



CONNECTED

October—December 2021

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THERE IS STILL LIFE PAST FOURSORE

Like people, fruit trees have a life span. Under Moses' law they were allowed to grow for a while before the fruit was harvested. An orchard of mature fruit trees was a treasure. The biggest, sweetest fruit came in the last years of a tree's life; maybe not as much, but the best. I think fruit trees are a standing testimonial of how it should be with people, especially preachers.

Our last years should be our best; the sweetest and most ideal fruit of our lives. We should be models of godliness; kind, loving, faithful, examples of how life should be. The sermons of old preachers should be meaty, powerful, passionate and well-delivered. Even though I fall miserably short, I aspire to be that way.

Since the last *Connected Newsletter* reached you three months ago, life for Mrs. H and me has been anything but docile and mundane. Thankfully it has moved closer to what I expected when I resigned the pastorate; however, there is still a way to go. In spite of the COVID resurgence, we have remained uninfected and able to be quite active. I completed six weeks of physical therapy which I continue; it has greatly helped with my lower back problems. In July we

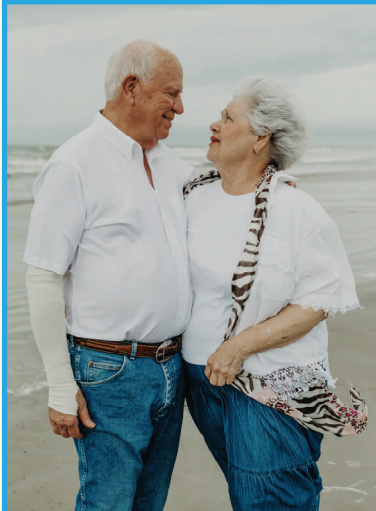
attended the [Rodgers Baptist Church Missions](#) Conference. As always, what a blessing! August 3, Margaret and I celebrated 59 blessed years of marriage. We spent September 9 with our long-time friend Edwin Zellner. This semester he is teaching a course on church history in a Bible institute. He's using my book as the textbook: [A History of Churches: The Survival of New Testament Christianity against Overwhelming Odds](#). It was my honor to be his guest for the first class. In the last Sunday of September, I was privileged to be the guest speaker for the 84th anniversary of [Lake Worth Baptist Church](#) in Fort Worth.

During these three months we were blessed to be a part of the annual *Staff Planning Workshop* of [Northwest Baptist Church](#). I preached and assisted with five funerals. One was my pastor friend Dan Dulany. I am happy to say that I was able to finish the complete re-edit of my little commentary, [Outlines on Ruth](#). The updated version will soon be available on Amazon in both electronic and paper formats. Those with the older electronic version will be able to download the upgraded version at no charge. I also completed a seven sermon

preaching series to complement the book. I am preaching the series at Northwest BC. They can be seen and heard on the [church YouTube channel](#). I also completed a series of five prophetic messages which I will preach at [Midway Baptist Church](#) in McKinney, Texas Friday night through Sunday, October 15-17: *Big Events on God's Prophetic Calendar: What God's Word Says about the Future*. Thankfully I have also been able to return to my new book: *What's So Wrong with Doing Right?* Seven of the chapters are now completed.

JUST AROUND THE CORNER

My websites is REALLY old and outdated. I'm at the head of the line in efforts to change that for the better. Lord willing, in the near future you will find it greatly improved. Much of the basic information will still be there along with new material. It will mainly be the looks and accessibility that will be a better reflection of who I am.



Aug. 3, 1962. Great choice!

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LIFE IS AN ON-GOING SERIES OF ADJUSTMENTS

Is it ever! Wow! As far back as I can remember, I've never been able to stand on one spot for very long. *"Ol' man river, that ol' man river, He don't say nothin', but he must know somethin', He just keeps rollin', he keeps on rollin' along."*

If you don't adjust, you'll get swept under; you'll get *left behind*. With or without you, life goes on. It's dizzying to me to contemplate how things have changed since I arrived on the planet in 1941: health care, living conditions, education, transportation, morals, values and technology. Yes, I remember when electricity reached my home outside of Lufkin, Texas. There was no television when I arrived on the scene. We finally got a *"party line."* No computers. No Internet. If I hadn't learned to type, I can't imagine how I would manage today. Firsthand I have faced both the need and value of adjusting to what you face as you move forward in life.

You never get past it, even when you're an old man. Actually, to a great degree the effectiveness of your life depends on your ability to adjust, to roll with the punch, to posture yourself for fruitfulness. I am convinced that if you fail to adjust to where you are in life, you are pretty likely to either die too young or die before you die. Yes. Really. I know some who've done it. They are still breathing, walking and talking; but they're basically gone, out of touch with reality, fruitless, for all practical purposes as good as dead.

