



# CONNECTED

July—September 2017

## In this issue

A Personal Update	1
Impersonation	1
Chasing Christians	2
Good Friends	2
Now in Spanish	3
Book Review: <i>Esther: The Romance of Providence</i>	3
Christian Law Assoc.	3
Dying Churches	4
Variety	4

## A PERSONAL UPDATE

In Jesus' famous and glorious *Sermon on the Mount*, He placed great emphasis on human frailty and impotency, and on the need for people to trust God in all things. Midway through the sermon, He highlighted His practice of clothing the trees with leaves and covering the earth with grasses. At the end of that part of the sermon He said, "*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*" **Matthew 6:34**. In no way was Jesus discouraging forethought and planning. After all, He's the same Jesus who said those who would build towers should count the cost and those who would attempt projects such as war should be sure they're ready to go. **Luke 14:28-32**. Twice Proverbs makes this statement, "*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hide it himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.*" **Proverbs 22:3, 27:12**. The Proverbs also say, "*The heart of the righteous studieth to answer.*" **Proverbs 15:28**; when it comes to foresight and planning, we are advised to consider the ant, **Proverbs 6:6-11**. As stewards of the Lord, let every one of us plan wisely, but let everyone also keep in mind that our plans may not all work out as we have in mind.

That has certainly been my case. Another pastorate was not in my plans, but God had other ideas.

The last three months have found me neck-deep mainly in the work of pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Houston, Texas. Anyone my age must surely know that a long-time pastorate is not likely; but every man of God who is worth his salt will routinely give his best to the God-given job at hand.

The first weekend of May Dr. Pat Briney was here. What a trooper and racehorse he is! Our plans at Northwest Baptist are to host a seminar on *Answers that Build Faith* every year at about this time. We called our first seminar *Equipping Believers for Worldview Warfare*. It was truly a powerhouse event. In June I started a seven sermon series on the book of Esther. For me, preparing for and delivering this set of exegetical, expository sermons has been very uplifting and enriching.

God continues to restore Northwest Baptist Church. It has not been an overnight, *flash-in-the-pan* experience, but it has been steady. It has been my privilege to baptize three new believers, and another is scheduled for July 2. God has added a wonderful new young family, another young family has made a serious re-commitment to faithful service and our nursery and children's ministries are growing. In spite of the fact that old age is taking its toll on our numbers, our attendance is still holding strong even in the summer. Thank the

Lord for building His church!

Mrs. Hutson and I were blessed to spend a few days with Pastor & Mrs. Don McFarland in Childress. We also had the privilege of seeing our University of Texas grandson off to China. Over there, he is taking an engineering course and completing an internship abroad. We also spent a part of one day visiting with our Colorado son and daughter-in-law who spent a few days in Texas.

Lord willing, July 17-19 I will attend the Rogers Baptist Church *Missions Conference* in Garland. The last week of July our church is taking a group to visit the Creation Museum/Ark Encounter in northern Kentucky, just outside Cincinnati. I look forward with great anticipation to being with Pastor Collin Hirsch and Holt's Prairie Baptist Church in Pinckneyville, Illinois the second weekend in August. At that time the church will celebrate its 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Praise the Lord!

What a privilege it is to live and serve the Lord! I hope I never live long enough to get tired of it. I don't want to be griping, complaining and halfhearted when I cross the finish line.



Dramatic impersonation of Simon Peter  
Easter Sunday 2017

Sunday school teacher, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"  
"No! How could he, with just two worms?"



Dr. Patrick Briney

# CHASING CHRISTIANS

Through the years, usually with a heavy heart, I have *chased* a good many Christians for lots of reasons. Not always, but often the Christians you have to chase are sour, negative, mad about something, complaining because they didn't get enough attention or recognition, backslidden, into to sinful behavior, lazy, self-righteous, unreasonable and downright childish. Many of them are the people discussed in Hebrews 5:11-14. They've been saved a long time, and have had plenty of time to grow up; but they're still *babes*. What I'm saying here is not a matter of theory; I have spent a lifetime in the ministry, and have spent a lot of my time chasing, petting, burping, cobbling and trying to appease people who should have grown up years ago.

I have painfully observed that if you don't *chase* lots of people, they will attack you. They will say you don't care and are not compassionate enough. They will remind you of the shepherd who left the 99 and went after one stray. I have also observed that people who expect to be *chased* are very good at twisting the Scriptures to their advantage.

I do not feel very good that I have fallen victim to this perverted mentality. I have neglected lots of people who needed help to chase after other people who seem to delight in being chased, and chased, and chased. I have let them worry me sick, and have neglected time in the study of God's word and prayer because I knew someone was sour. I doubt that it is right to chase after one who doesn't want to be helped to the neglect of many others who really need attention and help. There's just something wrong with an educational system that neglects 29 kids in a classroom to chase after one kid who's a habitual troublemaker or who for one reason or another can't or won't compete.

