However evangelicalism has become so mighty it does not require God's permission to add “commandments of men” to His plain instructions.

Professional fund-raisers distort Scripture to make it say what it doesn't say. They turn a beautiful story of our beautiful High Priest into something sordid. The end – to procure lots of money to do (their version of) kingdom work – justifies the means. Why didn't Jonathan (and all of you) simply quote a verse that plainly stated that the “head of the church” requires christians to tithe their income? The answer is simple: There is no such verse!

Jonathan reads to *The River* congregation Hebrews 7:1 to 8 from the New Living Translation. I print these verses because I want you to scrutinize them to determine if there is any justification for using them to extract billions of dollars weekly from Christ's saints....

1. This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When

Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him.
2. Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means “king of justice,” and king of Salem means “king of peace”.
3. There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors–no beginning or ending of his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.
4. Consider how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognized this by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle.
5. Now the law of Moses required that the priests, who are descendants of Levi, must collect a tithe from the rest of the people of Israel, who are also descendants of Abraham.
6. But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing on Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God.
7. And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed.For some reason Jonathan misquotes verse 8. First I will record verse 8 from the NLT and then record Jonathan's misquotation....
8. The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on.

Jonathan's misquotation: “Verse 8: The priests who collect tithes HERE are men who die, but Melchizedek COLLECTS IT IN HEAVEN WHERE IT IS told he lives on.”

This is a serious breach of both Scripture and the people's trust. Of all 62 translations of Hebrews 7:8 in Bible Gateway *not one* uses the word *heaven* or the expression “collects it in heaven”.

Jonathan goes on to explain the meaning, not of 7:8, but his misquotation of 7:8: “In other words men receive tithes here where they die. But it is received in heaven by Christ where it is witnessed He lives forever. So giving a tithe and offering is not a lateral transaction. It's not you making a donation to a ministry. The Bible says this kind of giving is different than any kind of giving. Because though men receive it here that die it is received in heaven where it is witnessed He lives forever. So *Christ* actually receives the tithe and the offering.”

When working as an electrician in a huge pig barn, the smell was atrocious, more so than a cow or horse barn. Jonathan's line of reason, used to extract millions from *The River* adherents, stimulates that awful memory.

Hebrews does *not* teach that “men receive tithes”. It teaches that men (Levite priests) *received* (past tense) tithes. “Here where they die” is not referencing today's pastors. “The priests who collect tithes are men who died” is referencing *priests* who died thousands of years ago, *not pastors* who die today. The Amplified makes this clear: “Here tithes are received by men who are subject to death.” (Several other translations confer.) Also....

To say that Jesus receives tithes in heaven is a wild supposition. Jonathan, in his own misquotation of 7:8, said that "*Melchizedek* receives in heaven". Does he think both Melchizedek *and* Jesus receive the tithe in heaven? There is no reason whatsoever – not the slightest hint, not one Bible verse – that suggests either Melchizedek or Jesus receive tithes in heaven.

The Amplified makes this clear: "But in that case they are received by one of whom it is testified that he lives on ." "That case" refers to the *one time*, thousands of years ago, Abraham gave a tenth of the plunder to Melchizedek.

The River is not the only megachurch that imposes the awful evangelical tithe on its congregations; seemingly they all do. What motivates so many pastors – all having been thoroughly schooled in Scripture – to come to the same unreasonable consensus. The answer, I conclude, is found in the words of Jesus, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."

Jesus confronted the Pharisees "who were lovers of money"....

"Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and 'He who curses father and mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"–then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition."

Christ's words directed to priestly leadership demonstrate the awful power of love-of-money. Love-of-money did not disappear with the Levite priesthood. It's still here. It runs rampant throughout evangelicalism, most certainly including evangelical leadership; surely the weekly collection of money – that has no Bible precedent – sufficiently evidences that.

Love of money (and the power it purchases) created the awful evangelical tithe. Love-of-money produced megachurches and every evangelical church building. Love-of-money sentences (not millions but) billions to hell.

I believe I have answered the question, "How was the construction of building financed?" And, more important, I also answered the question, "How was the construction of *your* church financed?" Rodney and you did so by enforcing the awful evangelical tithe – that has "made the commandment of God no effect" – by coercing your people to direct the bulk of their generosity to your non- biblical religion.

Still not convinced that the evangelical tithe (a tithe created and propagated by evangelicals) is one of many "commandments of men" and "doctrines of demons", a destructive ploy against blood-washed brothers- and sisters-in-Christ, a betrayal to the "captain of salvation"? For you I have a few questions....

Why was the tithe statute, directed to the Israelites through Moses, the *only* edict dragged from the old covenant to the new? Doesn't that make you even mildly suspicious? Or are you

blinded by love-of-money? (Jesus: “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”)

Why do you agree that christians 1) are not obligated to honor saturday as God's sabbath even though the word *sabbath* is mentioned 59 times in the New Testament compared to the word *tithe* and *tenth* mentioned a combined 12 times 2) are not obligated to obey the many decrees regarding the seven feasts. 3) are not obligated to sacrifice animals of various kinds 4) and many etceteras, and yet you insist that God nonetheless wants His people to tithe?

Who gave you the right to change the tithing of farm produce – a statute directed to old covenant believers – to the tithing of income? Again, who gave who such permission?

Isn't coaching the congregation to tithe prior to the collection – the tithe being the main source of your salary – self-serving?

Aren't you obligated to tell the congregation, precisely, the details regarding your salary (i.e., the amount)? Isn't transparency, especially regarding money matters, pleasing to One you call *Lord?*

Are you sufficiently aware of the upcoming judgment seat of Christ whereby “each of us shall give account of himself to God”? Are you prepared to explain to Judge Jesus why you coerced your people to give a tenth of their income to be placed under your supervision?

Is coercing your people to tithe feeding Christ's sheep (Jesus to Peter: “Feed My sheep”), caring for Christ's sheep (Jesus to Peter: “Tend My sheep”), or *fleecing* Christ's sheep?

Doesn't fair play require both sides of the tithe debate be presented to your congregation?

I say to you again, my brothers-in-Christ: The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming!

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I was about twenty-five and Cal was in his forties. Cal goddamned various people and things throughout the day, and loved telling dirty jokes. His left hand had a thumb but no fingers, having lost those four fingers when a youngster while chopping wood with his brother. This impairment didn't seem to interfere with his livelihood as a mechanic.

Cal and I were hired – $2.00 per hour – to level a lengthy pile of trees that had been bulldozed to make way for a roadway. The pine-needled trees lay crisscrossed over each other. We each had a heavy chainsaw. It was treacherous work climbing over pine-needled trees carrying that noisy saw. Cal lightly touched his four remaining fingers over the chain of his saw causing a bit of bleeding on the base of each finger. He came so very close to making his right hand the same as his left.

I realized the madness of what we were doing. If I seriously injured myself that would be the

end of my electrician apprenticeship. How could I look after my young family? So I quit and so did Cal.

About five years past and I was now a born-again convert of our Lord Jesus. I changed but Cal didn't. I felt the Lord tell me to drive from my city to Cal's city, an hour-plus drive, to share the gospel that revolutionized my life. It seemed like an urgent matter. Perhaps I had heard a bad medical report regarding Cal – I just don't remember.

I made the drive and parked at the A&W across from Cal's house, trying to work up courage to share my faith in Jesus to a man who wasn't open to the gospel, not the least. I saw him on his driveway, and had I waved He would have noticed me. Fear of man that plagued me caused me to just drive away. I was so ashamed of my cowardice.

On my way home to Kelowna I stopped at a roadside park along the Okanagan Lake. Perhaps I needed to use the washroom – I can't remember. There was Cal! Right in front of me! Face to face!

This was beyond coincidental. This was God! No other explanation. Cal was with his wife and another couple, but soon the two of us were alone, chatting. But I just couldn't do it. I was fully aware Cal was on the road to hell, but that reality didn't give me the boldness to share Christ with him. I continued my trip home, so ashamed – so very, very ashamed.

Cal died a year or so later.

That dismal failure is one of several reasons I dare not pass judgment on others in my calling to bring wayward brothers and sister back to “first love”. I hate religion but have nothing but empathy for religionists.

Chapter twenty-eight

A.W. Tozer believed there is ranking of christians (various levels of prominence) in heaven just as there is ranking of angels. Makes sense. Since earned “treasures in heaven” are eternal, some will be eternally richer than others and some will be eternally poorer. And eternal treasures in heaven will be relative to depth of relationship with our Lord Jesus here on earth.

