

Tragedy in the White House

Death of American Foreign Policy as We Have Known It



Washington, DC, Feb 28, 2025 -

Today will go down in American history as one of the most shameful episodes in American foreign policy, as Trump reversed decades of American support for democratic states over authoritarian dictators by viciously attacking Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, a guest in our own White House. There is no way Republicans can spin this, though they are trying. Because President Zelensky did not come groveling to King Trump and dared to address his grievances against Putin, Trump laid into him for

daring to make a complaint against his friend.

Zelensky was constantly insulted by the President, Vice-President and even a Russian TASS reporter (who trashed Zelensky for not wearing a suit). He was allowed in the Oval Office to the exclusion of some western reporters. The Ukrainian president kept his cool and never raised his voice or displayed any real anger.

Later, after he run Zelensky out of the White House, Trump stated that Zelensky had “disrespected the United States of America in its cherished Oval Office. He can come back when

he is ready for Peace.” The kind of peace Trump and Vance have spouted is that Putin should be rewarded for his attacks on the sovereign nation with the land conquered, without real guarantees of security afterwards, and oh yeah, pay us back for our grants by paying over three times what we give you in rare minerals. (Trump claims that we have given \$350 billion, when it is closer to \$100 billion that has been delivered so far and it was not a loan, then wants 600 bil. in minerals.)

Continued on next page...

The Christian Press table of contents has moved to page 2 for future reference.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Tragedy in the White House..... | 1 |
| Recent News..... | 2 |
| The Church Today..... | 3 |
| Potluck Recipe..... | 3 |
| Feature Article: Principles of Exemplary Church Leadership..... | 5 |
| CP Sermon Series—The Churches of Revelation: Thyatira..... | 9 |
| CP Sunday School Series— | |
| Introduction..... | 15 |
| Pulpit Humor..... | 23 |

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Tragedy in the White House

Continued from page 1...

The question-and-answer session with media took a rancorous turn after Zelensky questioned Vance about what “diplomacy” meant with Russia, given Moscow’s track record of breaking ceasefire agreements. Vance called Zelensky “disrespectful” for trying to litigate the conflict in public, and soon Trump also began railing against Zelensky’s alleged lack of gratitude for U.S. support.

Response from Ukraine and European leaders was swift as they praised President Zelensky for standing up for Ukraine’s honor and slammed Trump’s actions. Alina Zhivorinko stated, “We are really very grateful to (the U.S.) for the support we have received all this time and continue to receive, but our dignity and honour should come first.” Polis Prime Minister David Tusk wrote on X, “Dear Ukrainian friends, you are not alone.” Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stated, “Ukraine, Spain stands with you.” Germany’s foreign minister added, “Ukraine is not alone. Germany together with our European allies stands united alongside #Ukraine—and against the Russian aggression. Ukraine can build on unwavering support from Germany, Europe and beyond.” “Sweden stands with Ukraine.

You are not only fighting for your freedom but also for all of Europe’s. Slava Ukraini!” wrote the Swedish Prime Minister. Zelensky responded to many of the posts with “Thank you for your support.”

Trump sycophant Lindsey Graham tried to spin it by saying he was “proud” of Trump and Vance and, “I don’t know if we can ever do business with Zelensky again” This, just after a couple of weeks ago at the Munich security conference Graham stated, “I want to tell you and your people that you are the ally I have been hoping for all my life. Not a single American died defending Ukraine. You took our weapons... And I am very proud that you are our ally.”

Cool as a cucumber, despite the embarrassing tirade against him by Trump and company, Zelensky continued to be the adult. At the end of his Friday evening Fox News interview, Zelensky was asked if he thought his relationship with Trump could be “salvaged”. After asking an interpreter to translate the word, Zelensky said “Yes, of course because it’s relations more than two presidents.” There are “strong relations” between our two people, he said, and it is the American people who have helped “to save” Ukrainians. “We are thankful. Sorry for this. We wanted very much to have strong relations, and I am very confident we will have it,” he said.

