



CONNECTED

October-December 2018

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The church is God's lighthouse, "the house of God, which is the church, the pillar and ground of the truth."

1 Timothy 3:15

"Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year."

Victor Borge

IT'S BEEN HOT IN HOUSTON

Indeed it has! Down here July, August and September are hot months; usually close to 100 degrees every day with humidity 80%-90% and sometimes more. You don't have to *work up a sweat*; just stand outside for a few minutes, and it will automatically happen.

Life can heat up in other ways too. For churches and those in the ministry, it seems that summer keeps everybody hopping: summer youth camp, Vacation Bible School, a summer youth trip or two. Yes, these were all on our calendar.

For me, July started off with a couple of funerals and considerable time in doctor offices. Walking problems and lower back issues asserted themselves. I have seen a number of doctors and seen minor improvements, but the verdict is still out. For the most part, I think it is simply the wear and tear of the years. It seems also that old injuries from the 1967 head-on collision are asserting themselves.

In July it was a blessing to be a part of the Rodgers Missions Conference. Our young people here at Northwest Baptist came home really encouraged by the Youth Conference which was in tandem with the Missions Conference.

In August Mrs. Hutson

and I celebrated our 56th wedding anniversary in Canada. The big national parks in Alberta are spectacular and breathtaking, and the entirely different landscape of Newfoundland is equally majestic. God blessed us with a great trip.

Most of you know that one of the anchor beliefs of my life is "*He who aims at nothing generally hits it.*" If I understand Jesus' story in Luke 14:28-33 about builders counting building materials before building towers and warring kings counting their troops, God's people are obligated to plan, prepare and count the cost. Planning is as much a part of my life as is eating and sleeping. For years I have maintained a *Preaching Calendar*. I don't want my preaching to be helter-skelter and seedy. I maintain a *Church Calendar*; events are usually scheduled at least a year in advance. I have a *Personal Calendar*. God often interrupts my plans, but I am never just aimlessly ambling along with little or no direction.

I never want to be a church dictator or a *one-man-show*. Without planning and the involvement of others, that is how it will be. With that realization burning in my soul, it has long been my pastoral practice to meet annually with the leadership of the church to

(1) honestly evaluate how we're doing with improvement in mind and (2) outline specific plans for the future. At the end of August, I met with my leaders here at Northwest Baptist for three nights and two very full days. We went away with lots of plans and improvements on our books. I pray God will never let me become content with mediocre, second-best, or just enough to get by! He is worthy of the best we can give Him! Routinely!

I am looking forward to a great time of fruitfulness as we move into the final quarter of 2018. Yes, that's where we are; life is not standing still. Pastor Ron Thomas from Rodgers Baptist Church in Garland will begin October in a revival with us. Later in the month we will recertify our children's workers. Oh yes, child molestation cases are very much alive and well. We must protect our most precious assets, our children. Every church should, and those who don't stand to pay a mighty high price for their negligence. Our Northwest ladies will host a *Ladies Retreat* in November. I am investing my life in my apprentice who is Nathan Bragdon, and I am so glad that God continues to allow me to represent and serve Him.

GOD IS LOVE!

CRYING OVER SPILLED MILK

Back in 1996, one of our two sons departed this life at 27. It seemed far too early. For his mother and me, it was anguish of soul like I have never known. The emotions were overwhelming and overpowering. I will never forget the call and trip to meet a policeman on that Monday morning before a large 10:30 funeral and people who had no idea of what I was experiencing.

I felt very much like I was in a dense fog. Mentally I couldn't see much of anything beyond the next step or two. My mind was swirling like in a mighty storm. Was foul play involved? His mother; how could I help her cope? And his sister? And brother? Who did I have to tell, call? How would it impact my church? My ministry? Where would I bury him? How would I pay for the funeral? It was really hard to think very far out. The grief and anguish of soul which I felt was beyond what I can adequately describe.