There's a time for people to grow up. They've had plenty of attention and help, often for years. For whatever reasons, they didn't get it. Spiritually they are 20 or 30 years old, but still behaving like a two-year-old. Care for them, love them and help as much as possible? Yes! Coddle them, pet them, baby them, cater to them and spend the lion's share of your time with them? No! There comes a time when people have to accept responsibility for their own attitudes and actions. It is real easy for those of us who lead, especially those of us who pastor churches, to neglect the many in favor of the few, to cater to those who refuse to grow up rather than help develop those who are serious about the work of God. If I know my own heart, I would give the shirt off my back to a person who is serious about God and who really wants to know the truth, however I have lost my heart for those who make a lifestyle of being petted and chased. Life is mighty short. Resources should be used wisely.

## GOOD FRIENDS

For Mrs. Hutson and me, a lifetime in the gospel ministry has been better than a dream come true. I committed my life to the ministry on May 1, 1955. I am just past the 62 mile marker. I thank God for choosing me, for allowing me to be a part of what He's doing.

Over these years, we have met multitudes of wonderful people. Many of them have become lifelong friends. They are scattered across America, and some live oceans away. In most cases, life does not afford us the privilege of seeing each other very often, but we know. Yes, we know the gift it is to have caring friends, people who love you and pray for you, people who do not require lots of attention.

Some of you read my *Connected Newsletter*. It is one small way we stay connected. Thank you for being there. Thank you for caring for Mrs. Hutson, and for me.



**Jessie & Thomas George**  
Dear friends for many years!

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up."

"That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?" "Well, I have to go to church on Sunday anyway. I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

By the time an average American child reaches the age of 18, he will have seen approximately 40,000 murders on television.

**"I am the way, the  
truth & the life"  
Jesus**

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## A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ

### *Esther: The Romance of Providence*

J. Vernon McGee  
 Thomas Nelson Publishers  
 Nashville, Camden, New York  
 ISBN 0-8407-5796-4

A book does not have to be scholarly to be good. Though J. Vernon McGee was a scholarly man and what he wrote was scholarly sound, he rarely concerned himself with footnotes, the opinions of liberal scholars or other such expectations of scholarship. He was folksy; reading his book makes you feel like you're hearing him preach. McGee was a conservative, Bible-believing preacher who spoke the common man's language. That approach is clearly reflected in his writings.

*Esther: The Romance of Providence* is a delightful little commentary on the book of Esther. It is both exegetical and expository. It also flows very well, and presents a very good understanding and overview of the book of Esther. McGee's book presents lots of historical information, and has a particularly strong section on anti-Semitism.

*Esther: The Romance of Providence* is not a long book, only 140 pages, but it will give you a good understanding of the book of Esther. It is a very easy read. Those who would do a more scholarly and in-depth study of Esther would do well to read *Esther: Triumph of God's Sovereignty* by John C. Whitcomb and the writings of the ancient Greek historian, Herodotus. For those who would simply like a good, clear understanding of the book of Esther, *Esther: The Romance of Providence* by J. Vernon McGee is a good place to get it. I recommend the book.

## NOW IN SPANISH

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many faithful people, *A History of Churches: the Survival of New Testament Christianity against Overwhelming Odds* will soon be available worldwide in Spanish. For a long time, making this book available to the Spanish-speaking world has been the dream of missionary Robert Creech. He spearheaded the translation. By his side was another faithful Panamanian missionary, Alexis Gordon.

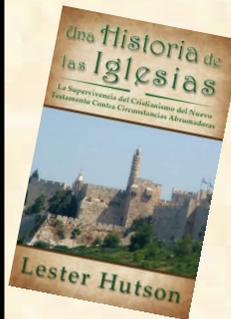
They were greatly blessed with the help of a Spanish professor from one of the universities there in Panama.

Translating and publishing a book especially of this magnitude is no small undertaking. There are long hours of meticulous work. The translation alone is a tremendous undertaking, but hours upon hours are needed to proofread and make all of the corrections, establish correct margins, ensure the accuracy of the maps and charts, not to mention

all it takes to prepare the book to meet the requirements of Amazon. A faithful yokefellow named Philip Rice has graciously provided the technical know-how and work to make this happen.

My English version of this book has a chapter on the King James Bible. Many Spanish-speaking people use the Reina Valera Spanish translation. They need a chapter giving the history of the Reina Valera. Missionary Bruce Martin graciously wrote that chapter.

