



# CONNECTED

April—June 2020

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## WE HAVE BEEN HIGHLY BLESSED

Since our last *Connected Newsletter* back in January, Mrs. Hutson and I have been richly blessed on many fronts. We have travelled over 5,000 road miles in Texas; the Lord has given us protection and safe travel. Overall our health has been remarkably good.

Having Pastor Dmitry Gospodarev and two of his children in our home for almost 3 weeks was quite an experience. They live in Belarus, but children are children all over the world. They all love to romp and play, giggle and push the limits. We had the

privilege of introducing Bro. Dmitry to 9 sister churches and to many of my pastor friends.

The pastor who is replacing me at Northwest Baptist Church is now living in Houston, and expects to be fully settled by the end of May. Currently he and I are functioning in a co-pastor role as we proceed through an orderly transition. He is Bro. Darren Simpson; how thankful I am that God has brought him to us. I am so eager to give more attention to the preparation and publishing of more books and other Christian materials.

In January we had a really blessed Missions Conference at Northwest Baptist Church. I greatly enjoyed presenting a *Saturday Basic Bible Truths Seminar* at [Southside Baptist Church](#) in Weatherford, Texas. Bro. Josh Merrell is pastor there. My loved ones keep dying, and I keep conducting funerals; one in Killeen, Texas and another in Vidor. In my log these were numbers 424 and 425. Of course, if you keep

living, there comes a point in your life when you spend more and more time in doctor offices.

The Coronavirus arrived on the scene and has already substantially changed the landscape. In the efforts of our country to limit the spread of this extremely contagious disease, we are temporarily conducting our Sunday services via video recordings. You can find our church website at [www.nwbchouston.org](http://www.nwbchouston.org). Locate the NWBC Videos. Click on the *Link to Playlist* under *Church Services* and choose the one you wish to view. Under *NWBC Videos* you will find a growing selection. Most of them are training sessions for young preachers. Now that we've called a new pastor at Northwest Baptist, I hope to soon give much more attention to this sort of work.



Leah and Tim Gospodarev  
Precious children from Belarus

**“Rejoice in the Lord always”**

## HOW TO PRAY FOR LOST PEOPLE

It's hard to imagine any child of God who does not have a deep desire to see more people saved. Most of us would do anything it takes to see lost people come to Christ. If God so loved the world enough to give his Son to die on the cross in their place, we ought to do all we can to bring them to Him.

One thing we can do is pray for them; however, how to do that is not as simple as it might at first seem. I have spent a lifetime around churches and Christian people. I have been in *my fair share* of prayer meetings, and have seen thousands of *prayer lists* complete with names of lost people. I have heard the passion and seen the tears of many dear, sincere and God-fearing people plead with God on the half of a lost mate, child, parent, friend or coworker. Many times I have heard the phrase, "*Lord, please save that person nearest Hell's door.*" I respect those people, and wish every believer had that kind of zeal, sincerity and passion.

It's important to pray, but "**how**" we pray is also very important. One of the biggest mistakes we can make is to mistakenly imagine that a lost person will get saved simply because we pray for him. He won't. The fact is that "*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,*" **Romans 10:17**. Three verses earlier the question is asked, "*How shall they believe in him of who they have not heard?*" **Romans 10:14**. In this section of Scripture the point is well established that in order to be saved lost people must (1) hear and (2) believe the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Until that happens no amount of praying, however sincere, will result in the salvation of the lost person under consideration. People who pray for lost sinners should not imagine that all they need to do is pray.

The fact is that the gospel message must be introduced to lost people. They must have a messenger to give them the good news: a preacher, missionary, Sunday school teacher, mother, father, brother, sister, cousin, friend, neighbor or coworker. The message may reach the lost person in the form of a tract, book, radio or television message or by simply reading the Bible.