The Pursuit of God, A.W. Tozer

Chapter 7: Christian literature, to be accepted and approved by the evangelical leaders of our times, must follow very closely the same train of thought, a kind of “party line” from which it is scarcely safe to depart. A half-century of this in America has made us smug and content. We imitate each other with slavish devotion and our most strenuous efforts are put forth to try to say the same thing that everyone around us is saying.

Chapter 7: When the habit of inwardly gazing Godward becomes fixed within us we shall be ushered onto a new level of spiritual life more in keeping with the promises of God and the mood of the New Testament. The Triune God will be our dwelling place even while our feet walk the low road of simple duty here among men.

Chapter 8: Let no one imagine that he will lose anything of human dignity by this voluntary sell-out of his all to his God. He does not by this degrade himself as a man; rather he finds his right place of high honor as one made in the image of his Creator. His deep disgrace lay in his moral derangement, his unnatural usurpation of the place of God. His honor will be proved by restoring again that stolen throne. In exalting God over all he finds his own highest honor upheld.

Chapter 8: Another saying of Jesus, and a most disturbing one, was put in the form of a question, “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God alone?” If I understand this correctly Christ taught here the alarming doctrine that the desire for honor among men made belief impossible. Is this sin at the root of religious unbelief?

Chapter 8: The whole course of the life is upset by failure to put God where He belongs. We exalt ourselves instead of God and the curse follows.

Quoted by permission from The New Christian Classics Libraryhttps://calvin.quadweb.site/giving/ccel.

Chapter twenty-nine

“Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Go? Go where?

Relationally, christians must return to Christ. After returning, the love relationship between Christ and christian must be more stable, more protected than any other relationship. Only then

can Christ's Blood- washed saints pick up and carry the cross that the “head of the church” has set before them.

NOTE: The final chapters of *Let....My....People Go !!* are especially directed to the few (very few?) who have themselves profoundly repented of betrayal to the “Lord of lords and King of kings” and returned to “first love”. Only those set free can set others free. Only the humble and determined and courageous are empowered by the Holy Spirit to set their brothers and sisters free from religion and all other idols.

Since you have funnelled them into religion (“commandments of men”) and since it is you who redirected their loyalty from Him to you, it is you, dear brothers-in-Christ, most qualified to set them free. This will not be easy. Perhaps for many (most?) it will be impossible. Egypt has confiscated loyalty once fixed on Jesus. Egypt has become a lifestyle.

Egypt has become their comfort and their protector and their guide.

But you must try. After much prayerful preparation use sunday morning's pulpit to speak unadulterated truth to your people, even truth that could thoroughly shock and upset and anger them. You owe that to Lord Jesus and you owe that to them.

Perhaps your message to your congregation will be similar to this.... PART ONE

Good morning, my brothers- and sisters-in-Christ. I have an important message, a fervent apology and an important announcement to deliver to you this morning. I have prayed that our Lord Jesus would give me the ability and courage to speak candidly and to give you ears to hear words that, perhaps, you have never heard before. I will speak very slowly to help you grasp this most important and hopefully life-changing message. Please give me, as fully as possible, your attention. This message is of such importance that I offer to you, at my expense, a CD recording to be listened to at home, hopefully over and over again.

Exodus 7:16: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” These words of God directed to Pharaoh through Moses were repeated several times. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

Way back then, God's “people” were the descendants of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, whose name the Lord changed to Israel. Today God's “people” are every blood-washed saint, every born-again person, every new covenant christian. This may come as a shock but most christians today are as much in bondage as were “the children of Israel”, certainly not in harshness but in thoroughness. And until very recently this most certainly included me.

Obviously, no christian can come close to his/her potential of service to Jesus Christ while held in spiritual captivity. One can only serve Lord Jesus effectively when serving Him directly, not indirectly through the governance of other christians. A follower of christians is not a disciple of Christ but rather a disciple of man.

The Lord's command to me and every leader of institutionalized assemblies is the same as his mandate to evil Pharaoh: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.” That is my intention this sunday morning. Please bear with me, and, again, I petition your full attention.

I am the one who introduced many of you to evangelicalism. I am the one who, week by week, strengthened the hold this religion has on you. Your trust in me has seriously encumbered you with debilitating spiritual strongholds. A spiritual stronghold is an ungodly mindset that has a strong hold on one's mind and heart.

Before leading this congregation into our denomination's array of “commandments of men” I had to first be coerced to embrace these evangelical traditions as my own. Let me tell you my story....

When I became converted to Jesus Christ when a young man I, like everyone of you, had a strong desire to serve Him. Perhaps my fervor surpassed that of most. To do, to accomplish, to build – these ambitions were partly of God and partly of flesh. My born-again spirit hungered for more of Jesus while my sick soul lusted for relevance and recognition. How can I serve God? How can I be influential? How and where do I get started? I appealed to church leadership for answers and church leadership pointed me to our acclaimed seminary.

I have never said this before, but seminaries and Bible colleges are not what you think they are. I first entered our denominational seminary with a small head and a large heart, and exited two years later with a small heart and a swelled head. I entrusted myself to experienced and professional teachers, assuming they would make of me a competent and faithful shepherd of Christ's sheep. Instead I became an artificial and pompous controller of people.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent.” (NLT) The corruption of my devotion to Christ was subtle and imperceptible while my devotion to evangelicalism was equally subtle and equally imperceptible.

All the externals – the impressive buildings, the structured schedules, the refined teachers, the school hierarchy, the throng of students, the school's reputation – assured me that all this was wholesome, pleasing to God. All these people just couldn't be mistaken!

Looking back, I realize that missing from the staff and directors of our denomination's seminary is a strong devotion to Jesus Christ. Does this surprise you? Have you assumed, as most assume, that seminaries are God's appointed and anointed training fortresses? Not so. It is possible to be active in christianized service while being relationally distant from Lord Jesus. Don't all other religions verify this? These brothers had themselves been infected with “commandments of men” and they dutifully passed on those non-biblical traditions to their students.

Understand that if they refused to do so they would soon be unemployed.

I graduated with a framed piece of paper that elevated me above the crowd. I was a nobody; now I'm a somebody. My diploma, signed by the president of our prominent school and the head supervisor of our denomination, is convincing evidence that I am equipped to equip others in the ways of the Lord. My future was promising....

I was advantaged over my “competition” (other unmarried guys) in choosing a spouse; young ladies are attracted to single church ministers, eager to share their significance. And....

If I proved myself faithful to denominational lords I would soon have an audience. Everyone wants an audience, the bigger the better. Who doesn't want to be heard?.... to be relevant?. to be the chief influence of a sizable assembly? Thousands of evangelical churches provide a quiet and orderly congregation of listeners, and I was determined to get hold of one. I instinctively knew the pathway to placement: enthusiastic compliance to those above me. And....

And then there's the salary. A salary would elevate and empower me even more than the diploma. Only spiritual elites are salaried. The salaried call themselves servants but they're not. A servant is not the decision-maker, not titled, not controlling. And...

And soon people would be calling me Pastor. Who doesn't want to be titled? People will actually consider me (yes, me!) their shepherd, their guide, their instructor?! Wow! Authority, salary, audience, title, significance what a jackpot!

So that's my story. That's how I became who I am or rather, who I recently was before I repented and recommitted my life to Jesus Christ.

(Part 2 is chapter 31)

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There has always been contention between evangelicals who believe in Holy Spirit manifestations and those who don't. When the Holy Spirit swept across our city in the '60s and '70s many catholics came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our *People of Faith* prayer group, mostly consisting of recently converted catholics from our local St.

Theresa parish, grew quickly, and a decision was made to have an all- day conference at the Centennial Park hall a short distance down the road.

Everybody there, including leadership, were quite unaware of spiritual matters outside of catholicism; it could not be said that the unusual manifestations were copied from anyone. I could have been the most senior convert in that group (though nonetheless quite young in the Lord) and what I witnessed I had never before seen or heard of....

People who were being prayed for were “slain in the Spirit”, a term probably none had previously heard. Many were on the floor, seemingly in a state of euphoric peace and tranquility. I wasn't frightened but I was concerned. My wife lay silently and immobile on the floor in this spiritual encounter with the Holy Spirit. A friend who was kneeling while praying for her, himself fully bewildered, got to his feet and I pulled him back to the kneeling position as if to say, “You aren't getting to *your* feet until my wife gets to *her* feet!” This significant manifestation of the Holy Spirit throughout the large hall went on for several hours.

A sizable chunk of evangelical leadership would scoff at this account of something I witnessed almost fifty years ago. They seem to be of baptist (or similar) background. They seemingly accredit unusual manifestations – that is manifestations unusual to them and their denominations – to the devil, though they don't say that directly.