Some things don't *just go away*. You don't wake up and realize it was all a bad dream. It's easy to turn bitter, grow sour, blame and crucify yourself. The range of emotions which I experienced over the next few months truly tried my soul. Oh the temptation to *write myself off* and *throw in the towel*!

In several very hard ways, I have learned that the difference between victory and defeat, success and failure is response. Sooner or later everybody meets a Goliath. They get beaten up, hurt, disappointed and crushed. The people who can't get past it are the losers. They stay at the cemetery, harbor a grudge, pity themselves, blame somebody and turn inward and negative.

We can't go back. Whenever possible we can and should make amends and we should learn from our mistakes, but to fasten ourselves to the past ruins us. It doesn't make sense to allow something to fowl and wreck the rest of our lives. *Crying over spilled milk* doesn't solve a thing. If you can, clean up the mess and move forward. See what went wrong and don't repeat the same mistake, but don't take the poison of your past into your future.

Jesus said, "*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God,*" **Luke 9:62.**

REAL CHRISTIANITY IS MORE THAN EMPTY WORDS AND PATS ON THE BACK

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John 3:17.

On a cold day in January, some years ago a barefoot little boy was standing on a sidewalk in front of a shoe store peering through the window, and shivering with cold. A passing lady approached him and said, "My, you're in such deep thought staring in that window!" In a soft voice he said, "I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes."

The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his cold feet, and dried them with the towel.

The clerk returned with the socks. She put a pair on his the boy's feet, purchased him a pair of shoes, wrapped up the remaining socks and gave them to him.

She encouraged the little boy and turned to go. The astonished child caught her by the hand, looked up into her face with tears and asked, "Are you God's wife?"

PASTOR HUTSON'S PRAYER REQUESTS

- ◇ That I will never be a whiner or excuse maker.
- ◇ That my approach to life will always be proactive and not reactive.
- ◇ That I will focus on the blessings I have and how good God has been to me, and not on what I don't have.
- ◇ That I will be a good example of the sustaining grace of God in all times, especially as I walk through the valleys of life including the final valley.
- ◇ That I will be a good ambassador for Christ, putting His interests first. Routinely!
- ◇ That *practice what I preach* will be a reality in my life, not empty words.

To order books from me, send (1) your name, (2) a surface address and (3) a phone number. Most, but not all of my books and materials are available on Amazon. They are listed on my website:

www.lesterhutson.org

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**A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ
AND HIGHLY RECOMMEND**

Living in the Times of Jesus of Nazareth

Peter Connolly
Steimatzky LTD
P.O. Box 1444
Hakishon St. Bnei Brak 51114
Israel
Printed in China
No ISBN

This is the best, most informative study book I have ever read on life in Israel as it was in the time of Jesus Christ. It is crammed full of explanations and pictures about everyday life at that time.

It has three main sections. The first is about Herod the Great. In simple and concise ways the book explains Herod's connection to Rome. Herod was a genius, but a cruel despot. He did anything to protect his position including the murders of anyone who he viewed as a threat whether it be his wife or his sons. The book creates a feeling of the viciousness that prevailed in Israel and shows how unstable and desperate the times were. There is tremendous information on those who were in power; their lineages, their treachery and their scorn of the poor. The Jewish religious system was wed to the political system. Those were truly explosive times.

One section of the book deals with Pontius Pilate and Jesus. It is fascinating and extremely informative.

The final section of the book deals with the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple and the fall of Masada. There is a progression from Herod to the end of Judah, and this book captures it better than any I have ever encountered.

This book is only 99 pages, but they are large pages. Many pages have tremendous reconstruction pictures of how things looked at the time: the ritual baths on Masada, the Temple Mount and Herod's Temple, Herod's Herodium, Masada, a fully dressed High Priest, the harbor at Caesarea Maritime and many more. There are pictures of Roman and Jewish coins of the day, a Roman crucifixion with full explanation of how they did it, clothing of the day and how they were made, eating and food-storage vessels, furniture, housing construction, footwear, jewelry, wood-working tools, farming implements and Roman military weapons. There are maps of Israel, battle scenes and maps of military maneuvers, scenes from ancient times and scenes of ancient places as they are today.