**How** should we pray for lost people? Pray that somehow God will get the message to them. Pray for doors of opportunity, and the good sense to recognize an opportunity when it presents itself. God opens and closes doors, **Revelation 3:7**. After all, He controlled Providence, **Colossians 1:17**. Pray for those on the front lines such as preachers and missionaries. Ask God for wisdom in how to best approach the lost person with the message of salvation. Pray for boldness and consistency. That's how the early Jerusalem Christians prayed for lost people, **Acts 4:29**. Pray for a right spirit in yourself as you present the message of Christ, **Psalms 51:10**. Ask God to minimize the efforts of Satan to hinder efforts to bring people to Christ, **Job 1:10**. "*Pray one for another,*" in our ongoing efforts to bring people to Christ, **James 5:16**.

Yes, by all means we should pray for the lost; however, we should do so in a scriptural way. We should never pray in a way that takes away our personal responsibility to get the gospel message to lost people.

### Coronavirus Fallout

Our cleaning lady just called and told us she will be working from home. She said she will send us instructions on what to do.

### THANKS FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Many of you are aware that I started 2020 with a surgery to repair damage from a previous surgery back in 2007. It didn't go so well, and I struggled to regain my footing. I am facing another surgery to correct the problem; however, the Coronavirus has it on hold.

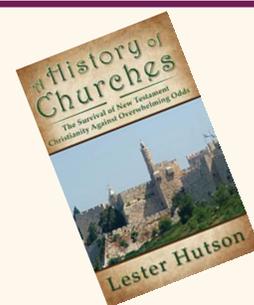
So many of you have been praying for me, and I am deeply grateful. I ask you to please continue.



### The Shrine of the Book

This is one wing of the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem. The top or dome is built in the shape of the clay urns in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at Qumran.

Apart from an intervention from God, this was our 15th and last trip to the Holy Land. The years have taken their toll.



*"In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm and three or more is a congress."*

John Adams

## A GOOD SERMON WILL ALWAYS

- ✓ **Be scriptural.** A message from God, not human rhetoric. Adequate Scriptures
- ✓ **Have a clear central theme and message.** Not rambling
- ✓ **Have a good title.** One that conveys the theme and direction of the sermon
- ✓ **Start well.** No hot-dogging, posturing or unrelated material. Clear, attention-getting introduction with Bible text
- ✓ **Be exegetical.** Bring out the message of the text; never impose a foreign message
- ✓ **Make sense.** Never leave people wondering about the point.
- ✓ **Make a case.** Not merely a good, biblical talk; but sermonic
- ✓ **Have definite structure.** Clearly identifiable points with direction
- ✓ **Have good, clear transitional thoughts.** Identify and negotiate point changes
- ✓ **Have a clear flow.** Never herky-jerky; natural development of the theme
- ✓ **Move.** No potholing or needless repetition; make the point and move
- ✓ **Have depth and substance.** Be meaty; have something to say
- ✓ **Have personal application.** Not lofty, but sterile. No *pie in the sky*
- ✓ **Be clear.** Logical; no needless, superfluous unrelated information
- ✓ **Manifest conviction and passion.** The preacher really believes it
- ✓ **Be colorful.** Well illustrated; Good language, choice of words & gestures
- ✓ **Draw a succinct conclusion.** One which summarizes the sermon
- ✓ **Bring listeners to the bar.** Sermonic. Produce a *So What*
- ✓ **Be short and to the point.** Quit when the point is made; It's over
- ✓ **Be free of pathologies.** Bad speech, gestures and distractions

## A BOOK I HAVE RECENTLY READ & HIGHLY RECOMMEND

### *Still a Baptist neither angry nor ashamed of it*

Jerry D. Locke  
Calvary Publishing  
Lansing, Michigan  
ISBN # 978-1-61119-180-6

I consider *Still a Baptist* to . . . *neither angry nor ashamed of it* one of the best, most powerful books in my library! Every Baptist should read it, and everyone who denigrates or is ashamed of Baptists should read it. This book is concise, to-the-point and very articulate. It puts a truck-load of great and factual material into a thimble. The layout is excellent; Locke is remarkably gifted at emphasizing key points in a variety of ways. You will appreciate his sprinkling of personal history, humor, cutting *one-liner* and occasional sarcasm. His hundreds of doctrinal claims are supported with prolific scriptural backing. The numerous claims in *Still a Baptist* are well documented; the book includes an 8 page bibliography.

