



CONNECTED

January—March 2018

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Snow at our place in Houston
December 8, 2017

Please receive our best wishes for you at this beautiful holiday season! Merry Christmas and a happy New Year from the Hutsons!

PLANNING TO SUCCEED

If there was nothing to debate and argue about, within minutes some preacher would find something. We're good at it. Just run something up a flagpole, and very soon it will be full of bullet holes by good Christians who know just about everything.

For a long time I have been of the opinion that *he who aims at nothing generally hits it*. I try to live a *proactive*, not *reactive* life. It seems to me that approach to life is pretty obvious in the Scriptures: "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,*" **2 Tim. 2:15**; "*The heart of the righteous studieth to answer,*" **Prov. 15:28**; "*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished,*" **Prov. 22:3**; According to Jesus, wall builders and generals count bricks and soldiers **before** they start, **Luke 14:28-31**; and there are many other similar passages.

I am quite aware that we are nothing without God. We live on His earth, breathe His air, drink His water and have nothing of our own that death won't take away. We all came here naked, and every one of us will leave penniless. That's right! Not one of us will take even one penny with him or her. "*In him we live, and move, and have our being,*" **Acts 17:28**.

I am equally aware that God expects something from every one of us. He has given us a mind and abilities, and we have the capacity to do what He expects of us. He expects lost people to believe on Him, and He will not save them until they do. He expects saved people to trust Him, work, plant and sow seeds, give, be honest and do lots more. If they don't, they cannot expect a good harvest and

God's blessings. "*The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing,*" **Prov. 20:4**. "*The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble,*" **Prov. 4:19**. "*If any would not work, neither should he eat,*" **2 Thes. 3:10**.

The Bible says, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,*" **Gal. 6:7**. Inherent in this passage is the concept of personal responsibility. Where a person does not sow, he cannot expect to reap. Those who sit by and wait for God to do everything are in for a rude awakening. For a long time I have said that *God feeds the sparrows, but they all have to dig for worms*.

Where's the balance? I will leave it to the brilliant theologians to figure that out. In the meantime, I intend to keep on planning and working until Jesus comes. For me, *We'll Work till Jesus Comes* is not just a song. I know that it is all God's work: His earth, His blessings that make it possible for us to be here, His plan of redemption, His time, His talent and His treasure. It is ALL His. For every good thing we must say, *To God be the glory!* But I know that in His great scope, there is a work for me to do. Thank God! He lets me be a part of what He is doing. I think that is mighty generous of Him; He could do it without me. And you! I will simply do my best to do my part. I leave the rest to Him. I will plan to succeed, not fail. I will not piously sit around and wait on Him to do what He has clearly said that I should do.

In 2018, I may fail, but it will not be because I didn't plan to

succeed. I am not merely hoping to succeed; I am planning on it. Yes, making very definite plans to succeed. These are not all, but here are a few of my plans to succeed both personally and corporately to the glory of God.

- ⇒ Besides those who get saved as a result of my preaching, I plan to personally win at least four people to Christ in 2018.
- ⇒ I plan to invest myself to the max in the mentoring of Nathan Bragdon.
- ⇒ By faithfulness, good preaching, good leadership and example, and by aggressive follow-up on those who God brings into my life, in 2018 I will do my best to bring about the spiritual and numerical prosperity of Northwest BC.
- ⇒ I am committed to better management of my time.
- ⇒ I plan to publish the edited version of *What We Believe and Why 2* in 2018.
- ⇒ I plan to again read the Bible from cover to cover in 2018.
- ⇒ I plan to read at least one good book every month in 2018.
- ⇒ I plan to do a better job of taking care of my body by walking at least 1 1/2 miles 3 days every week and by following a healthier diet.
- ⇒ I plan to periodically take a little personal, quality time with Mrs. Hutson and my family.
- ⇒ I am committed to being a faithful servant of my Savior and Master in 2018.