Generally speaking, this powerful and assertive army of (supposed) protectors of the faith believe that manifestations of the Spirit ceased with the death of the apostles and therefore “signs and wonders”, speaking in tongues, prophecies, gifts of the Spirit, miracle healings are imaginary.... or delusional.... or perhaps hypnotic or perhaps demonic.

Yet these people claim obedience to the Bible. No, they don't have commonality (regarding the supernatural) with Jesus or His twelve. And no, they don't imitate Paul and many others. And no, they don't speak in tongues. (Jesus: “These signs will follow those who believe they will speak with new tongues.”) And no, their christianity has no resemblance to the book of Acts. Yet they consider themselves qualified to correct those better aligned to New Testament precedents. Go figure!

These people are a militant bunch. They scour social media and non- baptist-type ministries for reports of manifestations of the Spirit and publicly scorn the preacher or ministry. They are skilled at what they do. They discredit a particular manifestation and the accompanying minister while concealing their bias; they don't tell their audience that they don't believe in *any* spiritual phenomenon. I discern they have made inroads into many (most?) of my Facebook friends who seem suspicious and unnerved by anything supernatural or unusual.

It is so paradoxical that these brothers express no objection to “commandments of men” within their own assemblies – the awful evangelical tithe, appellations, salaries, ordination, and many etceteras – yet denounce Holy Spirit manifestations that do have solid precedent in the Bible they claim to defend. And now I will have a second story that will no doubt further ruffle their religious feathers....

I was one of hundreds of thousands who travelled to Toronto, Ontario, Canada to attend one of “Toronto Blessing” gatherings of saints. This Holy Spirit phenomenon had been going on for years and I was hungry for more of God. When my sister, brother-in-law and I arrived at the large church auditorium the place was already packed and we had to sit behind the stage. We

could hear everything but see nothing. After the service I walked in front of the platform to see (not dozens but) hundreds of people lying on the floor in a euphoric state. Wow! When making my way to the restroom at the opposite end I had to cautiously step over people's arms and legs and heads.

I have learned that moves of the Holy Spirit such as the one we experienced at St. Theresa parish and even more powerful ones such as the "Toronto Blessing", *are not God's endorsement.* As our Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, works though flawed individuals, He likewise moves through flawed assemblies. Amen?

Chapter thirty

Wayne Jacobsen: "Simply put I am the son of a farmer, a husband to Sara, the father of Julie and Andrew, and a grandpa to some delightful children. I consider myself a brother on a journey, willing to share what God has given to me in any way that will help others discover the joy of life in him. As you will see the Lord has been gracious to me, and everything he has done in me and through me is by his mercy and grace. I hope the real story you glean from these pages is a greater awareness of God's unfolding work in you, not in me. That's a story worth knowing."

Finding Church, Wayne Jacobsen

Chapter 1: And everyone knows of congregations with leaders so abusive or extravagant they are an affront to the nature of Jesus as well as an embarrassment to the Gospel.

Chapter 1: Some pointed out that Sunday morning is the most divisive time of the week in our culture. Our "churches" divide us racially, economically, and socially. We gather with people who see the world like we do and prefer the same teaching and style of music. While each congregation has its own people in leadership and claims allegiance to the same God, there is little real collaborations between them. In fact, judgements abound between one group and another.

Chapter 1: People have often told me they have suffered more vitriol at the hands of fellow Christians than they have in family or business. Gossip can be more common than fellowship, and the constant plea for more volunteers or more funds are designed to manipulate people's guilt.

Chapter 1: It is no secret that people are leaving their congregations in droves and have been doing so for more than twenty-five years. Some estimate as many as thirty-five hundred people leave their congregations every day, causing many to close up or merge with others to survive.

Chapter 1: But those who have left tell a different story. They say that their religious institutions were too focused on money and power, too judgemental of others, and too hypocritical. Disappointed in flawed leadership, wearied of jumping through hoops and still feeling spiritually empty, trapped in superficial relationships, or disillusioned by unanswered prayers, many end up questioning God's character, if not his existence.

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Chapter thirty-one

I am no longer naive – I know most evangelical leaders are thoroughly connected to and dependent on their religion, and will not consider turning from their beloved “tradition of men” and commit themselves to God's Bible. But some will. I say again that the remaining chapters are especially directed to pastors and other evangelical leaders who have heeded Christ's call to “Let My people go, that they may serve Me”.

This chapter is a continuation of my imaginary sermon from an imaginary repentant pastor to an imaginary assembly....

PART TWO

This is the third assembly I have pastored, the first two stepping-stones to this more prominent one. It was a pompous and professional and pretentious man-appointed pastor that first stood behind this powerful pulpit several years ago. I had always been the most religious person in our congregation, more loyal to our denomination's customs and disciplines than any of you.

I want you to understand that while you live in one spiritual sphere, I, until recently, lived in two. Your spiritual realm is, chiefly, this congregation; my spiritual realms were this congregation AND the denomination that credentialed me. I was their go-between. They used me to pass onto you their lengthy list of “commandments of men”. I heeded them and preached to you. They had my loyalty; you had my time and energy. They were my associates and overseers; you were my ministry.

It was my submission to those above me that secured me this position and this pulpit. Denominational headquarters expected me to strengthen your alignment to their perspectives, both biblical and non-biblical.

Always ambitious for advancement, this I was eager to do. I believed their flawed doctrines because I wanted to believe them. I followed these religious managers because my peers were following them. It's called peer pressure.

Rewards for my loyalty to those above me are a pulpit and an audience and a precious bi-weekly paycheck. These three prizes combined to blind me to the reality of my lukewarm relationship with the One who “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree”.

But I recently repented before the One I betrayed. I blame no one but myself. Whenever I consider placing blame on others the Holy Spirit reminds me of the words of Jesus to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you.” God's grace was always sufficient to overcome the temptation to confiscate His glory. More than ever I appreciate these words about our Jesus, “but was in all ways tempted as we are, yet without sin”. I often bowed to temptation, but Jesus never did. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!

Genuine repentance leads to commitment. I recommitted my life to Jesus Christ and to His Bible. I vowed before the Father, His beloved Son and the most Holy Spirit to never compromise again, to never place pompous “commandments of men” over His instructions.

And now my precious brothers- and sisters-in-Christ Jesus, I sincerely (repeat sincerely!) apologize to you. What could be worse than imposing on Christ's saints words and traditions He never sanctioned? I'm not speaking of a few words and a few traditions but many. I passed on to you foreign doctrines – teachings that have no kinship whatsoever with Scripture – that were passed onto me while in seminary and from denominational headquarters.

My purpose this morning is to set you free from the spiritual stronghold that I and many others have placed on you. A stronghold is a mindset that has a strong hold on a christian's heart. This awful stronghold came on you, as it did me, in increments so small as to be almost imperceptible. “Commandments of men” have become so embedded that they compete with the words and examples of our one, true Teacher. (Jesus: “One is your Teacher, the Christ.”)

The challenge I face this morning is that many of you, perhaps most, do not want to be set free from your religion. I understand. I was very recently where you now are. There is something comforting about sameness and routine, and something threatening about change.

And why should you believe that I could possibly be right and the huge majority of evangelical pastors and writers and public ministers be in serious error? Let's look at it....

Isn't the enormous quantity of opposing opinions on many spiritual issues sufficient evidence that all evangelical leaders can be in error? The Bible is loaded with examples of unified

deception. Examples: Eight out of nine brothers sold Joseph into slavery. After witnessing several amazing miracles the “children of Israel” wanted to return to Egypt captivity Only Joshua and Caleb believed the Lord's ability to overtake, through the Israelites, the promised land of Canaan. Now let's turn to the New Testament....

Jesus to “the Pharisees”: “You are of your father the devil.” Paul to the Galatians: “Who has bewitched you?” Paul to the Corinthians: “You are still carnal.” Jesus to the church in Ephesus: “You have left your first love.” Jesus to the church in Pergamos: “Repent.” Jesus to the church in Sardis: “You are dead.” Jesus to the church of the Laodiceans: “You are lukewarm.” Yes, the Bible teaches us that many can be unified in untruth, misunderstanding and wrongdoing.

I remind you that the Bible, not contemporary christianity, is God's standard. 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” I repeat that Scripture is God's standard. And I repeat that contemporary christianity is not God's standard.

Under my oversight, and that of other evangelical controllers, you have adopted many practices that have gained you acceptance with me and each other, but are contrary to God's Bible. One example of many....

Why did you call me pastor? Can you find one precedent in the Bible of one christian calling another christian pastor? The Bible declares “the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church” and yet many wives consider me, not their husbands, their pastor. Does anyone think Lord Jesus wants you to call someone other than Himself pastor? When you called me pastor you were implying that I was your spiritual shepherd (pastor means shepherd); isn't Jesus alone your Shepherd, your Pastor? Don't you think it's an insult to Jesus, “that great shepherd of the sheep”, to call a brother by that title?

