



CONNECTED

October—December 2020

In this issue

| | |
|--|---|
| Bloom Where You're Planted | 1 |
| Grandsons | 1 |
| A Complete Facelift | 2 |
| Billy Watson | 2 |
| Winston Wheeler | 3 |
| 4 Things You can do with Your Hands | 3 |
| Just in Case You're Interested | 3 |
| Book Review: <i>Love, Romance & Intimacy</i> | 3 |
| Smoke Screens | 4 |



Two of my precious grandsons:
Adam & Nathan Shugart

I'm still learning.

BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

We're pilgrims; just passing through here. All of us! For how long? Only God knows for sure. One thing is certain; this earth is not our permanent abode. Don't waste too much time daydreaming about *greener pastures* and *what if*. My thinking is "*bloom where you are*." Do all you can to improve your status and productivity; God may reassign you to a new job or relocate you, but He may not. I am with the apostle Paul said, "*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, there with to be content,*" **Philippians 4:11.**

My years at [Northwest Baptist Church](#) in Houston were not in my original game plan; but God saw fit to put me here, and I have greatly enjoyed the time. COVID-19 has not been so pleasant; however, God allowed it to be and God forbid that it be an excuse for a lack of joy and fruitfulness! The work of the Lord here at Northwest Baptist Church has gone right on, and we have enjoyed some really wonderful worship services. It was a crowning experience on Labor Day Sunday to baptize two young adult ladies.

It has been such a joy to invest myself in the young man of God who will soon take my place as senior pastor. Bro. Darren Simpson has proven to be a ready student, and I am glad that he will soon be my pastor..

During these last 3 months, our church has experienced deep grief and heartache. July started with the deaths of two of the most faithful ladies in this church. On Sunday after church while we were preparing the church for the Monday funeral of

Linda Jones, our dear custodian Gwen Thomas passed into glory with a heart attack. Back to back Monday funerals were not easy. The first week of September, Linda's husband Frank slipped into his eternal home. By the end of the week, Virgil Blackwell was also gone. Though we know that all of these are now with the Lord, the loss of these four people leaves a big hole in our church. Yes, it has truly been a grievous time for us. We are not *sorrowing as those who have no hope*, but we are *sorrowing*.

I found this year's *Missions Conference* at Rogers Baptist Church in Garland to be especially refreshing. Immediately after the Conference, Mrs. Hutson and I were able to spend a few wonderful days with our family in Colorado. August 3 the two of us celebrated 58 years as husband and wife. Yes, if I had it to do all over again, without hesitation I would choose Margaret to be my lawful and wedded wife. On August 22, Margaret and I drove to [Leagueville Baptist Church](#) near Athens, Texas for the funeral of a dear, dear friend, and yoke fellow in the gospel ministry, Bro. Billy Watson. How blessed and enriched I feel for having had the privilege of knowing him!

Sunday, September 13 found us with [Midway Baptist Church](#) in McKinney, Texas. Pastor Ed Neal is a dear friend, and it was a great blessing to again be with him and this church which I have learned to love. Mrs. H and I drove directly from McKinney to

Galveston for our annual *Staff Planning Workshop*. About this time every year, the leadership of our church gives three days to intense (1) self-evaluation of every aspect of our ministry with the goal of improvement and to (2) forward planning. We are able to walk away from the *workshop* with a basic calendar for the coming year and groundwork for the new budget. It is a very soul searching, yet enriching time.

I thank God for enabling me during these days to complete the full edit of *What We Believe & Why 2*. There are no content or message changes; however, I greatly improved the language and readability of the book. Also, I added one chapter giving it a total of 53 chapters. Lord willing, very soon it will be available in both electronic and paperback formats from Amazon.com.

During these days, I was also able to start work on my next book: *What's So Wrong with Doing Right?* Lord willing, it will be a modern Christian apologetics. I hope to convey the reality that this country and world needs more, not less of what true biblical Christianity has to offer.

Due to a positive COVID-19 case in our church, we moved the 56th anniversary celebration of Northwest Baptist to Sunday, October 25. Bro. Rudy Rios from Texas City will be our guest speaker. We have restarted our 2 PM Sunday worship services.