Commentary

Zelensky’s calm response makes me think of the movie *Patton* where George C. Scott as Patton gave a memorable response when he heard of the reply to the Germans from the American Commander at Bastogne, Belgium. “To the German Commander, N U T S ! The American Commander.” To Zelensky I give the same response as Patton: “A man that eloquent has to be saved.”

This is the most shameful event in the White House this old historian and journalist has ever witnessed, and I include Marilyn Monroe and Monika Lewinski. At least those cases of adultery did not affect foreign policy or our nation’s security. Compared to Trump’s actions over the years, President Richard Nixon was at least a patriot and did very little wrong in com-

parison. When are Christians going to quit burying their heads in the sand while this would be dictator and lover of Putin and Kim Jung Un continues to destroy our nation’s image, security, economy and government. Get your pens out, buy some stamps, and let your Republican congressmen know what you think about this traitor.

Again you ask, “But what about the poor unborn babies?” What about the thousands, tens of thousands of born babies in third world countries who are dying right now because he halted funding to USAID? What about the death of the child in Texas due to the preventable disease of measles because he supports antivaxxers (although he gets vaccinations) to the length of putting one of them in charge of health and human services. How many more must die, like the thousands during the pandemic, because of his incompetency. Yeah, you saved a few unborn babies, but you killed many more live babies with your vote for this man. God forgive you. As I have stated many times, Evangelicals have a bad habit of throwing out the baby with the bath water, supporting an evil ruler despite God’s commandment not to do so. I can proudly state that I always vote for the Christian. Can you? If you voted for Trump you can’t.

I am against abortions, except in the life of the mother or incest or rape. I am for life. I am for God. Life as we know it as Americans is being taken away from us everyday under this evil and immoral ruler and once rights are taken away, remember that separation of church and state is there to protect Christians and atheists alike. Otherwise, the Church of England would have been the only safe church door open for our ancestors under previous kings. In China, there are four recognized religions: generic protestant, Catholic, Buddhism, and Muslim. I lived there for a year. Don’t try to put up a local association with the Southern Baptist Convention, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc., it is not allowed. If Trump could have his way, only those denominations who pledge fealty to him will be allowed. All others would be labeled “fake religions” (as though he would know).

Continued on page 4...

The Church Today

Issues that Affect Churches in Modern Times

Top 10 Problems Plaqueing Many Churches Today

No. 10 Spiritual Failure

Throughout the rest of the year, we will list the top 10 problems that churches face in modern times. At the bottom of the list, and theologically, closer to the top, is the failure of modern churchgoers to practice the spiritual disciplines. First, they fail to show the proper spiritual reverence one should have when entering and worshipping in the house of the Lord. Even more importantly, is the need to have a spiritual life the rest of the week. Pastors in training must go through at least one course in spiritual formation. This course addresses spiritual practices and spiritual disciplines as pastors learn how to become closer to God in their everyday lives. Sadly, this is something that is rarely or weakly addressed in church training and education in protestant denominations. Catholics receive better training in spirituality, but have turned it into something that is so rote and so repetitive and routine that it loses its spiritual value. Often they are like a young children memorizing the pledge of allegiance, but not learning the real meaning behind the words they repeat.

Addressing the first problem of spiritual failure in the worship service, I offer this story from Donald S. Whitney in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (a book I highly recommend). He wrote that he once pastored a church that had two services on Sunday. For his main service, his members came into the sanctuary and socialized with each other until it was time for the service to begin. Later, there was a Korean service. When their members came into the sanctuary, they would often pause, perhaps

say a prayer before proceeding. They were quiet and reverent in the house of the Lord in contrast.

I believe that often, we, as evangelicals, fail to offer the reverence in the sanctuary that God deserves. Consider your own church. Do you believe that God receives the reverence in your own sanctuary that he deserves or is it more like the social gathering of Whitney's congregation.

Spiritual disciplines throughout the rest of the week is also important. If your congregation is not addressing at least most, if not all, during their week, then they have a huge deficiency in their spiritual life.