There is truly a wealth of information in this book. It will greatly enhance Bible study for anyone, but it will particularly help those who plan to visit Israel. The book is hard to find and pricy, but it is well worth the effort to locate it and the price.

A U.S. Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian, and French Navies at a cocktail reception. He found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks, but a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English. He then asked, "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?" Without hesitating, the American Admiral replied, "Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies, and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German."

You could have heard a pin drop.

THEY'RE IN PANAMA

It is a blessing to announce that Tim and Mandy Dulany are now on the field and their missionary work in Panama is under way. They flew from Houston to Panama on August 23, and have already started orientation and outreach.

Thanks to all who have helped. With the blessings of God, they were able to raise most of their support in about two years. At Northwest Baptist Church, it is our heart and deliberate intentions to be responsible and cooperative team players with each church and individual who has joined this effort.

WISDOM OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES

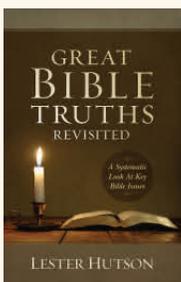
⇒ A little boy was watching his pastor father write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" "Why, God tells me." "Oh! Then why do you keep crossing things out?"

⇒ A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

MESSAGE FOUND ON THE WALL OF A CHURCH IN FRANCE

"When you enter this church, it may be possible that you hear the call of God. However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, find a quiet place and talk to Him. If you want to see Him, send Him a text while you're driving."

"In times of change, the learner shall inherit the earth while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." Eric Hoffer



THIS BOOK IS NOW AVAILABLE ON [AMAZON](https://www.amazon.com)

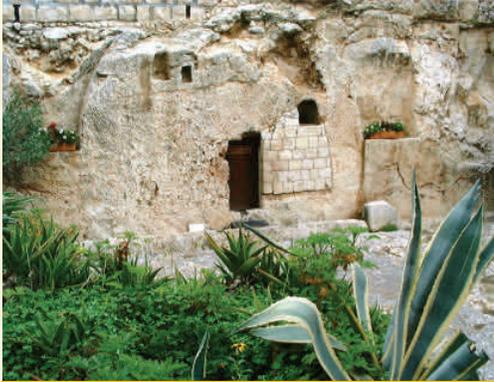
"STATESMEN, MY DEAR SIR, MAY PLAN AND SPECULATE FOR LIBERTY, BUT IT IS RELIGION AND MORALITY ALONE, WHICH CAN ESTABLISH THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH FREEDOM CAN SECURELY STAND."

- JOHN ADAMS, JUNE 21, 1776

Israel in October 2019

Lord willing, on Monday, October 14, 2019 we will fly to Tel Aviv, Israel to begin a time of great inspiration and learning. Though it is still too far out to get exact details on some things, many things are already firmly in place.

We will fly Houston to Houston, not New York to New York. We will arrive in Israel on Tuesday morning and immediately begin our tour. From Ben Gurion Airport, we will drive straight through the heart of the Holy Land on our way to Tiberius on the Sea of Galilee. The fact is that at any spot where you stand in Israel, you're standing on ground where some significant Bible event or person is recorded in Scripture. To say that *your Bible suddenly becomes alive* is a huge understatement. As we move through the land during this tour, it will be our goal to help you stay oriented, to know where you are in the Bible. There are far too many great stories in the Bible for us to elaborate on all of them; but we will unfold some of them on site. You will be overwhelmed.



The Garden Tomb

It's still empty! Our God lives!

We will spend about half of our time in Galilee; one day around the Sea of Galilee visiting the place where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount and where he fed the 5,000. We will take a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, visit Capernaum and see a boat from the time of Jesus. In a year of drought when the water was low, a tip of the boat was exposed. The Israelis were able to salvage and preserve it. We're going up on the Golan Heights and then to Caesarea Philippi, right in Matthew 16. We'll visit Megiddo, Mount Carmel and the Jezreel Valley.