No one will ignore God forever

AN EFFORT TO HELP

On May 1, 1955 at the Fairview Baptist Church in the country outside of Lufkin, Texas, I publicly committed my life to the gospel ministry. I was 13, and most of the old folks thought it was a childhood fantasy. I am now 76. You can be assured that what happened back there was no fantasy. Through the years there have been lots of ups and downs, but I cannot imagine my life as anything other than a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Of those 63 years in the ministry, about 55 of them have been in the role of a senior pastor. I hold earned degrees from Lamar University and Liberty University for which I'm grateful. I have been both in the classroom and in the school of pastorate reality. There are merits to both.

Along the way God has put some very good men in my life. Some of them are now in heaven where I shall soon join them. Many others are still here, serving God in the gospel ministry. Oh, how I desire to help them! God only knows how many needless blunders I have made through the years. Time and again I have observed the consequences of poor decisions made by preachers and missionaries especially where they made no provisions for their post pastorate or missionary years. Oh, oh, oh! Along my trail, a few older preacher friends helped me with simple, but profound wisdom; just a few hints and tips at the right time. They helped me *see* some things that should've been obvious, but I hadn't seen them. I am so grateful for them.

Seminary can be helpful, but there are some very real and practical aspects of a preacher's life that are not covered in seminaries. In a set of video recordings which I call *Gospel Ministry Wisdom*, I am addressing and hopefully shedding insight into some of these areas. The subjects which are currently available are listed below. Later I expect to add others. In addition to the *Gospel Ministry Wisdom Series*, I have also posted 9 sessions on *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. In each of the two series, a free downloadable handout for each session is available. To view or download the sessions and handouts, simply go to my website: www.lesterhutson.org. Click *Products*, then click *Videos*. Both series will appear.

The Gospel Ministry Wisdom Series

Session 1	<i>Selected by God for Gospel Ministry</i>
Session 2	<i>Attitude, Spirit and Approach</i>
Session 3	<i>Character and Example</i>
Session 4	<i>Personal Discipline</i>
Session 5	<i>Pastoral Leadership and Vision</i>
Session 6	<i>Vision and Planning</i>
Session 7	<i>Vision, Planning and Longevity</i>
Session 8	<i>Assuming Leadership and Gaining Support</i>

The Preparation and the Delivery of Sermons Series

Session 1	<i>Ministerial Perspectives</i>
Session 2	<i>Understanding the Idea of Hermeneutics</i>
Session 3	<i>Understanding Expository Preaching</i>
Session 4	<i>Preparing an Expository Sermon</i>
Session 5	<i>Model Sermon Outline</i>
Session 6	<i>God's Plan for Good Preaching</i>
Session 7	<i>What Preaching Should Be</i>
Session 8	<i>Delivering a Sermon</i>
Session 9	<i>Some Factors in Evaluating a Sermon</i>

SermonAudio

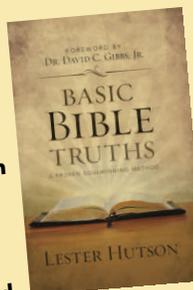
The sermons preached from the Northwest Baptist Church pulpit are routinely posted on SermonAudio. Many of the sermons are mine, but I have lots of good help. A frequent speaker in the Northwest Baptist pulpit is Attorney Hutson Smelley and my associate, Nathan Bragdon. Messages by our guest speakers are also there including this year's revival sermons by Raleigh Campbell. The URL is https://www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=northwest.

BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

God continues to use this soul-winning, discipleship tool to reach and disciple people. Often I receive reports and inquiries from far and wide.

This book is highly available. You can go to Amazon and type in my name or *Basic Bible Truths*. Plenty of used copies will pop right up, many of them at extortionate prices. Recently the Christian Law Association reprinted *perfect-bound* copies. I still have several copies of the old blue-backed *spiral-bound* books at \$5.00 each plus shipping. *Basic Bible Truth* is also available in electronic book format from Amazon.com.

When allowed the time, I can also provide copies of *Basic Bible Truths* in Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Czechoslovakian and Russian.



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MEET NATHAN BRAGDON

Most of you know that it was not in my plans to pastor another church. I had thought to give the rest of my life to writing good Christian materials including several books along with limited consulting and evangelistic work. The providence of God made it clear that I must serve as pastor of Northwest Baptist Church in Houston for at least a limited time.