First, and the most important, is **Bible intake**. Members should be reading the Bible daily if at all possible. Some holy Christians I have known read their Bible morning and evening. In fact, the Gideons have such a twice a day approach with their bible reading plan that takes you through the bible in a year, addressing the Old Testament in the morning and New Testament in the evening. In fact Bible illiteracy is one of the top 10 problems that will be addressed in the coming months. It is also a discipline that Christians should practice to enhance their spiritual lives as well.

Prayer is the next spiritual discipline that many use sparingly over the week, but should at least be daily. Barna Research reported that four out of five adults in the U.S. claim that they had prayed in the past week. Did that include only Sundays for many and what about daily prayer. If you do not talk to God, do you really care about Him? How can you receive the benefit of God's grace, when you do not seek it through prayer on a regular basis. What is your daily relationship with God?

Worship is itself a spiritual discipline. God wants his people to gather in worship to Him. We not only get to show God proper reverence, but we benefit from the strength gained from our common love of God. Sharing our faith with each other helps to strengthen our own faith. As we sing hymns and praises to our Lord, it affects our own spiritual well-being. The sermons we receive reinforce behaviors expected of us as Christians and help to make us better.

Continued on page 23...

The Potluck

By Qunhong 'Hong' Tan
Homemade Biscuits



One of the most important breads at Southern church potlucks is the homemade biscuit. They widely vary from light and fluffy like this recipe to those with brown crispy crusts. These are like those my husband's mother made and you will find that for most members, light and fluffy is always successful. Hong

3 cups plain flour
1 tsp. salt
3/4 tsp. cream of tartar
1 tbs. baking powder
1 tbs. sugar
3/4 cup butter, margarine, or shortening
1 1/4 cup milk

Preheat oven to 450°F and butter a half-sheet baking pan (12x17 to 13x18 in.). Then, in a medium mixing bowl, whisk the dry ingredients until completely combined. Add the butter and using a pastry blender or large whisk, work the butter into the flour until the butter is not much larger than tiny crumbs. Form a bowl in the middle of the mixture, then pour in the milk. **This is the step where you can go from fluffy to hard biscuits:** using a spatula or large spoon, lightly fold the dry mixture over the middle again and again until all ingredients are consistently wet, then **stop. Do not stir.** Spoon about 1/4 to 1/3 cup of dough into one inch tall, round lumps in a 3 x 4 well-spaced pattern on the baking sheet, giving you 12 biscuits. Put them in the oven for **10 to 12 minutes** depending on how brown you want. Mother-in-law would not spoon, but with cupped, floured hands, grab a lump and lightly shape them first then put them on the pan, re-flour and do it again.. Butter the tops out of the oven.



Tragedy in the White House
Continued from page 2...

I leave you with this verse. Proverbs 28:15: "Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people." The attack is on! Are you not going to stand up to it? Having stood up five times over 20 years raising my right hand to "defend the Constitution of the United States", I am bound by oath to speak up about a man who violates it by trying to overrule the document itself and get rid of the balance of power. Congress gave those funds to Ukraine. How dare he insist they pay it back six times (600 billion in rare minerals)? Congress instituted the safeguards of the independent watchdog agencies in government he is firing. Congress validated the election on January 6, 2020, which he incited an insurrection to stop. How much more can you take? When will it be too late and we have our own version of Hitler in power?

Tim Walz Caught Telling the Truth

Minneapolis, MN Feb. 27, 2025 -

The Irish Star wrote that Tim Walz was "caught on tape" at a town hall meeting labeling the Trump administration as "fascists and Nazis". Walz, governor of Minnesota and Democratic candidate for Vice-President in the last election, has been relatively quiet since his defeat. However, he was known to take a jab at Trump on social media writing, "Elon Musk is a terrible president."

Commentary

Tim Walz has always been center-left in his thinking and certainly has the chops to be able to recognize fascists and Nazis when he sees them in action. He believes capitalism works, but there are things society needs to do collectively (like social security and Medicare). He stated, "One person's socialism is another person's neighborliness." That is not something we should admonish him for as the right did during the election. Being the good Christian Walz is, he is right.