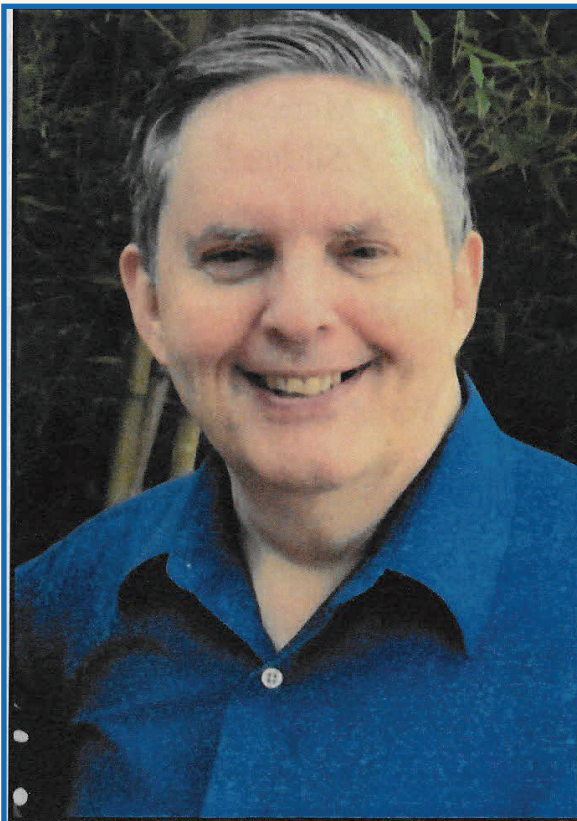
Some adjustments are harder than others, and they will not all be popular. All of my life I have lived with lower back problems. Never real strong, but sometimes as we'd say in East Texas, I'm *"down in my back."* With the years it got worse: sore 24 x 7, a painful struggle to get up and down from a seat, hard to get in and out of a car, holding the rail to get on or off the platform at church, really hard to put on my shoes, bending increasingly painful. About 2-3 years ago I had to face-up to the fact that if my lower back demise continued its current direction, within a pretty short time, I'd be in a wheel chair, and basically an invalid. If God puts me there, I'm okay with it; but I'm not okay with it if I through neglect or failure to adjust to where I am in life put myself there.

I decided to adjust: visit to orthopedic doctor, laser-guided cortisone shot, 6 weeks of physical therapy, 7 chiropractor adjustments, 3 acupuncture treatments and continuation of the physical therapy at home as long as I want to keep walking. For me, staying ambulatory and mobile means life-style adjustments. Since I was a teenager, I have been *up and at-um* almost every morning by 6:00-7:00 o'clock, and on the trail till 11:00 or later. I *didn't have time* for exercise; too busy in the ministry: sermons to prepare, early-morning prayer with people before surgeries, 8:00 o'clock in the office and *"nobody's ever going to call me lazy."* Besides, I'm a preacher and read in the Bible that *"bodily exercise profiteth little."* Now, I'm eating a little crow. According to several highly respected health care experts in my life, if I want to keep walking, and I do; then regular lower back exercise is no longer an option. *"It's your choice, Preacher."*

My phone still keeps ringing around 8:00, sometimes earlier. I ignore it and keep on exercising. Sometimes I still get the 10:00 o'clock caller with the rather contemptuous greeting, *"Did I wake you up, Preacher."* I'm still going to keep on with my home therapy. Yes, there will be occasional exceptions, but they will be *exceptions*, no longer *the rule*.

Yes, I'm still having to make adjustments. This *writing ministry* means turning off my phone and ignoring emails and texts for a few hours or days. Mrs. H and I had to give up long-trip night driving, and long driving trips of any sort are now in serious question. My stamina and endurance will no longer allow me to work 14-15 hour days for days on end; increasingly in much shorter time I simply *run out of gas*. I am trying to learn how to say *"No,"* that failure has been a lifelong weakness of mine. It's finally dawning on me that I can't fix everybody's problems or be everybody's man.

My recommendation for all of us regardless of age is *adjust your schedule and activities to best fit the situation in which you find yourself.*



Daniel Keith Dulany

It grieves my heart to announce the death of my friend and yoke fellow in Christ, Bro. Dan Dulany. He was 62. COVID 19!

I have known Bro. Dan since he was a teenage boy. Ron and Mary Dulany were headed to Peru as missionaries. Dan, the oldest and Tim both surrendered to the gospel ministry when they were young boys.

Bro. Dan labored in the Houston area his entire ministry: Austin Avenue with Bro. Nick Michalinos, Pinehurst, Giddings, Creekwood in New Caney and [Silsbee Baptist Church](#). He was pastor there for 22 years. Please pray for that church; losing him is a devastating blow.