In our efforts to improve the long-term outlook for this church, Bro. Joseph Allen joined me and served for a year before returning to Kentucky. Along the way, God brought Bro. Nathan Bragdon into the picture. I have known Nathan's parents Mike and Resa since they first went to Japan as missionaries. A few years ago, God called Bro. Nathan to preach, and he began to study under his dad's supervision. When Bro. Mike moved to Gatesville, Texas to become the pastor of the [Gateway Baptist Church](#), Bro. Nathan moved to Houston to study with me here at Northwest Baptist Church.

When the need for a new associate arose, Bro. Nathan was the ideal choice. He joined the staff on October 1 and continues to be a very good blessing and asset. This is his first full-time ministerial job in a paid capacity. He is so eager and hungry for the work, and he is thrilled at what God is allowing him to do. His outgoing, warm spirit and his zeal and eagerness to see the prosperity of the church are contagious. His heart is to be used of God. He is eager to learn and grow. Here at Northwest Baptist Church, he serves as Youth Pastor and as my personal assistant.



A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ

The Waldenses of Whom the World Was Not Worthy *A Sober Disquisition on the Persecuted People of God*

Ted Alexander
Calvary Publishing
1902 E. Cavanaugh Road
Lansing, Michigan 48901
ISBN 978-1-61119-162-2

The Waldenses of Whom the World was not Worthy is a good exposure to who the Waldenses were. As the author laments, far too few of God's people today have any knowledge of who these great spiritual giants were, let alone an appreciation for them.

Undeniably the Waldenses were spiritual forefathers of those who believe and practice the Bible. As loyal disciples of first century Christianity, these people existed continuously in the Cottian Alps, particularly the valleys of the Piedmont for at least 15 centuries. In spite of unbelievable opposition and persecution, they were highly evangelistic and begat spiritual children throughout most of Europe including the British Isles. They never were a part of the Church of Rome, and they predated Peter Waldo by several hundred years. They were thoroughly Baptist in doctrine and practice, and greatly confirm Baptist perpetuity all the way back to the time of the New Testament. As you read the doctoral overview of the Waldenses in chapter 7, you will realize they believed and practiced the same things truly Bible believing and practicing Baptist churches believe and practice today.

The author makes clear that the book is not intended to be comprehensive. Like many of us, he sees that it is important that we keep alive our Baptist heritage and do not allow it to perish. This short book is a very easy read of 181 pages, and I greatly recommend it. Mr. Alexander sites dozens of great references for proof and for further study including *The Israel of the Alps* by Alexis Muston, which I highly recommend. Pastor Muston's book is the comprehensive masterpiece on the Waldenses. Mr. Alexander also includes a brief Waldensian timeline and overview of the Waldenses. Such features as this enable a reader to quickly gain a good overall perspective of the Waldenses.

THE BEST SERMONS ARE LIVED, NOT PREACHED

**How long a minute is depends on
which side of the bathroom door you're on**

SETTLED IN OUR NEW QUARTERS

So many of you have been very kind to Mrs. Hutson and me. We are most grateful. You have asked about our home, and how we personally fared when the big storm Harvey parked here. The Lord graciously spared us. We are quite aware that we did not deserve it any more than anyone else; however, our new home received no damage. The floodwaters stopped rising about two blocks from where we live. For several days, we were on an island surrounded by floodwaters.

The old house where we lived for 26 years before moving to our new location had never flooded; during Hurricane Harvey, it took in about 4 feet of water. The storm was in August; we closed on that house in May.

We humbly thank you for your prayers on our behalf and your interest in our welfare.

**Tech Support: "Okay, at the bottom left hand side of your screen, can you see the 'OK' button displayed?"
Customer: "Wow! How can you see my screen from there?"**

A GLIMPSE AT MY PASTORAL LIFE

Since my last *Connected Newsletter*, I have been blessed with mostly good health and plenty to do. It is hard for me to imagine how any Christian could ever be *bored*. "*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest,*" **John 4:35**. It seems that being blind would be bad; but it seems to me that it would be much worse to have good eyes and not be able to see.