I suggest you called me pastor because everybody calls me by that title. This is one example of bowing to contemporary christianity rather than submitting to Scripture which “is profitable for. instruction in righteousness”. Jesus said, “Do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.” Does anyone think our Lord doesn't want you calling a fellow christian teacher but approves calling a fellow christian pastor?

If you come to the conclusion that it is indeed contrary to Jesus Christ and contrary to Scripture to call a brother pastor, an internal alarm should go off. Not only have you called me by that title but also many other religious overseers. Now I want you to get the bigger picture: christians throughout worldwide evangelicalism have been taught by church leadership to call them pastor. Is that not sufficient evidence that united fallacy is not only possible but prevalent?

I do not say this to bring condemnation. No, no, no! I am trying to open your eyes to the reality of spiritual bondage. How can you be set free if you are not convinced you have lost your

freedom? My heart this sunday morning is to obey Christ's command directed to me and all religionists: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me”. To serve our Lord you must cease serving denominational overlords.

I want you to see what you don't see, that which has always been quite visible. I will try to lift the veil that hides the real me in my role as leader....

It was not the Lord Jesus Christ who authorized me to be the pastor of this assembly; it was flesh-and-blood that appointed me. If you find that hard to absorb, try to find me in the Bible. The New Testament teaches “one another” ministry, not a salaried one-man overseer. (To verify, simply type in “one another” in a searchable online Bible, i.e. Bible Gateway). No christian should have the degree of influence over you that I had. You assimilated my untruths, which were many, as well as truth. I want you to see that, as leader, I had a vile leverage over you.

For example....

If you did not call me pastor you would have paid a hefty price. I have learned over the years to efficiently deal with dissention. I have subtly intimated from this very powerful pulpit that the only way you can publicly serve God is through this assembly, or one similar, and you correctly sensed that to do so my approval is paramount. Also, you know

your friends within this congregation will withdraw much of their warmth if they sense any dissention between me and you. Harmony is everyone's friend; tension is everyone's enemy. And so everybody was careful not to cross me. Not only is that the reason you called me pastor but it's why you submit to many other “commandments of men” that I have imposed.

I also had unfair leverage over the board-of-elders (that gave my 'authority' as exclusive leader increased credibility). Paul gave Timothy a list of qualifications to be an elder; the qualification that I required was their intention to faithfully support me and my ministry. I only allowed those with a history of cooperation and loyalty to serve on the board. I made it appear that their acceptance was a group decision, but in reality I was in the background calling the shots.

You have to understand that just as you are good at what you do, I was good at what I did. Because of much practice I excelled at dominating people. The first step to control people is to unite them. The pastor's method for gaining control is not divide-and-conquer but rather unite-and-conquer. That's why you often heard me quote David: “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” And that's why I often said, “We can do more together.” And that's why I echoed such expressions as “our church family” and “be a team player”.

This pulpit and this microphone can make any man powerful. Every sunday I grew in stature, certainly not in God's heart but in yours. Every sunday was an opportunity to teach, to shepherd, to solidify, to impress and to direct. I am not saying my motive was entirely wayward. Not at all. But I am saying my motive was a mixture of honorable and insidious. I wanted to

bless you and I wanted to control you.

It will shock you to know that my chief Competitor for your obedience was the Holy Spirit. Let me explain....

You and I and every christian were intended by Jesus Christ to be governed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “He will guide you into all truth.” If the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to “guide you into all truth” why do you need me? Do you remember the words of Jesus, “I will never leave you or forsake you”? But Jesus is in heaven; how can Jesus be there and here at the same time? Jesus speaks to us via the Holy Spirit. (Jesus: “He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak.”)

Obeying the Holy Spirit is obeying Jesus. Ignoring the leading of the Holy Spirit is ignoring the very “head of the church”, Pastor Jesus. The Father, your Father, wants you to be lead by Jesus who speaks to you by the Holy Spirit. Yes, the Holy Spirit, in turn, often speaks to christians through christians, but He never assigned a credentialed, salaried pastor to replace Him! It is so very important you understand that.

Two shepherds cannot lead a flock of sheep, especially if the two are going opposite directions. If I am your shepherd than the Holy Spirit is not your Shepherd. And if the Holy Spirit is your Shepherd, I am not your shepherd and you have no business calling me pastor. You call me pastor because of the two you have chosen me to shepherd you, to guide you, to teach you. When I replaced the Holy Spirit as pastor I, at the same time, replaced Jesus as your pastor. To confirm this....

To confirm this, simply self-inspect to see who you are obeying. Are you obeying “commandments of men” or are you obeying God's commands? Is calling a man pastor a “commandment of men” or a commandment of God? Is allegiance to many other evangelical traditions allegiance to christians or allegiance to Christ?

I don't want you to think that I made an intentional attempt to replace the Holy Spirit. No way. And yet this I did, unknowingly and unintentionally. I assumed that God's order in given oversight to Christ's church-on-earth is: Jesus..... Holy Spirit.... pastor congregation.

That's what I learned at seminary and from those who rank higher in our denomination. But in fact that is catholicism. Catholics are taught God's order is: Jesus.... Holy Spirit.... catholic church catholic. That same type of order is found in mormonism, anglicanism and every other christianized religion.

Lord Jesus wants to rule His people, individually, through the Holy Spirit. Freedom is being pastored by “that great Shepherd of the Sheep” via the Holy Spirit who “will guide you into all truth”. Freedom is what Lord Jesus wants me, and every other person who has sabotaged congregational leadership, to “Let My people go, that they may serve Me”. Jesus wants you to

have what you once had when first “born of the Spirit” before being snatched by religionists.

Evangelical leadership refute this logic with Hebrews 13:17: “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive.” “Those who rule over you” rule in a very limited sense; they are restricted to God's word. Even the authority of Moses was limited to God's word, possessing no authority whatsoever to add words to His word.

Leadership led the Galatians astray. Paul: “Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?” The only plausible answer is church leadership. Who else could it be? Who introduced many “commandments of men” to evangelicals? The same answer: Who else could it be? Your true Leader must be none other than Jesus Christ.”One is your teacher, the Christ.” If man is your teacher, your leader, your shepherd, your guide you have a serious problem. You must set yourself free, this by the grace of God.

It has been said that we have as much truth as we want. If you want more truth – truth regarding your religion, truth regarding the lordship of the Holy Spirit, truth regarding the spiritual bondage that has seriously devalued your relationship with Christ, truth regarding my words to you this morning – ask The Teacher (“One is your Teacher”) for more truth. “Ask, and you will receive.” Again I say, if you want more truth, ask The Truth for truth. (Jesus: “I am. the truth.)

I know this has been a most challenging word this morning. And there is more to come. Freedom is not cheap. The Israelites were occasionally under much pressure to reconsider their pleas to God to be set free.

Consider all the drama they withstood – the drama of the plagues, the drama of “the Lord's Passover”, the dread of Pharaoh's army in pursuit and encountering the impassable Red Sea, the arduous trek to the promised land, the evil reports of most of the twelve spies.

I say again that I will mail each of you a copy of this message so that you can listen again and again at home. Let me know if you want extra copies for friends.

And now I must confront you about another most important matter – your money.

(Part 3 is chapter 33)

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Dirty tricks. If you make a decision to choose Christ's commands over “commandments of men”, if you refuse to be a follower of christians, beware of what I call dirty tricks.

A dirty trick is a nasty message given in a sly manner. The essence of the message is, “You are no longer welcome here!” I received this message several times, by various people, in imaginative ways. I will relate one such frosty incident. But first I want to make it clear I was never a loudmouth, not a troublemaker. Adversely, I was a loner. I pursued Christ diligently,

more so than most. Anyhow....

I was at an evening service at Kelowna Christian Center, about forty years ago. The Holy Spirit was moving, there was an altar call for those wanting prayer. About fifty people were kneeling at the altar and I was one of them, my wife kneeling on my lefthand side. David, the pastor, who had just given an inspirational message to the congregation, prayed over each individual, starting on one end of the lengthy lineup, an elder on either side of him.

I was deep in prayer, eyes closed, seeking a special touch from the Lord. After praying for my wife David skipped past me. This is one example of a dirty trick meant to give me a silent but emphatic message: “You are no longer welcome at this church.”

I think my trespass was *Financing the Great Commission*, a book I had written challenging the tithe that David so favored. Anyhow....