When we leave Galilee, we'll visit Beth Shean where the bodies of Saul and Jonathan were hung on the walls. We'll go down the Jordan River Valley right past Jericho and up to Jerusalem. It's the route Joseph and Mary took, and later Jesus. With our base in Jerusalem for the last part of the tour we'll visit the Mount of Olives where Jesus prayed in Gethsemane and was betrayed. I want you to touch the Wailing Wall and see the Temple Mount, go inside the High Priest's House where the Jews tried Jesus, walk through the Antonia Fortress where He was tried before Pilate, and see Golgotha where He was crucified. Nothing can compare to standing inside the empty tomb. We're going through Yad Vashem, the Jews own Holocaust Museum. We'll drive the famous Jericho Road, dip in the Dead Sea and visit Masada.

And yes, we will have time for shopping: the Diamond Factor, the great store at Masada where you can purchase Ahava products and lots of gift shops as we tour.

Early the following Tuesday morning our plans are to fly to Amsterdam, Holland. (There is a possibility that we will fly to Rome or Paris.) We will arrive there midmorning and tour all day, then spend the night there before flying back to Houston on Wednesday, October 23.

All this and more will be spelled out in a tour brochure which will be available about December 1. The reason we cannot be exact on every detail at this time has to do with airline seats and hotel rooms. The airlines and hotels will not quote firm prices prior to 11 months before departure date. Obviously, until then it is impossible to put a firm, exact price on the tour; however, we expect the price to be between \$4,600 and \$4,700.

Once I have firm prices, I will complete the tour brochure and we will begin receiving deposits which will be \$500. The entire trip can be paid up front or paid in installments. It must be paid in full 3 months before we fly. A full-size tour bus has 52 seats. The driver takes one of those seats, and the guide takes another. There are therefore 50 available seats on this tour. Those who confirm that they will be a part of the tour will be given first opportunity to pay their deposit. Afterwards, opportunity will be given to others on a first-come first-served basis. If you would like to be guaranteed a seat on this *Holy Land Tour*, you should let me know as soon as possible at lesterhutson@gmail.com. Several have already done so and will be given first priority once we start receiving deposits.

I have booked this tour through DuCar International Tours out of Lynchburg, Virginia. I have known Duke and Carlene Westover for over 50 years. They have been my tour operators for more than a dozen tours. Ido Keynan will be our guide; I cannot imagine a better guide. He is truly the expert's expert. This is a vintage Christian tour. We will hear something about modern Israel and other pertinent information; but our focus will be upon the Bible. The land we see and places we visit will all be viewed in light of the Bible. To be a part of this tour, you will need a valid passport. All tips, taxes, site fees, airline tickets, tour buses and guides are covered including 3 meals a day. Soft drinks, bottled water, candies, souvenirs and personal items are at your own expense. You will need trip insurance.

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM THE HUTSONS

The big holiday season is just around the corner. Yes. By the time you read these lines, Thanksgiving will be just over seven weeks away, Christmas is four weeks later and the New Year is one week later.

Mrs. Hutson and I are blessed beyond measure to have so many dear friends. Thank you for loving us and caring about our lives and what we do. We especially appreciate your prayers on our behalf, and your encouragement.

Since this is the final edition of our *Connected Newsletter* for 2018 both of us wish each of you a most blessed and joyous holiday season. As Thanksgiving moves past us, count your blessings. No doubt you will be surprised at how good God is and how gracious He has been to you personally. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to say Merry Christmas. This season really is all about Christ; there is no good reason to keep quiet about it. Be kind and respectful, but cultivate as many opportunities as possible to tell the greatest story ever told.

To each and all of you our many friends, *Merry Christmas and a happy New Year* from Lester and Margaret Hutson!



How You Look at the World Matters

"I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."
Winston Churchill