When I last wrote, we were just waking up to the realities of Hurricane Harvey. The media is notorious for making mountains out of mole hills, and for majoring on the minors. In the case of Hurricane Harvey, even the media was not able to paint an adequate picture of the scope and devastation of disaster caused by this big storm. Multitudes are still hurting; everything lost, rebuilding, trying to move on with life. Thankfully, Northwest Baptist Church was able to help lots of people with disaster relief. We are very grateful to several sister churches from abroad who joined us in our relief efforts.

Some of the things that pastors do are preach funerals (I had 4 in less than 10 days), certify children's workers, prepare and deliver sermons, constantly interfaced with church leaders and do lots of church planning. Thankfully our proposed 2018 church budget is ready, we're about to approve our new *Wedding Manual* with its outline of policies and procedures and we have a well-planned and populated 2018 church calendar. Our *Preaching Calendar* is also in good order through May, and we are ready for *Vision Night* which is January 7. We were blessed to have Bro. Don McFarland as our 53rd anniversary guest speaker, and Bro. Raleigh Campbell was a huge blessing for our fall revival. I had a right-eye cataract removed and a lens implant, and had to start using a CPAP machine; but generally I'm in great shape considering the mileage on my odometer. I am just grateful to God that He allows me to be a continuing part of what He is doing.

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

In the late 18th century, Benjamin Hawkins was a politician and Indian diplomat. While in the south, he was requested by the President to return to Washington. He responded, "God willing and the Creek don't rise." He was referring to the Creek Indian tribe and not a body of water.

He that hath the Son hath life

"Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint." Mark Twain

Today, after my 72 hour shift at the fire station, a woman ran up to me at the grocery store and gave me a hug. When I tensed up, she realized I didn't recognize her. She let go with tears of joy in her eyes and the most sincere smile and said, "On 9-11-2001, you carried me out of the World Trade Center."

A TESTIMONY TO INDIGENOUS MISSIONS PRINCIPLES

The first weekend of December afforded me the opportunity to help honor missionaries David and Carol Holland. For 30 years, they served in Papua, New Guinea, mostly in the very remote highlands jungle village of Karimui.

David Holland is a very ordinary man, not the kind you would expect God to use to establish such a massive and outstanding missionary work in one of the most remote places on planet Earth. He was already in midlife when he went to New Guinea. He set about to quickly learn the trade language, which is Pidgin English. There are over 600 tribal languages over there; almost every tribe has a different language.

Long before he arrived in Karimui, Bro. David asked God to give him a man who he could win and train. In their very first service, Kimin was saved. With Bro. David's guidance, Kimin grew like a weed. A church was planted. Eventually Kimin became the pastor. That church planted other churches. Today there are more than 30 churches and missions points in the vicinity; all have come from that first church.

Furthermore, they have done it on their own with very little American money. From the start, Bro. Holland taught them to tithe and do things for themselves. There has been a grubstake here and there, but the works in Karimui, New Guinea are indigenous. Yes, their rise or fall does not depend upon the continued infusion of American money. If I understand the Scriptures correctly, that is how it should be.

I considered it an honor to be in the presence of the great old man of God who David Holland is, and with his dear wife Carol who has been with him step for step. Neither his nor her health is very good. They now live in Duncan, Oklahoma, but they stay in regular contact with Pastor Kimin and the people in New Guinea. He gives advice and direction to Bro. Kimin and the churches much as did the apostle Paul to Timothy and the churches of his day. The Hollands visit Karimui once a year and stay about three weeks each time. Before he came off the field, Bro. Holland began translating the Bible from the King James into Pidgin English. Once he arrived back in the States, he continued the effort, and now the complete Bible (Old and New Testaments) is available in the trade language of New Guinea. What a wonderful privilege it was to be a part of something so special as this surprise honoring of such distinguished servants of our great God who worked themselves out of a job in Papua, New Guinea! That's the way missionary work ought to be.

The Hollands are also active in the ministry of their home church, [Bible Baptist Church](#), where their son-in-law, Jeremy Taylor is pastor.