A brother standing behind me noticed the snub and he put his hand on my shoulder and prayed for me. Another brother, standing a distance away at the back of the church, was drawn by the Lord to also come and pray. (All this time I was deep in prayer, eyes closed, but I could hear the conversation of the two brothers.) The second brother was absolutely amazed at what the Lord was showing him regarding my future. I was going to be used by the Lord in mighty ways, he prophesied. (I really believe *Let....My....People Go !!* is one of many examples of the

fulfilment of that prophecy given four decades ago.) Anyhow....

I tell this story to warn you that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” Jesus: “Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.”

Chapter thirty-two

Wayne Jacobsen: “I have been on a life-long journey to sort out what it means to live loved by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and enjoy helping others find traction on that journey as well. It is the reason why I maintain Lifestream.org and host a podcast at TheGodJourney.com.

Finding the joy of being love by him, we also discover how to love others, not only fellow members of his family in the world, but also how to be a better vessel for God's compassion to find its way to those who don't know him yet.”

Finding Church, Wayne Jacobsen

Chapter 1: Because it is easy to blame people for their lack of commitment and outside forces for seducing them, few pastors are taking an honest look at how local congregation might be a part of the problem. Instead of inviting people into a compelling engagement with God, they have resorted to pressure.

Chapter 1: If you share my frustration with the disparity between the church as Scripture talks about her and what we see reflected in our religious institutions, you're not alone. You're standing in a long line that includes the likes of Francis of Assisi, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and nameless others who dared to ask the difficult questions and struggled with the uncomfortable answers.

Chapter 1: What if he is actually behind this move away from institutionalized Christianity? What if he is inviting people into a simpler and more effective way to express the reality of his family? What if that church has been growing since the Day of Pentecost, and we've missed it–not because it wasn't there but because we were so distracted by human attempts to build our own version of the church that we missed the more glorious one Jesus is building?

Chapter 1: To embrace that reality, however, we're going to have to see the church as he does, not how we've been taught to define her. The longing to find a church that fulfills the promise of Scripture is God's gift, drawing you toward a greater reality than you've yet seen. I know how frustrating it can feel when your tastes of it seem to fade like a mirage in the distance, but his church is alive and well. She is not and never has been the building on the corner. Evidence of her may be there, but she's far more glorious than our institutions or denominations could possibly contain.

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Chapter thirty-three

When your colleagues turn on you for speaking Bible truth to your congregations in an effort to set them free from the religion you imposed on them – believe me, they most certainly will! – remember the words of your Lord and Saviour and Teacher and Rewarder, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be *exceedingly* glad, for *great* is your reward in heaven.” Yes, rejection hurts. You

may be startled to discover just how paper-thin is fellowship that is based on “commandments of men”.

PART THREE of an imaginary sermon delivered to an imaginary congregation Jesus warned against love-of-money. (Jesus: “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”) Money buys things and money buys prestige and money buys power. And love-of-money swells proportionately to love of things, prestige and power. Love-of-money can make honest men thieves. I know, because that is what I had become – a thief, an embezzler, a racketeer.

And you were my victims.

I say again that we are all good at what we do, and I became expert at prying money from your wallets and purses to be deposited into my supervision. The more I collected the more I wanted. The more I wanted the more devious I became at twisting God's Bible to justify collections that the Bible never endorsed. Love-of-money blinds the lover of money; he simply cannot see the embezzler he has become.

It was love-of-money that created the evangelical tithe. The teaching that God wants evangelicals to blindly entrust a tenth of their income to a local church is false. More than false it is fiendish. More than fiendish it is theft. Is there a Bible precedent for surrendering a tenth of your income to a salaried pastor (or to anyone)? Did Jesus endorse such a practice? Did Paul or any other New Testament writer? Check it out for yourselves. Come to your own definite yes or no conclusion.

Jesus (Mat. 6:21): “Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.” I embezzled more than your money, much more. I devalued the most precious possession you have – your relationship with Jesus. That relationship was weakened every sunday morning when you surrendered a substantial portion of your income to a religious thief.

Read Matthew 6:21 again and again until you really get it. The Amplified says it this way: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” One of life's treasures is your income that cost you so much of life to attain. When you surrendered a portion of that income to me you surrendered a portion of your heart to me and the religion I represent.

Your heart follows your treasure.

I taught you that giving to me was giving to God. In fact, giving to me was giving to me and giving to yourselves. This beautiful church is financed by you for you. Also you pay me to care for you and do the work Lord Jesus called you to do. I was never worthy of a salary. The Bible you and I claim to honor does not speak of one salaried christian. Not one. Contributions, yes; salaries, no.

Love-of-money and the power it purchased had captured my loyalty. Money, not Jesus, had long ago become my “first love”. As the pressure to meet financial commitments increased and

my need to fulfill my religious ambitions soared, the more time I spent strategizing how to get more of your money. I thought I was being responsible, but no, I was being driven by a lust for money. Again, love-of-money blinds lovers of money.

Successful salesmen have learned that enthusiasm increases sales, and pastors have learned that enthusiasm increases collections. There cannot be the slightest hint of pessimism. A good salesman sells himself first, and after capturing the potential buyer's trust it is easier to sell his product. I used this powerful pulpit to likewise capture your trust and after gaining your loyalty it was easy to sell my adopted religion.

I was a skilled profiteer. I knew how to exploit your need for acceptance. That need incrementally increased as I incrementally drew you further and further from the comforting reality of Christ's acceptance. The warmth that I doused over each of you was proportional to your donations. I was adept at making the chintzy nervous – and thus less chintzy – by withdrawing my warmth. I held much leverage over you, and was skilled at applying it.

I learned many years ago to always collect your money after praise and worship. That's when hearts are softened. The more passionate the worship onto Jesus, the more successful the collection. And to prompt your generosity I quoted a Scripture or two that suggest God will enrich your finances to the degree you give.

Never, never, never did I suggest you ask Lord Jesus for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to where to direct your generosity. You may have

thoughts of financing an evangelist or directing your givings toward third world outdoor crusades or supporting one of many worthwhile ministries. Can't have that. “We are a team”, I often exhorted. “We can do more together.”

To put it as bluntly as possible, I was a man-appointed shepherd that fleeced Christ's sheep. I used my position and experience and my genius to embezzle you. I was a heartless control freak and you were my prey.

Not encouraging you to be Spirit-led in your givings is teaching you to not be Spirit-led. Drawing you away from dependence on the Holy Spirit is drawing you away from the One who sent Him to you. Allowing yourself to be managed by me was detrimental to your relationship with Jesus. You can't have two lords. You can't have two shepherds. If Jesus is not lord of your finances He is not Lord, not completely, not even mostly. Can you see that?

I suggest you open your own bank account. Call it a Jesus Account. Into this account “let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” You may decide to give a little each day. A little every day equals a lot in a month or a year. From this account dispense only as the Holy Spirit guides.

You may find this difficult – you have always allowed others to allocate your money – but this

you must learn. If you do not learn you will “suffer loss”, eternal loss.“The Spirit of truth” will guide those who welcome His guidance.

You have been coerced by me and others to forfeit the governance of the Holy Spirit, not only in money matters but in every aspect of your christianity. To be free from man and man's religion you must repent of exchanging the lordship of Christ for the lordship of man. (The lordship of man is only a small step away from man-worship.)

And now my brothers- and sisters-in-Christ, I have an announcement to make. As of today I am no longer the pastor of this assembly. I ask you to never again call me Pastor or any other appellation. I have renounced all false authority. I release you from the atrocious stronghold I had fashioned on your christianity. I recently applied to myself that reprimand God spoke to wicked Pharaoh, through Moses, thousands of years ago: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

It is not God you are serving. How can anyone who calls a brother Pastor assume they are serving “that great Shepherd of the sheep”, the Lord Jesus?Serving God is obeying God. Serving man is obeying man. I urged you to walk lockstep with each other so that I could better control you. I strongly insinuated that serving me and the religion that credentialed me was serving God. My precious brothers and sisters, that's catholicism!

Because I have sincerely repented of my betrayal to Jesus Christ I therefore....

I therefore break that cursed stronghold I have had over your christianity in the name of Jesus Christ! I set you, Christ's beloved saints, free to serve Christ! I renounce all ungodly leverage. I declare myself to be what I am.... your equal. Not above and not beneath. but equal. I renounce all prestige that I have illicitly garnered from this assembly and past assemblies. I have shredded the seminary diploma I once highly valued. I disavow all false denominational authority over my christianity. I commit myself solely and exclusively to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

I repent of all the money I have taken from this assembly through my non-biblical salary (the amount which I always kept secret). I should have worked at secular employment to provide for my family. I repent of a christianity so unlike that of Paul. I will never again sell my christian service.