*Still a Baptist* it not primarily a history book; although it is laced with history, mostly Baptist history. It is primarily an exposé. It presents a clear picture of who Baptist are, and of what has subtly gone far amiss. Though Locke's personal positions quickly become quite obvious, the book is scholarly and not subjective. It is crisp, and moves with considerable depth through much heavy and complex information. It is loaded with wisdom and insight.

*Still a Baptist* consists of 317 pages with 10 chapters plus a strong postscript. *Still a Baptist* is heavy, but an interesting easy read.

This book needed to be written, and Jerry D. Locke did a masterful job. I fully embrace its content, and highly recommend it.

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### 3 OBVIOUS CORONAVIRUS MESSAGES

1. God, not humans, is in control.
2. God can quickly change the landscape.
3. This world still needs God.

Because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter a minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city. He then put a note under the windshield wiper that read, "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses."

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation."

### ANSWERS THAT BUILD FAITH SEMINAR

Baring prohibition due to the Coronavirus, on Saturday May 2 Bro. Jerry Locke will present his *Still a Baptist Seminar* at Northwest Baptist Church. There will be Saturday sessions from 10:00-3:00: two morning sessions and two afternoon sessions.

On Sunday, May 3 Bro. Locke will continue his messages on Baptist heritage with two morning sessions beginning at 9:45 and one afternoon session beginning at 2:00 PM.

Northwest Baptist Church welcomes everyone to any part or the whole of the seminar. The church is located in Houston's near north side at 1710 W. 34th Street, 77018. We're two blocks north of Loop 610 at Ella. Copies of his books will be available.

To the left is a picture of my friend Bro. Jerry Locke and his wife Susan. For many years they have served the Lord well.



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## A LITTLE PRACTICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

Jesus said, *"I will build my church,"* **Matthew 16:18**. A church is simply a *"called out assembly."* It is obvious that Jesus had in mind a *called out assembly* which would be very distinct and different from all other *called out assemblies*.

A church that Jesus recognizes as one of His has very definite earmarks. For one, a true Church of Jesus Christ is made up of (1) saved people. Furthermore, it is made up of saved people (2) who have been baptized. These are not merely baptized believers who assemble; they have (3) covenanted together to form a distinct organization whose specific purpose is to carry out Jesus' Great Commission which He gave in **Matthew 28:19-20**. Being saved does not automatically make a person a member of the church. To become members of a church saved people must be baptized and join a church, covenant with it in the work of the Lord.

The Church of Jesus Christ is a very distinct and identifiable indigenous body. It is made up of members who regularly assemble and conduct the work of the church: worship, ministry and missionary work. A church has structure, government and officers: pastors, deacons, treasury people and others. Each church of Jesus Christ is *"the pillar and ground of the truth,"* **1 Timothy 3:15**. A *"pillar"* is a column and the *"ground"* is the foundation upon which the *"column"* sits. A primary purpose of each church is to be a stronghold for *"truth."*

It is no less than God who entrusted His church with the responsibility of carrying out His work on earth until His return. It is a great privilege to be a part of one of the Lord's churches. The Bible says, *"To him be glory in the church,"* **Ephesians 3:21**. At some future point, Jesus will come and gather all members of his churches together in one giant assembly called the *"church of the firstborn"* **Hebrews 12:23**. These will be the bride of Christ.

It is one thing to attend the church and even support what it's doing; it's all together a different thing to be a member. Every believer who is serious about what God wants should find a church and become an active, functioning member of it. The Bible says, *"Christ . . . Loved the church, and gave himself for it,"* **Ephesians 5:25**. It is possible to be saved and not be a functional member of one of the Lord's churches. It is not possible to be acceptable in his sight, and not be a functional member of one of His churches.



Love never fails!



No place but Texas. Sho nuff! This is my kind of bull!