



# CONNECTED

April—June 2018

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### Nathan Bragdon

A wonderful young man of God whom He has placed in my life

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## WHAT ON EARTH ARE WE DOING FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE?

All of us start out the same every year, every week and every day: 365 days, 7 days and 24 hours. God never violates our *freedom of choice*; He lets us use the time He gives as we choose.

I sometimes think of the time God has given me and of how quickly it has gotten away. I've spent it all; yes, ALL of it. I have none of it in reserve. I am keenly aware that one day soon I will give account to God, my maker, for *how* I spent it. After all, it was really His; the whole trip I've been living on *borrowed time*. I'm not alone in this journey.

I have to admit that most of my time has been spent in earthly pursuits. I haven't kept records on such things, but I suspect that in my case not nearly enough has been done for *heaven's sake*. I have observed that when most people, including Christians leave here (and they all do), not much outlives them. Oh, how wise we'd be to give more attention to *heaven's sake*!

In this little slice of my life which I call the last 3 months, I have been as busy as *a bee in a tar bucket*. Here I am, again doing what pastors do: studying God's Word, preparing sermons, delivering sermons, preaching the funerals of my loved ones, planning and directing the life of the church God has given me and doing my best to impact lives for the

better. Right in the middle of our January Missions Conference, one of our dear 50-year old ladies died. It was a big funeral. The Lord had truly turned around her life, and she had a big impact on lots of people. A week later Jo Ann Lanier departed for heaven. Jo Ann and Leland were missionaries in Japan for 10 years starting in 1960. Leland was a great servant of God, and Jo Ann was there stride for stride. He was pastor here at Northwest Baptist for over 20 years. Last week, another faithful member of our church took off for heaven. Seven months ago she had a massive brain hemorrhage; it took her down for the count. We were all relieved to see God promote her from the agony.

In January, the focus of our church is *Missions*. God forbid that we ever grow lukewarm about our first responsibility; we must "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,*" **Mark 16:15**. Our Missions Conference at the end of January was powerful. Our church theme this year is *Faithful Stewards*. "*It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful,*" **1 Corinthians 4:2**. Without faithfulness, a person is pretty well useless. That includes the secular as well as the Christian world.

About 25 years ago, Mrs. Hutson slipped and really hurt

her knee. So many times old injuries come back to haunt us. Hers did. On February 13, she got a brand new Titanium knee. As good as replacement parts are, they never seem to be as good as the original parts that came from God. And, the replacement process is usually quite an ordeal and very painful. That seems to be particularly true with a knee replacement. Mrs. Hutson is recovering very well. She's off the walker, and getting pretty frisky with a cane. Therapy has tested her mettle, but she has been very determined and quite courageous. She's really pushing herself; she's determined to again walk straight without a limp. Thanks for all who encouraged her (and me) with your prayers, cards, texts, emails and other acts of care.

I'd like to be more engaged in the publishing of more books and helpful materials; and maybe soon I can return to that pursuit, but for now my attention and energy has been mostly on preaching and other pastoral pursuits. How much of that will outlast me, I don't know; but I do know I am doing it for *heaven's sake*. It's where my Master has me for now; I'll let Him keep score.

**GOD LOVES YOU**

## BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM LESTER HUTSON

Please accept my gratitude to each of you who has showed a continued interest in the books which I have written and published. Here is a list of those books and where they are available.

Books by Lester Hutson	eBook		Paper	
	Amazon	Barnes	Lester Hutson*	Amazon
<i>A History of Churches</i>	\$9.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$15.00/2 \$25.00	<a href="#">19.99</a>
<i>A History of Churches (Spanish)</i>	Coming soon			<a href="#">19.99</a>
<i>Basic Bible Truths [perfect bound]</i>	\$9.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$10.00 **	
<i>Basic Bible Truths [comb bound]</i>			\$5.00	
<i>Basic Discipleship Teacher's Manual</i>	\$6.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$10.00	
<i>Basic Discipleship Student's Manual</i>	free	<a href="#">pdf</a>		
<i>Christian Family Principles</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$5.00	
<i>Christian Maturity</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$10.00	<a href="#">9.99</a>
<i>Cultivating Your Heart</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$5.00	
<i>Giving</i>	\$2.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>		
<i>Great Bible Truths Revisited</i>	\$9.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$15.00/2 \$25.00	
<i>Notes on Studying Nehemiah</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>		
<i>Once Delivered</i>	N/A yet		\$1.00	
<i>Outlines on Ruth</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$2.00	
<i>Peculiar Misunderstandings</i>	N/A yet		\$5.00	
<i>Philippians: God's Love Letter</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>		
<i>Survey of Bible History (Creation - Fall)</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$3.00	
<i>Survey of Bible History (Cain - Babel)</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$3.00	
<i>Survey of Bible History (The Patriarchs)</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$3.00	
<i>Survey of Bible History (Full set)</i>			\$6.00	
<i>The Week They Killed Our Lord</i>	\$4.99	<a href="#">kindle</a>	\$3.00	
<i>What Happens Once You Die</i>	free	<a href="#">various</a>		
<i>What We Believe and Why I</i>		<a href="#">kindle</a>		<a href="#">14.99</a>
<i>What We Believe and Why II</i>	N/A		\$5.00	