(Part 4 is chapter 35)

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Before telling of Richard's vision of the judgment seat of Christ, I will tell of Richard....

Richard was my elder brother-in-christ. No, not an institutional church elder, but the real thing. We spent many hours walking and talking, talking and walking. He loved the Lord and was

captivated by the Bible. Richard was seasoned, serious and sincere, and this brother affected my christianity more than all other friends combined. One day Richard had a vision of the judgment seat of Christ. This is his story....

The Judgment Seat of Christ

by Richard Crocker

2. Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good of bad.(KJV)

A Vision

I was at the Evangel Tabernacle one Sunday about fifteen years ago, in the old church on Bertram Street, listening to a guest speaker. This speaker was exhorting the people to use the gift of tongues to press into God. He reasoned that if we ignored what many consider the least of the gifts, the gift of tongues, how could we expect God to give us any of the greater gifts. It made sense. I took this message home with me and prayed in the spirit with new fervor.

Suddenly I was thrust out into another dimension. I was given a vision. This vision is not what I expected a vision to be in the sense that it did not leave me feeling joyous. On the contrary, it upset me to the point where I became ill and remained so for days.

I was shown the Judgment Seat of Christ.

A great multitude of Christians were bowed low on their knees facing Christ who was seated on the judgment seat. Each was dressed in a white robe. Each had his face hidden, almost touching the floor. A sea of white robes. None could look up. None could face their Judge. It reminded me of the verse, " the pure in heart… shall see God (Mat.5:8)".

In my vision of the Judgment Seat of Christ Jesus was grieved. Deeply grieved. Perhaps it was grief mixed with disappointment. Or grief mixed with anger. Of this I am certain – the Judge was not pleased.

This was the day that these Christians were to receive rewards for their obedience on earth. Jesus ached to give His beloved many precious rewards, the rewards that a Christian was meant to receive on this day "when each one of us will give an account (Rom.14:12)." But Jesus could not give them out. He ached to, but he could not. His justice would not allow it.

Three times Jesus spoke, "I told you not to do it! I told you not to do it! I told you not to do it!" Jesus was emphasizing the "I". It was like He was saying, "Yes, I know you heard many voices saying different things. But I, Me, the Eternal One, I told you not to do it!"

What was it that Jesus told them not to do? What command had they disobeyed? The Spirit gave the answer, bringing to the mind the words

of Jesus in Matthew 6:19: "DO NOT LAY UP TREASURES ON EARTH."

There was silence. No one had anything to say. Not one could look up.

"He shall suffer loss (1Cor.3:15)." That is what these saints were now suffering: loss. They would be eternally poorer than what they could have been. If only they would have been obedient during their life on earth, how differently this scene would be. But they forfeited their rewards for earthly gain. They had not looked upon the unseen (treasures in heaven) with the eye of faith, but that which they could see (worldly treasures) with the eye of the flesh. They had hungered for the temporal, the passing, the useless. And now they were in deep remorse, embarrassed in the presence of their righteous Judge.

Oh, what agony. Oh, what remorse. Oh, what losses.

I do not believe that for every Christian the day of accountability will be the day of remorse. Certainly not. For some of it will be a time of great rejoicing whereby their cups will be overflowing with praise and joy and thanksgiving. Their rich rewards will never fade away. They will hear their Master say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." But this is the vision I saw, nothing added, nothing deleted. This was the vision of the Judgment Seat of Christ that God chose to give me that day about fifteen years ago. Do with it what you will.

(To be continued)

Chapter thirty-four

Wayne Jacobsen: "I was an associate pastor at a growing congregation in Central California. I learned a lot there, but grew disillusioned by the way the priorities of an institution overwhelmed the simple, relational life of Jesus. In 1980 we left to help plant a new fellowship in Visalia.

This fellowship was designed to be an intimacy-based fellowship with Jesus at the center, and ministry committed to personal relationships instead of programs."

Finding Church, Wayne Jacobsen

Chapter 2: I know what they mean, but the language still jars me: "They left the church." Or, "I left the

church ten years ago." Since they have continued to passionately follow Jesus, I want to correct them. You may have left your congregation, but how did you leave the church? Do you think you can belong to him and not be a part of his family? It's one of the tragic consequences of using the term to describe the myriad of religious institutions that dot our landscape instead of the tapestry of his people Jesus is weaving together.

Chapter 2: They may do many of the things we'd expect a church to do–teach the Gospel, encourage fellowship, and reach out to the lost–but they begin by staking out their beliefs by forcing a meeting structure, decision-making process, and their mission. They try to make people good Christians by getting them to conform to those plans and expectations with varying degrees of pressure and varying degrees of success. The fact that we have hundreds of thousands of such groups all claiming to be the church and that they have so little in common renders the term meaningless.

Chapter 2: It would be easier to say that all religious institutions are bad, and smaller, more informal groups are good, except that it isn't true. If we just had an organization that represented the one, true church led by the right people then we would know who is in and who is out, except that every group who has ever tried it has ended up arrogant and abusive in trying to keep it pure.

Chapter 2: So we are going to have to make a distinction in our minds between the church that humanity has attempted to build for two thousand years, and the community of the new creation that Jesus is building. They are not the same, though they can gloriously overlap on occasion.

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Chapter thirty-five

Lord Jesus often understated but never exaggerated. "The truth" couldn't and didn't embellish. So His use of the word *exceedingly,* which He used only on two occasions, should grab our attention. The first time was at "a place called Gethsemane". Jesus said, "My soul is *exceedingly* sorrowful, even to death." Perhaps He knew tomorrow's agony would be more than the Roman's whip, the crown of thorns, the nails, the spittle, the mockery and betrayal. Perhaps this pure and spotless "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" was fully aware that very soon He would bear "our sins in His own body on the tree". How dreadful – the Sinless bearing man's putrid sins.

The only other time our Lord used the word *exceedingly* was when He told those privileged to suffer persecution "falsely for My sake" to "rejoice and be *exceedingly* glad, for great is your reward in

heaven." I say to you my brothers-in-Christ, if you dare abandon and thus disgrace the 'reputable' religion that certified you as their qualified representative you will be the target of scorn and ridicule and exclusion. But.... but.... but "rejoice and be *exceeding* glad"! (Not just glad, but *exceedingly*

glad!) "For *great* is your reward in heaven." I hope you find these words encouraging.

PART FOUR of an imaginary sermon

I know my words this morning startle most of you. You expected another sunday-morning spiritual massage, not a message that totally upsets life-as-is. But how can I set you free unless I convince you that you are not free, that you have been captivated by religion and religion's religionists.

I encourage you to listen to Lord Jesus: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth sets free, be it truth that soothes or truth that stings. The question is not, "Is my message disturbing?" but rather, "Are my words truthful?" Amen?

I desperately want you to rediscover what I recently rediscovered, intimacy with our extremely precious Jesus. Jesus said more than once, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Do you have "ears to hear"? You listened to me while drawing you relationally distant from Jesus; will you listen to me now as I attempt to draw you back to Jesus?

I say to each one of you: Before you is a life much better than the life you are now living. I repeat: Before you is a better life than the one you now experience. That better life is available whether or not you choose to receive it. Not just better but much, much better. "That great Shepherd of the sheep" wants to lead you to much healthier pasture. You once grazed contentedly in this pasturage but were snatched away by religionists, such as myself, and brought to an inferior grazing ground.

While I set you free from the tight grip I held over your christianity, only you can set yourself free from all religion and all religionists. My brothers- and sisters-in-Christ, you have a choice to make. God gave you a free will and He won't trespass that free will. The choice is not God's but yours. The wealth of your eternity, and perhaps that of those you influence, is in your hands.

To return to that better life you once had when first "born of the Spirit" you must do what I did: repent, recommit, reform. Repent of your betrayal to Christ, recommit yourself to Christ, reform your life in accordance to Christ's ways and will and words.

Are you with me? Do you have "ears to hear"? If so, the first thing to do is....

Repent. The word repent appears intermittently throughout the Bible because repentance was often necessary. God frequently called disobedient Israelites to repentance. John (the baptist) called "the Pharisees and Sadducees" to renounce their hypocrisy. Jesus called the churches in Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea to repent. Paul called the wayward Galatians to repentance. ("I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ.") And Paul often brought correction to the Corinthians who were"still carnal."

A sad reality: Christians often stray from from Christ. ("Many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.") Judas betrayed "the Son of Man with a kiss". Peter denied Christ. ("I do not know the Man!") Paul: "The evil I will not to do, that I practice." And you and I have strayed far from the intimate and fruitful bond we once had with the Lord Jesus, and you must confront that reality. I am not talking condemnation; I am talking conviction. (Jesus: "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world.")