Trust Christ Today

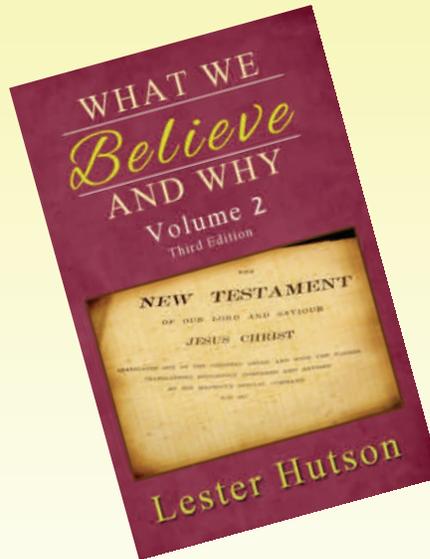
A COMPLETE FACELIFT

Many of you have a copy of my older edition of *What We Believe & Why 2*. I originally published 4,000 copies of this sequel to *What We Believe & Why 1* in 1982. In 1998 there was a need for a second edition.

I have realized that the wording in many of my early publications needed much improvement. For more than a year as time has permitted, I have been working my way through *What We Believe & Why 2*. The deep edit has been completed, and we are now formatting and processing the book for release on Amazon. The earlier editions had 52 chapters; I added one new chapter to this new edition.

It appears reasonable to say that *What We Believe & Why 2* will be available as a Kindle eBook and in paperback somewhere between the middle of October and early November. It is too early to know the price. To check on the book, go to Amazon books and type my name in the search box. All of my books that are available there will appear.

Thank you who have been supporting this effort with your prayers and encouraging words. At the end of this year when my responsibilities at Northwest Baptist Church are finalized, I will be giving most of my time and energies to producing written Christian materials which will hopefully outlive me. Already I have started on my next book: *What's So Wrong with Doing Right?*"



Billy Watson, Now in heaven

A WONDERFUL MAN OF GOD & DEAR BROTHER & FRIEND

Through the years God has blessed me with the friendship of many wonderful people including a large number of preachers. Bill Watson was one of the tops: sterling character, true blue, Christian to the core, practiced what he preached. Levity? You bet! A practical joker of the first rank with a face as straight as a poker player. It was always a joy to be around him; his love for the Lord, the work of the Lord and the people of the Lord always came through like a breath of fresh air.

God blessed Margaret and I with the friendship of Billy and Shirley Watson for close to 50 years. Bill was *Mr. East Texan*. He loved that special garden-spot of God with its great tomatoes, purple-hull peas and sumptuous water melons.

Most of all Billy Watson loved the Lord, and loved to preach His Word; and that he did very well for a lifetime. I heard him many times, and was always enriched. Bill preached the Word, not just about the Word. He preached messages of substance, and he did so very well. He touched my life very deeply, and I am grateful to God who intersected our paths. Bill reminded me of the words of Jim Elliot who said, "*When it comes your time to die, make sure all you have to do is die.*"

OH BOY!

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a barnyard of mules, goats, and pigs, the husband asked sarcastically, "Relatives of yours?" "Yep," the wife replied, "In-laws."

Contact us at:
lesterhutson@gmail.com

WINSTON WHEELER

Another great friend and yoke-fellow now with the Lord

Before the ink got dry on my article about Bro. Watson, my dear yoke-fellow since 1965 took off for heaven. Wonderful men of God! Now promoted!

Winston and Gerri came into my life with those 3 little girls on their way to serve with Dr. Roy Dearmore in Zaire, Africa. When the National Council of Churches told them they had to join or leave, they left. All of them! Convictions! They had ‘um!

They went to Brazil and planted more churches down there, lots of churches! Eventually Winston and Gerri came back to the States. He was a pastor in Kountze, Texas; Wetmore, Colorado and Conroe, Texas. I knew him well. Many times he asked me to preach in the churches where he served. Often he preached for me, especially on missionary work. That’s where his heart always was. No doubt, he has laid up many treasures in heaven.

Committed! Convictions! Depth! Unashamed! Tenacious! Tough! Always a U.S. Marine! Godly! Loyal! Good-hearted! A church man to the core!



“NEVER GET SO BUSY MAKING A LIVING THAT YOU FORGET TO MAKE A LIFE.”