It has been so refreshing to see God's servants cooperate together in a common effort to get the truth to a whole new language. To Him be the glory! You will soon find the book on Amazon.com in both electronic and paper formats. Praise God, this book is available to Spanish-speaking people worldwide!



## PIN DROP MOMENTS

A few years back at a conference of international engineers including those from France and America, during a break, one of the French engineers said, "Have you heard the latest dumb stunt Bush has done? He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims. What does he intend to do, bomb them?"

A Boeing engineer stood up and replied quietly, "Our carriers have three hospitals on board that can treat several hundred people; they are nuclear powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they have three cafeterias with the capacity to feed 3,000 people three meals a day; they can produce several thousand gallons of fresh water from sea water each day, and they carry half a dozen helicopters for use in transporting victims and injured to and from their flight deck. We have eleven such ships. How many does France have?"

You could have heard a pin drop.

## THE CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

The pastorate of [Northwest Baptist Church](#) in Houston, Texas now consumes most of my time and energies. This has greatly diminished my time available for private preaching engagements and for CLA representations. I still do both, but on a very limited basis.

Dr. David Gibbs and the Christian Law Association are helping God's people every day. What started in 1969 continues, and it continues pro bono. CLA has always been and is a faith-based ministry which depends mainly upon the support of the Lord's churches to pay the bills. Churches, pastors and individuals are not charged for the legal advice or representation they receive from CLA in matters of the faith.

Though I am rarely able to travel for CLA at this time, I'm always happy to help connect those in need with the right people.

## DYING CHURCHES

They're everywhere. On an ever-increasing basis, this world is rejecting God. Fewer and fewer people are going to church, especially younger people. Even for many *church-going* people, serious support is just not there; church attendance and involvement is a *take it or leave it* matter. Most anything is a reason for skipping church: visiting family or company, an out-of-town weekend, *feeling bad* which would never keep them from work and sports and almost any excuse. Especially sports! It seems that hunting season, a fishing tournament, a marathon, a get-away weekend, sporting competitions especially for the children and such things are adequate justification for skipping church.

With each new generation, commitment to God and his church is diminishing. Every year hundreds of churches die, mainly of old age. There is a core that keeps the church alive and the bills paid, but there is not much replenishing. The nursery is and children's Sunday school are mostly empty. Good, loving, giving, sound, godly people; but old. It's a formula for death. When 80%- 90% or more of the people in a church are 65 years old or older, the handwriting is on the wall. 10 or 15 years, and they're out of here. The church doors close; there's nobody to carry on.

For a long time, that is where Northwest Baptist Church has been; some of the best Christian people you could ever find, but mostly old. It's been a slow process, but things here are turning around. The verdict is still out, but there is good reason for hope and optimism. One thing is sure; when a church is dying of old age, you cannot sit around in denial and do nothing, expecting that somehow things will heal themselves. Some wise guy has pointed out the obvious: *Keep doing the same things you been doing, and you will keep getting the same result you been getting.* No church is at liberty to change sound doctrine or to behave like the world in order to reach the world, but dying churches need to look in the mirror. It's a mistake to be too pious and cavalier about yourself. Many dying churches with good people have lots of baggage: social cliques that new people find hard to penetrate, very formal and ritualistic habits, a slouchy *throw-it-together-at-the-last-minute* approach to worship, a holier-than-thou mentality, behind-the-scenes powerbrokers, a family gathering approach rather than a reverent meeting with God, an absence of joy and passion, a lack of teaching and preaching that gives real answers to the issues of the day and a superficial friendliness. It is easy to be set in your ways and be pretty intolerant of all who do not see it and think like you do. It's good to be strict for the right reasons, but it's a bad mistake to have your mind so set that you can't even talk about real issues in a reasonable manner.

Yes, there are lots of dying churches. When we one day stand before the head of the church, I doubt that most churches will fare as well as they think they will. A good, long, honest look in the mirror would help most churches. It seems to me that Revelation 2-3 is about this very matter.

*"Poor is the nation that has no heroes, but disgraceful are those who having them forgets."*  
Citizen Potawatomi Nation Long Room Veterans Wall – Shawnee, Oklahoma

*"Procrastination is the thief of time."*

Ronald Reagan

You can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig. Nothing short of the New Birth can make a person a child of God. 2 Peter 2:22

Many of My Books Are Available in both Electronic and Paper Formats at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)



*"The very same issues and liberties that affect church schools also impact Sunday schools, bus ministries, vacation Bible schools, and church camps. If the government has the right to license, regulate, and control church schools, the government also has the right to license, regulate, and control Sunday schools, bus ministries, vacation Bible schools, and church camps."*  
David Gibbs, Jr. Remembering the Price, p. 96

**"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHO-SOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE,"**  
John 3:16