He gave himself to the service of our great God. I saw it. Most of the trip he was bi-vocational, but Dan Dulany stayed with it; and never lost his zeal for the Lord or his love for God's Word and truth. He had my deep respect and admiration.

Also, please pray for his widow, Margie. She and Dan were married for 41 years.

Pray too for Bro. Tim and Sister Mandy in Panama. In this case, brothers married sisters. It was gut-wrenching not to be able to make the funeral.

The Forest was shrinking, but the trees kept voting for the axe, for the axe was clever and convinced the trees that because his handle was made of wood he was one of them.

Turkish Proverb



RESPECTING OTHERS

There's a selfish streak in all of us. Almost 100% of the time, our preference is for things to go "my way." Conceit is pretty subtle. Deep down we believe *my way* is the *best way*; however, the truth is that in spite of what I think, *my way* is not always the *best way*.

Other people have needs too. And ideas! Some of which are better than ours. The Bible has much to say about *others*. A great case in point is **Philippians 2** which majors on how Jesus Christ gave His life for others. What He did on Calvary is all about others, not Himself. Listen to **verses 3-4**. "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*" It seems to me that the heart of **The Golden Rule** is *others* and voluntary respect for them and their needs. "*As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise,*" **Luke 6:31**.

Time is life; our life is the time we have from our birth to our grave. There are exceptions, but history has proven that for most of us that will be somewhere in the neighborhood of 70 years. "*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*" **Psalm 90:10**. Most of us do not seem to realize that when we take a person's time, we're taking a part of his/her life. I have observed that one of the greatest ways to disrespect others is to not respect their time.

Far too few of us seem very concerned about whatever else is going on in another person's life. Even with friends it's easy to take right off with *our own agenda* and what's on *my mind* without much consideration to what's on their mind or to their need. That reality especially shows up on the telephone. As most of you know, I consider the telephone one of the rudest devices ever invented. It truly allows people to be disrespectful of each other; people butt into other people's lives and steal their time (lives) as though it is no big deal. They *just want to talk*. What's happening in the life on the other end of the line doesn't seem to matter. A few afternoons ago I was talking to my pastor. He told me that he had been non-stop on the phone since 9:30. I knew his pain. Not long after I became a pastor, I realized that if I'd allow it to happen, I could easily stay on the telephone most of every day: to the neglect of prayer, time in God's Word, study for sermons, soul-winning and taking care of planning and leadership of the Lord's church over which He had made me overseer.

The Golden Rule is so romantic; high, good and the right way to live – until it comes to *respecting others*. Somehow we praise it on the one hand but disregard it on the other hand without realizing what we're doing. Friends, the teachings of our great God are not merely lofty decorations for the walls of our lives, ideas to make us feel better about ourselves because we're "*Christians*;" they are to be practiced, lived day by day. We cannot disregard others and at the same time call ourselves "*Christians*." God expects us to practice respect for others: their time and possessions, their feelings and where they are in life at any given moment. Real Christianity is not in saying it; real Christianity is in doing it. "*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves,*" **James 1:22**.

A BOOK I HAVE READ AND HIGHLY RECOMMEND

Through Gates of Splendor

Elizabeth Elliot

First Edition, 1957

Harper & Brothers Publishers

New York 16, New York

Library of Congress catalog card number: 57-7341

ISBN to later edition: 0-8423-7152-4

It seems to me that a heart would have to be extremely hard to remain unmoved by the reading of this book. It is the true story of an effort born in the late 1940s to reach a tribe of Indians in the rain forests of Ecuador by one of the people who was there from the start. The Auca Indians were known for violence against their own people and against all outsiders who dared venture into their part of the jungle. A small group of Evangelical missionaries from mid-west America committed their lives to the death to bring the glorious message of Jesus Christ to those extremely backward and dangerous people.

Elizabeth was the wife of Jim Elliot, one of the five missionaries who laid everything on the line, including their lives, to reach the Aucas. With Jim were Peter Fleming, Ed McCully, Nate Saint and Roger Youderian. Each of them flew small Missionary Aviation Fellowship planes to bring medicines and help to the Indian tribes in the area. With the help of their wives Elizabeth, Marilou, Olive, Barbara and Marj, for months they prepared the care packages of peace with which they established friendly contact with the hostile Aucas. The men and their wives were all a part of the fatal effort to make person-to-person contact. On a sand bar along the Curaray River in Auca territory, the five men established a beachhead called Palm Beach. At first they were approached by "friendly" Aucas, but shortly thereafter they were pierced to death by Auca spears. All of the men were killed on January 8, 1956.