4 THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR HANDS

1. **Wring them in despair.**
2. **Fold them in idleness.**
3. **Clinch them in anger.**
4. **Use them to help someone.**

Trust is the most valuable thing you will ever earn.

JUST IN CASE YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS INTERESTED

You may not be aware that I have a website: www.lesterhutson.org. There is much information on the site, and I will soon be updating it.

Quarterly I publish this digital *Connected Newsletter* and post it on the site. I have a *distribution list* with several hundred names. Each time I post a new newsletter, I send a link to everyone on the list. If you know someone who would like to receive notifications of newsletters, blogs and new books, have him or her send me an email giving permission to add to the *Distribution List*. Send to lesterhutson@gmail.com.

A BOOK I HAVE READ AND HIGHLY RECOMMEND

Love, Romance and Intimacy

Hutson Smelley

www.proclaimtheword.me

ISBN 978-0-9861336-1-9

The message of this commentary and of *the Song of Solomon* reverberates: sexual intimacy is to be expressed physically only at the right time in the right context of marriage. That context is not accidental; it must be deliberately, intentionally cultivated and developed between a male and a female. Only when a true friendship and permanent commitments and bonds are established is the couple ready for marriage and sexual intimacy.

In a world of promiscuity and shallow sexual gratification filled with books, movies and people who glamorize sex outside of marriage, *Love, Romance and Intimacy* is a rare jewel. In the book of the Bible that deals primarily with sex in a most graphic way, Hutson Smelley clearly shows how one of God’s greatest gifts to humanity is to be treated. Smelley is frank and objective in his verse by verse commentary, but never crass or pornographic.

Love, Romance and Intimacy is scholarly grounded and includes an excellent bibliography; however, it is not hinged to other commentaries on *the Song of Solomon* or Christian works on marriage and sex. Hutson Smelley flows with the Scriptures seeking to impose nothing, but to allow God’s book to speak for itself.

By its own declaration, *the Song of Solomon* is a song and must be treated as such. It is Hebrew poetry and cannot be treated as a historical narrative or a book of prophecy. Neither is the book chronologically arranged. Yet, a clear picture emerges, the picture of ideal love, romance, marriage and sex. Figurative language is abundant, especially analogies with nature: plants, animals and exquisite jewelry. Beauty is everywhere in this Bible song; and it is brought to such life and clear understanding in Hutson Smelley’s commentary. Smelley has a remarkable way of sensitizing Scriptures into an understandable picture and narrative.

In spite of the fact that *the Song of Solomon* is arguably the most difficult book of the Bible to understand, *Love, Romance and Intimacy* is remarkably easy to read and grasp; only 179 pages. Though it is extraordinarily scholarly, it is written in layman’s language. Each of its ten chapters sets the stage for the section of the book to be considered, walks through the section statement by statement, closes the section, highlights the main points of the section and offers study questions. The book begins with a very scholarly and explanatory *preface*, and ends with an *appendix* which walks through *the Song of Solomon* identifying each speaker in order of their words.

This is by far the best commentary which I have ever read on *the Song of Solomon*. I highly recommend it especially to all couples who seek a strong, vibrant, enriching and enduring marriage. I encourage parents to expose their children to this excellent work.

The two most famous words in golf: “Oh, no!”

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

SMOKE SCREENS

Distractions. Create a diversion to take attention off the real issue. Webster says a *smoke screen* is “something designed to obscure, confuse or mislead.” In 2018 the Associated Press reported that Nevada ranchers, whose livestock compete with wild horses for grazing land, used draught conditions as a smoke screen to pressure the government to reduce wild horse populations. I thought it striking that in their “examples” Webster connected *smoke screens* to “campaign promises.”

Recently I read an article titled *Former Republican National Security Officials for Biden*. It’s a pretty thorough bashing of Donald Trump, and much of the criticism is true. Time and again I have been personally embarrassed and felt shame by Mr. Trump’s brashness and rashness; however, within the first few lines of this article the smoke screen approach glared. Smoke screens in politics is about as common as oxygen is in air, and that’s especially true in a presidential election year. On both sides of the aisle! There are about as many articles out there bashing Joe Biden as there are bashing Donald Trump. I must say that a few sour grapes as in the case of those who wrote the aforementioned article seem to enrich a bashing session. That became obvious when they wrote, “While some of us hold policy positions that differ from those of Joe Biden and his party, the time to debate those policy differences will come later.” It seems that thinking people would make decisions on “policy positions;” not personalities. Before buying a house it would be wise to inspect it: see its condition and features, check the neighborhood and age of the house, see if the taxes are paid or there’s a lean and find out whether or not it’s in a flood zone. I want more than *the word* of the realtor who obviously has a vested interest in the deal.