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Because there are degrees of sincerity there are degrees of repentance. We can repent fervently ("Peter went out and wept bitterly"), casually, or somewhere in- between. Because I want to bring you to deep repentance – so that you can be completely free – I am going to confront you with harsh realities....

You and I did what God warned us not to do: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength." We transferred much of our trust from Jesus Christ and redirected that trust unto man. We made very fallible "flesh" our strength, our leaning post, our teacher. Also....

Jesus taught (Matthew, chapter 7) that the "wise man" is the one who hears His words and builds his life on those words. Instead we were, in many ways, the "foolish man" who heard His words and built our lives on variant words. The words of Christ are the words of the Father (Jesus: "Your word is truth") and the words of "the Spirit of truth".

Their words are Bible words. Man's words are the plus of Bible-plus words. You and I wasted the biggest part of our christianity building on man's destructive pluses, "commandments of men". Also....

Within the party of the pharisees were some who believed in Jesus but "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Yes, they loved "the praise of God" but they "loved the praise of men more". The one we love most can be identified by the one we obey. Also....

Instead of being governed by the Holy Spirit who "will guide you into all truth" we submitted to religionists who compete with the Holy Spirit for governance over our christianity. Also....

Jesus is "that great shepherd of the sheep", the very "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Yet many time we have referred to fellow christians as our shepherd by addressing them as Pastor. What could be more grievous to the One "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree"? Also....

We must freely admit that – like the Ephesians, like the Galatians, like several other New Testament churches and like every christian who attaches himself to the evangelical religion or any other religion – we have left our "first love". We dethroned Jesus and seated a person or a religion or "earthly treasures" in His place. Also....

We carelessly neglected the admonition of Jesus to "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven". Instead we used our energy and ingenuity to do precisely what He told us not to do: "Do not lay up

for yourselves treasures on earth." Also....

Even though Lord Jesus empowers us to stand firm against all sin ("My grace is sufficient for you") and even though God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able", we nonetheless capitulated to the influence of the majority to keep lockstep with them.

Yes, we have every reason to be genuinely repentant. A cursory (superficial) repentance is an insult to "who Himself bore our sins". While a fervent repentance leads to a fervent recommitment to Lord Jesus, a casual repentance will, at best, lead to a casual recommitment.

Recommitment. *Do you agree that the husband who refuses to recommit himself to his spouse is indicative of a troubled marriage? And do you agree that the christian who refuses to recommit him/herself to Jesus Christ is indicative of an unsound christianity? (And do you agree that as the selfish husband endangers the marriage, the selfish christian endangers his/her salvation?)*

Recommitment to Jesus Christ should be made while kneeling. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." If you refuse to kneel before Christ you are not yet ready to recommit yourselves to Christ.

Wait until you are. Jesus hates apathy.

The wise christian recommits his/her entirety to Jesus daily. Do you agree that the marriage whereby both spouses daily recommit themselves to each other and to their marriage vows will never end in divorce? If so, do you also agree that the christian who daily recommits him/herself to Jesus Christ will never backslide. will never again be abducted by religionists will become (one of relative few) "fishers of men" will lay up an abundance of eternal "treasures in heaven"?

Is refusal to recommit oneself to Jesus Christ a sure sign of immorality? Isn't commitment to another person spiritual adultery? Isn't refusing to say yes to Jesus saying no to Jesus? Something to think about?

You must understand that commitment to Christ is commitment to the Bible. The Bible contains Christ's ways, Christ's will, and Christ's words. It is folly to think you can submit to the lordship of Jesus without submitting to Scripture (to the degree of your understanding, not the understanding of another). Your knowledge and understanding will increase to the degree you submit to "the Spirit of truth".

If you are lethargic in your commitment to Scripture you are in danger of losing (again!) your freedom. Be alert to the reality that you are surrounded by ravenous (no shame intended) religionists – both advocates of religion behind pulpits and those seated next to you in pews – wanting to slurp you up. Make a sincere (repeat, sincere) decision to always choose God's word over "commandments of men". If you are indeed genuine you have no reason to hesitate signing the last page of the Bible – in the presence of the Father, Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit – as a solemn declaration of your determination to choose the Bible over religion.

And now we must talk reform.

Reform: “an improvement, especially in a person's behaviour or in the structure of something.” (Cambridge)

You have heard it said, “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results.” To protect your newly upgraded relationship with the Lord Jesus (should you come to a decision to sincerely recommit your entire being to Him) you can't be “doing the same thing over and over again”. Amen?

A christianity that is not patterned after Christ's ways and will and words will bear little fruit. “Treasures in heaven” will be scant. “The judgment seat of Christ” will be grievous. May it sink deep in your heart that Jesus is giving you a new beginning. “Old things have passed away.” You don't want to ever again contaminate your christianity with “doctrines of demons”.

Obvious questions: “Now what?.... how do I live?.... what do I do?.... what don't I do?”

To be a qualified disciple of Jesus Christ that bears much fruit (“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit”) you must rid yourself of the religious strongholds that have done you so-o-o-o much dirt. It took a long time to get these religious strongholds and it will take time to get rid of them. And this you do by the power of the Holy Spirit and not by self-effort. (“The just shall live by faith.”) Now I have some suggestions for your consideration....

Renounce institutionalism. The Holy Spirit cannot guide an institutionalized christian. Calendar christianity is not fruitful christianity. You need not know what tomorrow brings. Intellect and reason must never replace the governance of the Holy Spirit.

Pursue Christ. Discover more fully the One you have discovered. Catch the One you have caught. Know the One you know. (Paul: “That I may know Him.”) Increased intimacy, that's the objective of your remainder earth years. More of Him, more of Him, more of Him.

More of Jesus translates into more of every good thing.... more fruit.... more converts.... more love and peace and joy more “treasures in heaven”.... a favorable account at the judgment seat more of every good thing.

Deepening your intimacy is not something you do collectively. It is not Jesus-and-us *but rather* Jesus-and-me.

Again I stress that more of Jesus should be every christian's determination. Warning: If it's not more it will be less. You are continually changing. If you are not changing for the better then you will change for the worse. More of Jesus for the determined, less of Jesus for the lethargic.

Speak Jesus. It's easy to speak God – even the world speaks God – but it's not easy to speak Jesus. That's why christians seldom speak that name. When is the last time you spoke the name of Jesus in conversation? In your last social gathering with other christians, did anyone mention that name?

It takes courage to speak Christ, but it gets easier as you do. Eventually it will come effortlessly, but in the meantime you may have to compel yourself to speak that “name which is above every name”. Speaking Jesus will bring you relationally closer to Jesus it really will.

Alone Time. Alone time with Jesus. Just you and Him. The two of you. Early in the morning when your place of residence is quiet.

The value of this alone time with Lord Jesus cannot be exaggerated. John 15:5: “He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit.” To bear “much fruit” you must practice abiding. Not just occasional visits, but a continual dwelling in the awareness of His Presence (realizing He is in any space you occupy). Your morning alone time will help you develop this holy intimacy with the very “King of Kings and Lord of lords”.

Don't build. Psalm 127:1: “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” I heard it said, “The hardest thing to do is nothing.” We like to do, to build, to accomplish. It is agony for those controlled by the flesh to “Be still, and know that I am God.”

A soldier stands still and quiet before the general busy at his desk. He is on standby. If the general doesn't give an assignment the soldier does nothing but wait. He doesn't leave, doesn't make himself busy, doesn't ask questions or offer opinions. He waits. Likewise “a good soldier of Jesus Christ” is to be on standby (this regarding public, not private ministry), waiting for an assignment. His business is to do the Lord's bidding; anything else is none of his business. When your assignment comes – and it will come – consider it a holy thing to be dutifully exercised. Your faithfulness will lead to further assignments.

“Walk in the Spirit.” The opposite of walking in the Spirit is walking in the flesh. The percent of christians fully submitted to the governance of the most Holy Spirit is almost zero. (Seriously, it's almost zero.) To walk in the Spirit is to swim upstream. There can be no man-pleasing. no compromising.... no “commandments of men”. And....

And there will be no failures. The Holy Spirit does not, cannot, fail. Never made a mistake and never will. You must understand and embrace God's order of command: Jesus.... Holy Spirit you. Repeat: God's order of government is Jesus.... Holy Spirit you.

If you attend church sunday morning let it be by the urging of the Holy Spirit. No more calendar christianity. The Holy Spirit cannot guide an institutionalized christian. You don't need to know what tomorrow brings. Remember, you are no longer the lord of your life. You repented and reinstated Jesus on the throne of your christianity. He directs you through the Holy Spirit whom He sent to you. Amen?