Beyond the Grave tract: 100 for \$10.00

\* These books are ordered from  
[lesterhutson@gmail.com](mailto:lesterhutson@gmail.com)

\*\* Available in Spanish,  
Portuguese, Vietnamese, Czech  
and Japanese

## U-TUBE TEACHING SESSIONS

Each of the teaching sessions listed below is approximately one hour. These are for students who are serious about gospel ministry (both pastoral and preaching). To view or download the sessions and handouts, simply go to my website: [www.lesterhutson.org](http://www.lesterhutson.org). Click *Products*, then click *Videos*. Both series will appear.

### The Gospel Ministry Wisdom Series

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

### The Preparation and the Delivery of Sermons Series

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

## OCCASIONALLY

**For now most of my time and energy is given to the welfare of Northwest Baptist Church. Occasionally with proper planning, I preach abroad, but the demands here keep me pretty close.**

Solomon wisely observed that *"Children's children are the crown of old men," Proverbs 17:6*. I can say *Amen* to that. On May 11 our granddaughter, Megan Hutson, will graduate from Colorado State University in Ft. Collins. The next weekend our grandson Cody Hutson will receive his engineering degree from the University of Texas in Austin. These children truly are a joy and crown to Granny Hutson and me.

**If your output exceeds your intake, your upkeep will be your downfall.**

## A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ AND HIGHLY RECOMMEND

### *The Anatomy of a Hybrid: A Study in Church-State Relationships*

Leonard Verduin  
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502  
ISBN 0-8028-1615-0

This excellent book is not for the faint-hearted or those who have a hard time facing the truth. It is one of the most challenging, eye-opening books I have ever read.

Leonard Verduin is a true scholar who calls a spade a spade. New Testament Christianity has been here continuously since the church Jesus built in Jerusalem, Israel; not just here and there in isolated pockets, but widespread throughout most of Europe, North Africa and the British Isles. With massive evidential support, Mr. Verduin establishes that fact beyond refutation; however, tracing what we would call *Baptist History* (he doesn't call it that) is clearly not the objective of this book.

This book is primarily about monolithic societies versus composite societies. Most nations that have existed from the start have been monolithic or what Mr. Verduin calls *sacral*. Until this remarkable governmental experiment which we call the United States of America, *freedom of religion* (with it go *freedom of speech* and *freedom of assembly*) was hated and absolutely not tolerated by the nations of the world: ancient Israel, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Germany, England, the Navajo Indians, the Zuni Indians and the list seems endless. Every state (*regnum*) demanded alliance with its religion/church (*sacerdotium*); they were considered one, and to be a part of one was automatically to be a part of the other. There was no *choice*, and to refuse membership in the state religion meant extermination. In ancient Israel, a person became a member of Jewish society by birth and the act of circumcision symbolized oneness.

In "Christian" Rome, failure to *christen* a baby became punishable by death. *Christening* became the new *circumcision*, the means of identification with the state. In 323 AD when Constantine wed the *Christian* church to the political state of Rome, everyone was expected to immediately get on board. Those who didn't were horribly persecuted; and for their refusal, millions of them were killed in the most macabre ways. Once you understand *sacral* thinking which has dominated the world, you will understand why all-out war has consistently been waged against all dissenters.