I am not certain when America became so defensive about socialist ideas. By modern standards, Jesus was a socialist

in that he care for people and put them first. Jesus was apolitical. In today's language, he was not a Democrat, a Republican, he may not have been a socialist, nor a capitalist. He was kingdom-minded first. But he abhorred wealth and stated that a rich man would have a hard time getting into heaven. He believed strongly in taking care of the poor and needy and fed the five-thousand.

The first church was communist in reality. Acts 2 states, "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need". For example, when early church members Ananias and Sapphira lied about giving all their wealth, they died in front of an admonishing Peter in Acts 5. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a socialist who used the government to get our country out of the depression and offered us social security for our old age. Lynden Johnson was a socialist who brought us better health in our old age through Medicare.

You don't see any Republicans giving up their social security or Medicare when they get old just because it is socialism. We are a socialist nation. If we accepted that idea, no one would be turned away from a needed medical procedure just because their insurance company refuses to pay for it. If we as a nation embraced our socialism, everyone would receive medical care like 44 other industrialized nations around the world. But, our congressmen, especially Republicans, are bought and paid for by money from hospital chains, Pharmaceutical companies, HMO's and other corporate medical entities who steal most of our medical dollar by being between it and real care and by over charging for almost everything.

When I was in China, I went to the emergency room of a hospital twice seeking minor medical care, as my military retirement did not cover medical care where I was located. I was seen by a doctor (not a nurse or practitioner) within 15 minutes. Unless you are dying or bleeding to death, try doing that in less than 3 or 4 hours in America. A doctor in China sees you at your appointment time, not 30 minutes or an hour after you are sitting in the waiting room. Why? Because they do not overload patients for maximum profit and they hire enough doctors to take care of everyone, not try to save money.

When I was in Germany, I had a British friend who broke an arm. He said he went to a German doctor and paid nothing. Why? Because Great Britain has socialized medicine and they would be billed for his care. Another friend had to come up with funds before he was allowed to leave a hospital due to a skiing accident, because he was an American. Shame on us.

It is Christian to take care of the sick. Since when did we think it wrong to have medical care for the poor, the old or the disadvantaged? A lot of money is spent so that right-wing media can keep you convinced of long waiting lines and that inefficiency is the norm in socialized medicine, when nothing could be farther from the truth. You are being conned and you have taken the bait, hook line and sinker. They play you for a fool, and you let them.

I have become more and more impressed with Tim Walz since he was named as Kamala Harris' Vice-Presidential running mate. Now, I am even more impressed. He calls a Nazi a Nazi and a fascist a fascist. At this point at time, I cannot see anyone who better impresses me as the best presidential candidate for either party in 2028. We need a Christian in the White House again, not a pretender.

Nazis? What the current administration is doing getting rid of equal opportunity guardrails in government and firing minorities and women from top leadership positions and replacing them with white men, defines their actions as just what they are. Their attempts to get rid of our charitable institutions such as USAID and Medicaid, suggests they have not a Christian bone in their body. Taking power where the constitution and Congress does not allow, is simply being a "dictator from day one" - Trump's own promise.

I was asked about the bandage on my forehead in my last broadcast. It is not anything serious. I just had recent skin cancer surgery and it will take some time to heal. Thanks for your prayers.

Trump Fires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs

Washington, DC Feb. 22, 2025 -

According to the A.P., President Donald Trump fired Air Force Gen C.Q. Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Friday evening. The reasoning was to fire anyone who supports diversity and equity in the ranks. Gen. Brown held the position for 16 months with much of his time devoted the war in Ukraine and the expanded conflict in the Middle East. Trump was reported as posting on social media, "I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country, including as our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader, and I wish a great future for him and his family."