Be defensive. You have seen pictures of knights in armor; that's should be you when (if) attending sunday morning service. (“Put on the full armor of God.”) That church gathering is congested with religionists who captured you before and will tirelessly go after you again.

Good things happen in church gatherings. It seems there is a palpable presence of the Holy Spirit when christians congregate. Jesus: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” This visitation of the Lord is rarely strong – mostly the people are gathered unto each other and not unto Lord Jesus – but feeble is better than nothing. Also, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” An anointed sermon (no, not all sermons are anointed or even truthful) increases faith in our Lord Jesus.

And bad things happen in church gatherings. Sitting sunday after sunday after sunday in a pew, a religious stronghold slowly grips you, a religious mindset that says your place is the pew, not the pulpit. not any pulpit. And you surmise that the fellow controlling the microphone is called by God to be the preacher/teacher. When you accept that you belong where you are and he belongs where he is, you victimize yourself. You see yourself as his ministry. He gains your confidence and loyalty. You assimilate his religion. Instead of imitating New Testament teachers (Paul: “Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ”) you imitate this denominational appointee.

Important: If you think you are obligated to attend sunday services you are still in bondage. Refusing to sit silently in a non-biblical pew listening to a non-biblical salaried pastor in a preprogrammed service is not trespassing, as many suggest, Hebrews 10:25:“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”. (That verse goes on to say, “but exhorting one another”.) When the writer wrote those words there was no such thing as denominational hierarchy, evangelicalism, a programmed 'service', a one-man ministry.

Prepare to preach. I and many others have taught you, through insinuation and inference, that you are not called to preach. By not admonishing you to preach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” to the world Jesus died for and to Christ's church, we actually taught you not to. (Bonhoeffer: “To not speak is to speak.”) Bear with me as I emphasize this vital reality....

1) We convinced you that we are your God-ordained pastors, and 2) as such, you concluded, we certainly would have admonished you to preach if that was God's will, and 3) therefore, you have wrongfully concluded, you are not called by God to preach. This is a crippling mindset that will be hard to drive away. But you must because....

The Great Commission is your commission. And you must give an account to Lord Jesus for your response to this mandate. The Great Commission necessitates preaching. You are called to preach, to teach, to evangelize, to admonish, to correct. Not convinced? Read the New Testament. You can either pattern yourself after the twelve, Paul, Timothy, James, Stephen, Phillip, Titus, etcetera, or you can pattern yourself after today's evangelical (so-called) laity. The choice is yours.

The first time you preach will be the scariest. After that it will get progressively easier. Don't preach religion. Don't preach church. Preach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Don't imitate anyone and don't charge a nickel. (“Freely you have received, freely give.”) Memorize the most relevant verses. Consider yourself Christ's representative. (“We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were

pleading through us.") Let the stern reality that heaven and hell are the only two destinations for every living person permeate your christianity. Persuade the godless to come to Christ and persuade the lukewarm to return to "first love".

Prepare to encounter your Judge.

Prepare for the account you must give to your Lord and Judge.

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." The judgment seat isn't a maybe but a certainty, more certain than your next birthday.

The obvious reality that most are not preparing for that day is no sane reason for you not to prepare. The reason you never heard me mention the judgment seat of Christ over the years is because of a foreboding most institutionalized pastors have; it's impossible to regularly fleece Christ's sheep of money and loyalty without conviction of malpractice. ("The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit.") Never forget.....

Without the leadership of the Holy Spirit – "He will not speak on His own authority, but what He hears He will speak" – you have no chance of completing that high calling Jesus and His Father have long ago placed on your life. Without sensitivity to the Holy Spirit you cannot bear "much fruit"; your appearance before the "judgment seat of Christ" will be an embarrassment.

Before my closing remarks I want to assure you of my availability to speak one-to-one to anyone wanting to discuss this matter further, not as a pastor but as a brother-in-Christ.

And now, in closing, I will condense in a few simple words the content of my message delivered to you out of duty.... out of love and out of concern for your eternal well-being....

Before you is a better life than the one you are living. You can go after this better life or keep the one you have. Note that I have not pointed you to a man or to men or to another religion, but to the very "Lord of lords". To choose Christ will take courage. Whatever your choice, there will be eternal consequences. Those consequences will be fully realized at "the judgment seat of Christ".

My last words to you from this pulpit: The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming! The judgment seat is coming!

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Continuation of Richard's chilling vision of the Judgment Seat of Christ.....

From Me to You

Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! This is the word I want to speak to you. I speak Jesus to you. Not a sermon. Not admonition. Not advice. But I speak Jesus to you.

Jesus saved you. Jesus hung suspended between heaven and earth by three nails bearing your sins "on his own body on the tree." Jesus is the only one who died for you. Do not spend your life impressing anyone else. Do not serve yourself. Do not be a foolish man who heard the words of Jesus but built his life on the words of another. Your house will surely fall. If you build your life on the words of anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, your Christian life will end up in comparative poverty. Yes, you may make it "as by fire." But you will suffer loss. You will be eternally poorer than the man who heard the words of Christ and had the wisdom to build on His words.

Can you not see Jesus in the garden sweating drops of blood? Can you not picture Jesus suffering rejection before Pilate on your behalf? See Him now. Jesus being disrobed, left naked in shame. Spit upon. Crowned with thorns. Sneered at. His hands and feet pierced through with nails.

He cried out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Jesus taking your place and mine so that we would not suffer eternal damnation.

It is this Person that you have put your trust in to save you. It is this Jesus who promises rewards for faithfulness. It is this Jesus who loves you and aches to give you priceless eternal rewards. It is this Jesus that cries out to you now. It is His voice alone that matters. Jesus calls you to turn from your dead works and build on His words.

Would you reject your Christ to build on the words of another? It is the I am that calls you. It is the Eternal One who reasons with you to turn from dead works. It is He who longs to have you complete the course that He laid upon your life.

There is an appointed time for you to stand before this Jesus. You will have to give Jesus an account. Paul declared, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." The terror of the Lord. Though blood- washed, though His adopted, you will witness the terror of the Lord if you appear fruitless at the judgement seat.

Jesus will deliver you from any hindrance from doing His will. Jesus is on your side. Jesus does not condemn His own, but out of His agape love He would warn you of the certain tragedy that you are walking into if your life is consumed with laying up treasures in this life.

"Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Help me to hear Your words! Jesus, help me to prepare for that day of accountability. Jesus, I want to have the rewards that You want me to have. Jesus, let me feel the impact of Your words; may they move me, change me, challenge me. Jesus, help me turn from dead works and selfish pleasures. Jesus."

Chapter thirty-six

Wayne Jacobsen: "We are also connecting with an ever-growing group of people in this area who are living outside the box of organized religion and are learning to share a journey of faith without all the institutional politics. We don't claim to see more than a few steps down the road. We want to follow the Lord's call on our lives however he leads us and not seek to grasp anything for ourselves."

Finding Church, Wayne Jacobsen

Chapter 2: History shows us that no group structure can successfully reflect the life of Jesus' church for very long. It happens subtly but, over time, people end up serving the structure. They become dependant on it, instead of following him. In the end, however, no creed, ritual, or structure can contain the church Jesus is building.

Chapter 2: How well would we love each other and the people around us if we no longer had divisive institutions separating us or exhausting us with their meetings and activities? I am convinced love will do far more to unfold the kingdom of God on earth than any project or outreach would devise. The church Jesus is building is the one you've been longing for and that is why the human version has been so frustrating. I hope this book provides a catalyst for the conversation the church desperately needs if we're going to reflect his glory in the world.

Chapter 3: Though it took many years, in the end it won out when I stopped embracing Christianity as a religion of rituals and rules and started embracing Christ himself.

Chapter 3: Gossip and conflict divided people, and most of those who aspired to lead us during those various groups evidenced serious character flaws leading to sordid affairs, both sexual and financial. I found it disheartening that one could know so much about Jesus without being shaped by his life.

Chapter 3: We talked about being a family, but real relationships were undermined by a controlling system that encouraged people to follow the pastor instead of following Jesus.

Chapter 1: Those who knew Jesus best around me had no desire to create institutions or set themselves up as its leaders.

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List of Tozer Books

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*** God Tells the Man Who Cares

*** How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit

*** I Call It Heresy!

*** Man: The Dwelling Place of God

*** The Pursuit of God

*** That Incredible Christian

*** This World: Playground or Battleground?

*** Who Put Jesus on the Cross?

List of Wayne Jacobsen Books

*** He Loves Me!

*** The Naked Church

*** Beyond Sundays

*** A Passion for God's Presence

*** Finding Church

*** Tales of the Vine