You will also understand why the teaching of Jesus Christ about people who are *in the world, but not of the world* was considered so radical and not to be tolerated. The rulers of this world have always considered a divided allegiance to be mortally dangerous. To them a composite society is anathema; highest allegiance must be to the state, not to a person like Jesus Christ. The ideology of Jesus Christ is in direct contrast to the ideology of a church state. In a church state, there must be sameness of thought; any thinking outside the party line cannot be tolerated.

Christians should be paying attention. *Political correctness* and the official position of *atheism* in public education and many other layers of society coupled with *hate speech* legislation eerily speak of a new kind of *sacralism* in America, Europe and much of the world. It seems that a new kind of monolithic society is emerging; and inevitably with monolithic, totalitarian societies come persecution and elimination of all dissenters.

*The Anatomy of a Hybrid* will tax you, but it is well worth the read. To me, Verduin's marriage analogy from Genesis 6 is somewhat of a stretch, nevertheless I highly recommend the book. It is very educational, and it will probe your thinking. I am convinced that Leonard Verduin has his finger right on the pulse.

## Dr. Billy Graham

He lived almost 100 years (1918-2018) and he was very mortal with shortcomings like all of us, but he was a great force for good. He preached the saving message of Jesus Christ with clarity for almost a century. Thousands trusted Christ because of him. Yes, it is pretty obvious that some made false professions. I suspect every preacher who has ever won souls to Christ has had false professions. Not all who followed Jesus were genuine. Billy Graham touched millions of lives; all over the world!

Through the years I have heard him blasted by lots of people, many of them preachers who were close to me. Much of the criticism has come from people who never made much difference for the better in their entire lives. It's so easy to be negative, critical and full of cheap shots and talk than it is to see the good in someone and to get up and do something of value. In my opinion, one of the biggest, most self-destructive flaws of Christians (especially preachers) through the centuries has been their propensity to zero-in on each other in attack mode, fellow Christians who are strikingly like themselves. All they can see is the few percentage points where they disagree. The molehill becomes a mountain. Satan is reaching the masses with atheism, Islam and salvation by works; Bible-believing Christians are fighting over the mechanics of how to get missionaries to the field, the Lord's Supper and church music; gagging at gnats and swallowing camels. I am not saying that secondary issues are unimportant; I am saying that too many Christians are woefully weak in cooperation, dwelling together in unity and respecting other Christians with whom there's a 2% difference. It seems to me that we're people of war who would much prefer to fight each other than real enemies of the cause of Christ.

I wish I could touch the hem of the garment of Billy Graham. He was a Christian giant among us. I am grateful to God for him and his Christian impact on this world. I feel privileged to have lived during his lifetime. I have asked God to give me a portion of the spirit which was Billy Graham.

**Listen to our sermons:** [https://www.sermonaudio.com/source\\_detail.asp?sourceid=northwest](https://www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=northwest).

**We don't change the message of God;  
His message changes us.**

### I'M THINKING ABOUT DOING IT ONE MORE TIME



I'm standing on Mt. Carmel where Elijah had the contest with the prophets of Baal. Behind me is the Jezreel Valley where the Battle of Armageddon will be fought. Look at the V. Those are two landing-strips. The main Israeli air base is here; mostly underground. What a place, and there are lots of them in the Holy Land.

I thought I wouldn't go back until the Lord gets back, but I'm thinking about it. People need to experience this place. It's too grand to explain in words or with a slide show. For God's people, it's the Trip of all trips. Your Bible comes alive; just ask anyone who has been there. Sometimes they call this land the 5th gospel. It's an unforgettable experience which suddenly gives you a fresh perspective and appreciation for the Bible. Until about a year out, it's impossible to get an exact price or prepare a brochure. I suspect the full price including air fares, 3 meals a day, taxes and tips, guide, tour bus, driver and site fees will be in the neighborhood of \$5,000.00. That's based on double occupancy, New York to New York.

If we do it, we will spend days in the Galilee, days in Jerusalem and two nights at Eilat on the Red Sea. We will make a day trip to Petra in Jordan.. If you are interested in being a part of this potential trip, email me at [lesterhutson@gmail.com](mailto:lesterhutson@gmail.com). 713-206-8367.

Jesus said it this way:

*"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars,"* Matthew 24:6

Another person said it this way:

*"Peace is that brief, glorious moment in history when everyone stands around reloading."*

**A wise man once said nothing**

***"The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible."***

George Burns