Ironically, the firing of Gen. Brown sends a message in itself, as he is only the

Feature Article

Principles of Exemplary Church Leadership

By Larry Joe McDowell

Kouzes and Posner's work was first published in 1987 and they have spent decades studying leaders and followers asking, "What did you do when you were at your personal best as a leader?" (p. xii) They determined after "analyzing thousands of case studies and millions of survey responses" (p. xii) that there were "five practices of exemplary leadership" (p. 11) These five practices include:

1. Model the way
2. Inspire a shared vision
3. Challenge the process
4. Enable others to act
5. Encourage the heart.

It is their conclusion that leaders who use these five practices consistently are significantly more effective than those who do not. They have continued their research since first publishing their results and they contend that these five principles have held up over the last 30 years until this latest edition. They also suggest that the behavior of a leader has a strong influence on workplace engagement and commitment and that anyone can be a leader, if they engage these five practices. These principles can be used by church leaders to improve their own abilities in moving the church in a positive direction.

Certainly, these principles are more from the *leaders can be made* rather than *great leaders are born* school of leadership. For example, the authors quote "Tanvi Lotwala, revenue accountant at Bloom Energy: 'All of us are born leaders. We all have leadership qualities ingrained. All that we need is polishing them up and bringing them to the fore front. It is an ongoing process to develop ourselves as a leader, but unless we take on the leadership challenges presented to us on a daily basis, we cannot become better at it.'" (Kouzes and Posner, p. 12)

More importantly, it is rare that church leaders are born, but are guided more by God through the Holy Spirit and must seek God's guidance in all endeavors. James 1:5 states, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." ESV

Kouzes and Posner begin the five practices with "model the way" (p. 45), which starts with a process to "clarify values" (p. 47), a journey of discovering yourself as a leader. You must know your own values that guide what you do in your judgements, interactions, commitments and decisions. You must know your own values before you can communicate them to your followers.

For those in leadership positions within the Kingdom that the process should include a knowledge of yourself within God's Will. Ricketson (2014) wrote, "We follow the Leader in order to lead as followers." (p. 197) Rodin (2010) wrote, "A leader must be armed with confidence

that the path the organization has chosen to travel is God's intention (listening)..." (p. 132) Therefore, we must first have a good relationship with God and determine God's Will in also determining vision. That is an important addendum to looking within oneself for vision. Rodin stated in an interview that, "When we start with the idea of God being Leader with a capital 'L', then all we really do is steward the responsibilities of leading under that umbrella. In one section I talk about a type of leadership that is a miracle. It's bigger than me. In true leadership something miraculous happens." (Patterson, (2014), p. 31) The influence of God and the Holy Spirit on leadership is paramount.

Back to Kouzes and Posner, once you know what you want to say, you must use your own voice in the process, express it in your own words, rather than channeling others. In addition to a leader understanding his or her own values, one should also understand organizational values and be able to communicate and affirm those as well. The second factor under "model the way" is to "set the example" (Kouzes and Posner, p. 71). A leader must be a role model of what you expect from others. Matthew 5:16 states, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." ESV Instead of just communicating the shared values discovered earlier, you must live those shared values. This is judged by how you spend your time and what you say and ask. It is recommended that you seek feedback from others to determine how well you are modeling the way. Leaders should teach others how to model these shared values as well. There are opportunities for training when making correction, by telling stories and reinforcing systems and procedures of organizational practices.

The second practice is to "inspire a shared vision" (Kouzes and Posner, p. 93). A good leader should have a clear vision of the future and be able to communicate that vision to followers and help them see and share in that vision. The first step in the process is to "envision the future" (Kouzes and Posner, p. 95). You need to imagine the possibilities of that future considering four factors: your past, the present, the future and your passion. The next step is to "enlist others in a common vision" (Kouzes and Posner, p. 117). Your vision of the future must also fulfill followers' hopes, visions and aspirations in order for it to be more successfully a shared vision. Leaders should listen intently to others and identify a worthy cause that followers can believe in. The third step is to enlist others in that common vision or purpose by making an appeal to common ideals and making an attempt to animate the vision. You appeal to common ideals by relating to what is meaningful, making it special and aligning your vision with follower's dreams. You animate the vision by using visual references, concrete examples, symbolic language and practicing positive communication. Boyatzis and Ceferi (2012) showed the importance of shared vision:

Using a test developed to assess the degree

of shared vision, called the PNEA Survey (Boyatzis, 2009) emerging research is showing how powerful the PEA and one of its major components, shared vision, is. The PNEA Survey assesses the degree of shared vision, shared compassion, and shared positive mood of dyads, groups, and organizations. Clayton (2009) showed that shared vision was the most powerful independent variable affecting championing behavior, which has been shown to result in effective mergers and acquisitions (versus their less effective counterparts). Mahon (2009) showed that shared vision is stimulating increased organizational engagement in IT teams, amplifying the effect of the average level of EI competencies shown by the team members. Khawaja (2010) showed that the degree of PEA to NEA experienced by a patient was the most powerful variable in explaining treatment adherence for Type II diabetics when analyzed along with nine other variables considered important in the current medical literature. Buse (2011) showed that a strong sense of personal vision was the most powerful predictor of which women decide to stay in engineering and science careers. (p. 28-29)

To gain more insight into what can be a shared vision, it is necessary to listen to followers. Goleman, et. al. (2013) wrote of a method called dynamic inquiry which “involves focused conversations and open-ended questions intended to get at people’s feelings.” (p. 199) They not only found a method by which leaders “listen intently to others and identify a worthy cause that followers can believe in”, but the process itself involved followers such that they felt themselves becoming a part of the vision. Goleman, et. al. (2013) writes, “Once people are engaged in this kind of open dialogue about their culture and their dreams, it is very difficult to put the lid back on the box... This shared language provides a sense of unity and resonance, and the resulting momentum helps people to move from talk to action.” (p. 199) Thus, the followers become a part of the vision and embrace the vision.

However, you cannot know what visions will work best with the followers if you do not *know* your followers. The writer of “Leadership ‘Jesus Style’” (2017) wrote, “John 10 presents a most familiar image for Jesus as leader—Jesus as shepherd... Jesus’s application of this image is clear. Within the context of leadership, Jesus draws two striking conclusions: leadership involves a leader knowing his sheep and being known by his sheep.” (p. 3) This point is to add that an exemplary leader “knows his sheep” and that if he or she knows the followers well, they can better determine what visions will be best accepted. Remember in Jeremiah 29:11 the Lord had plans for Israel as he has plans for us today, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare¹ and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” ESV He has plans and a vision for us as well, but we must seek it through Him..

The third practice is to “challenge the pro-

cess” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 143). Exemplary leaders cannot always create innovation themselves, but they must look outside themselves and their organization “search for opportunities” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 145) to find more innovation. The first ideal in that process is to “seize the initiative” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 147). Exemplary leaders make things happen, encourage initiative in others and challenge with purpose, not just to shake things up. The second ideal is to “exercise oversight” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 158). Leaders must go outside of their own experience, enhance communication to tap on new ideas, stir the imagination and make every task an adventure to encourage breakthroughs. Exemplary leaders must “experiment and take risks” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 169). Leaders need to learn how to learn from risky experiments and recognize good ideas and opportunities to learn. In doing this, leaders should “generate small wins” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 172). They do this by building psychological hardiness by improving the 3C’s: **commitment** to make things happen, **control** to influence what is happening and **challenge** to learn from both success and failure. Leaders should chunk down – break down a big challenge into actionable steps. Then, leaders must learn how to profit from small wins in order to build larger successes. Finally, in challenging the process, leaders should “learn from experience.” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 180) They need to be an active learner, create a climate for learning that includes nurturing and motivating and strengthen resilience by assigning tasks that are challenging, but doable. One way that leaders can learn is to ask questions. “In contrast to many popular descriptions, leadership in today’s world is more about asking the right questions than having the answers. As complexity and change increase, confronting conventional wisdom and asking probative questions is an important leadership dimension of the twenty-first century.” (O’Neill and Nalbandian, (2018), p. 313-314)