Furthermore a bashing smoke screen seems a bit more lofty and credible when it’s by *intellectuals, authorities* and people *in the know*. I have a high respect for truly intelligent people; but I have observed that many people with high IQs and some in lofty positions have very little common sense, wisdom or touch with reality, particularly with what it comes to right and wrong. It’s shocking to read some of the books written by “our best, leading professors” and other *intellectuals*. When they start talking about the need to eliminate the non-contributing mouths within society and argue that a service animal is more valuable to society than a mentally handicapped or elderly person, I am not awed by their education or high rank. When they make the claim that educated, academic and “successful” people should be the ones who decide who lives and who dies, I’m thinking about Adolph Hitler, Pol Pot and Joseph Stalin. Every time I watch or read the news, bias glares. Censorship and twisting is obvious and disregard for truth and honesty astound me. Everywhere I look I see the elevation of *agendas* over truth and righteousness.

I am not a Republican or a Democrat; neither am I against Republicans or Democrats. I’m a Christian, and I am on the side of what the Bible teaches. I stand against all who defy God and with all who stand with Him on the issues. Furthermore, my focus is on the issues, not the personalities; and I refuse to let a smoke screen make me forget or lose sight of what really matters. The closer we get to Election Day, the more *smoke and mirrors* I see: name calling, highlighting the bad baggage, horror predictions, defamation of character and plain ole lying.

What about the issues? Tell me where a candidate stands on **the sanctity of life**, especially the lives of innocent babies. I’ve read the Bible, and I know that few things are more important to God than life. He hates murder. Don’t give me a smoke screen called *women’s rights or health care for women*. Don’t try to make “murder” look better by calling it an *abortion*. Tell me where you stand on the life of that little human being.

I’m looking at the issue of **sexuality**. God is not the least ambivalent on the fact that He created males and females, and that sex is to be between married males and females only after they are married, and never outside that relationship. I can’t stand a rash mouth, in myself or my president or congressman; but don’t try to distract me with a mouth issue or whether or not he’s popular with the presidents of Europe or South America. I’d like to know what he thinks about a person who says today that he’s a boy, but who decides tomorrow that he’s a girl. I’d like to know if he plans to push for laws that will put me in prison for taking God’s position on this and other issues. This week one of my doctors lamented to me that he’s no longer permitted to comment on a patient who says he’s of the opposite sex.

I’m focused like a laser on the issue of **religious liberty**. I wrote a book on religious intolerance. (*A History of Churches: the Survival of First Century Christianity against Overwhelming Odds*.) I know something about what it’s like to be persecuted, horribly abused and killed by the millions for preaching and practicing the Bible, and for advocating stances which are out of sync with the people in charge of the religious system and government in power. I see what’s going on this day in Muslim countries around the world. I don’t want this country to go there; and I don’t want my grandchildren to live in a country where freedom of religion, speech, the press, assembly and the redress of grievances is not tolerated. I’d like to have a president that is kind, respectful, humble and in charge of his mouth; but first tell me what he believes about the 1st Amendment.

I’d also like to know what he believes about the 2nd **Amendment**. Does he think taking firearms away from the populace will solve the crime problem in this country? Will it prevent another mass shooting? If a law is passed requiring all citizens to turn in their firearms, will the criminals all do it? What are his plans for sportsmen and law officers? Does he really believe that the elimination of firearms would have kept Cain from killing Abel?

There are other “issues” like *civil rights, police reform, the military, foreign policy, health care, socialism* and more. I hope I am intelligent enough to not be distracted by *smoke screens*. I am a free American. In the history of mankind, freedom has been a very rare thing. Many people paid a high price for us to be where we are in this country. I don’t plan to be distracted enough by smoke screens to let this rare thing called freedom which we have to slip away, especially when it is within my power to help preserve it.