Elizabeth Elliot was a part of the effort from the start. Her eyes and the eyes of the others were wide open to the dangers and risks involved. The Aucas had a well-known history, and they all knew what the outcome might be; yet to a person they believed their service to God would not be in vain, and they were willing to die for the cause. Their objective was to see Auca Indians hear the message of Christ. They believed God would give the increase, and He did. Later with her three year old daughter along with Marj Saint, Elizabeth Elliot went back to live among the Auca Indians and witness the coming of many in that tribe to Christ. This book is Elizabeth Elliot's first-hand account of what happened in the jungles of Ecuador. The first edition which was published in 1957 became a best seller. Not only did the massacre ultimately prompt the salvation of almost an entire tribe of hostile people; the event sparked an outpouring of funding for evangelization efforts around the world.

This story of commitment to Christ will inspire you. I encourage you to read it. Parents should insist that their children read books like this. Cell phones, iPads and video games are ripping away our Christian heritage and robbing us of the stimuli true Christianity desperately needs. Egotistical Christians who seem to think that the success or failure of the work of God rises or falls with them should read this true story. While it has been fashionable in some circles to bash Christian groups not exactly like themselves, men like Jim Elliot and groups like the Missionary Aviation Fellowship have been out there at the peril of their lives spreading the glorious gospel message to people who never heard. Their story needs to be heard, and *Through Gates of Splendor* tells it very well. You ought to read it, and let its ramifications sink into your soul.

TRUE LOVE IS REALLY BIG WITH GOD!

NO CENTRAL AUTHORITY

Standing on Stony Pass high in the Rocky Mountains of Southwest Colorado never ceases to be profound to me. At one simple break-over point all of the snow, hail and rain westward eventually makes its way to the Pacific Ocean hundreds of miles away. Every drop one inch to the east finds its way to the Atlantic. It looks innocent enough, but it's truly a watershed place.

Many benchmark truths are that way. The position you take on certain issues will impact and make a huge difference in every other thing you believe.

What you believe about the authority of the Bible is that way. If you believe that it is God's Word, and the final authority for all beliefs and practices, then it will be your heart to yield to whatever it says. If you don't believe it's the final authority on all matters, then you will be your own final authority. You'll make the final call about all beliefs and practices. You will decide what's right and wrong, and about what you will believe and do.

It seems to me that acceptance or rejection of the final authority of Scripture is one of the most basic, fundamental issues there is; perhaps the most. The position a person takes on this issue impacts and affects everything. Yes, everything: every other decision and choice, all behavior, what he sees as right and wrong or good and evil!

Once a person chooses and embraces Scripture as the final authority of his life, all other decisions are essentially set. Sometimes Scripture directly states clear direction such as prohibitions against lying, murder, covetousness and revenge as found in *The Ten Commandments* and the New Testament epistles. On other issues, the Scriptures speak through examples including the character and nature of God. Like direct commands against some things and admonitions to believe and practice certain thinking and behavior, the character of the Bible and its people make very clear what people should believe and practice. The choice to yield in all matters to the authority of Scripture fixes, sets, orders or establishes all following beliefs and decisions; to the best of one's capacity all following decisions will be in harmony with what God taught in His Word.

An enormous strength and peace accompanies the decision to make God's Word the central and final authority for life. Forming beliefs and making behavioral decisions in harmony with Scripture can sometimes be challenging. They necessitate a good understanding of Scripture and a firm grasp of the decision to be made, but the stress of any decision will never be about which way to go; it will be about getting it right before God. After all, up front the decision was made to always believe and do what God says.

The other side of this watershed is such a bottomless pit. Those who fail or refuse to make God their central final authority become their own authority. Obviously their beliefs and behavior are subjective and cannot be any bigger than themselves. They may occasionally consult and defer to an outside authority; a friend, some celebrity, a famous historical authority or whatever whelm may suggest, but they reserve the final say for themselves. They have no external compass; and when every man does that which is right in his own eyes, civil strife and social confusion and tension are as inevitable as the orbit of the earth around the sun.

Rejection of a central authority is the taproot of human misery. When Adam and Eve rejected God's authority in favor of their own ideas, the entire world experienced a broadside that continues to this very day. Besides the inherited troubles which come with being a son of Adam, additional troubles and misery are multiplied upon each individual man and woman who elects or chooses to not make God the central and final authority of his life.

The decision about who will be your boss truly is a watershed issue, and each of us gets to make the call. Every one of us would do himself a great favor by deciding once and for all to make God through His Word the final authority of our life.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish," Psalm 1.

LESTER HUTSON

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SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS

- *New Testament Churches from Jesus until Now*
- *The Reliability of Your Bible: the Translations Issue*
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- *Improving Your Home*
- *Basic Bible Truths Training*
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