The fourth practice of an exemplary leader is to “enable others to act” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 193). Leaders give their followers confidence and develop their competence, helping them to have a sense of belonging and ownership. To do this, they must “foster collaboration” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 195) and “strengthen others” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 219). To foster collaboration, leaders should first “create a climate of trust” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 198) through a sound investment, being the first to trust, showing genuine concern for others and sharing knowledge and information with their followers. Second, leaders should “facilitate relationships” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 206) by developing cooperative goals and roles so that followers believe that they are a part of it. They should support norms of reciprocity so that they are cooperative, but not taken advantage of. They should structure projects to promote joint effort so that they understand that working together will result in greater results. And, leaders further facilitate relationships by better face-to-face interactions. To “strengthen others”, exemplary leaders “enhance self-determination” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 221) and “build competence and confidence” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 233). To enhance autonomy, leaders give some freedom of choice to followers, allow job discretion and independent judgement in making decisions and taking

actions, and build accountability by allowing followers to be responsible for their choices. To “build competence and confidence”, leaders should educate and share information, develop competence and ownership, and coach their followers giving constructive feedback and guidance.

God gave us this freedom of action. We have not always pleased Him with our “freedom of will” choices, but he did allow us to make our own mistakes. It is only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that these mistakes can be overcome and the Grace of God that we are saved from our own mistakes. As Galatians 5:13 states, “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” ESV

In many organizations, and specifically in the Army, this includes delegation of authority. One of the biggest challenges to leaders is to give up any authority, when delegation is sometimes the most efficient way to handle problems and encourage the type of enabling suggested above. Goleman, et. al. (2013) wrote that command style leaders, “rather than delegate authority, they seek tight control of any situation and monitor it studiously.” (p. 76) This is the opposite of what is implied in this section. By enabling followers to become a part of the process by delegating authority, there is not only a feeling of having some part in the organizational role and its success, but it lessens the stress and burden of leadership.

The fifth practice of exemplary leaders is to “encourage the heart” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 245). To do this, leaders must first “recognize contributions” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 247) by expecting the best of their followers and personal recognition. In expecting the best, leaders must show their belief in their followers, clarify goals and rules and give regular feedback so that followers are able to learn and adjust, thus growing their confidence. Personal recognition requires that leaders develop relationships built on trust, incentivize creatively using creative and informal rewards on top of formal awards, and simply say “thank you” to express appreciation. To “encourage the heart”, leaders must then “celebrate the values and victories” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 271). To do this, they should “create a spirit of community” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 273) by holding public celebrations, promoting camaraderie, and investing in fun. In this celebration, leaders need to “be personally involved” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 284) – be there personally, share stories and develop a culture of celebration as part of the organizational calendar and life.

Hyatt (2013) did a study to determine if “a significant relationship between the leadership practice of ‘Encourage the heart’ and subordinate perceived organizational support exists” (p. 56) in response to this work by Kouzes and Posner (2002 edition). Her results indicated:

“This study indicated a link between ‘Encourage the Heart’ and perceived organizational support. This leadership practices (sic) implies the opportunity to make a difference, think “outside the box”, and experiment with new ideas without fear of discipline or blame for making a mistake increases employee motivation and perceived or-

ganizational support. Thus, employees need to be able to try new ideas and ways of doing things (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998; Tucker & Russell, 2004). Leaders should encourage healthy dissent and allow employees to Encourage the Heart (Bennis, 1999).” (Hyatt, p. 59-60)

Therefore, there is indeed outside study support for their theory about “encourage the heart” and its impact. In fact, Hyatt further wrote, “If leaders do not engage in this leadership practice, it may cost the organization in terms of performance (Swanson & Johnson, 1975).” (p. 60)

The five leadership practices are presented with a lot of support. The most important facet of the work of Kouzes and Posner is that the book is packed with over a hundred real-life examples and case studies and background on the research conducted that help with understanding the concepts and practices proposed. It is a comfortable approach to leadership in that within the five practices are concepts found in numerous books on good leadership, that additionally support their premises. The outline mentioned above supports a well-organized book and thesis of leadership theory and the practical examples help to support the theory in a manner that leaves a lasting impression. But more importantly is the emphasis of how anyone can excel with the five practices – with practice. As Kouzes and Posner write,

“Throughout this book we’ve told stories of ordinary people who’ve made extraordinary things happen. They are from all over the globe, from all age groups and walks of life. They represent a wide variety of organizations, public and private, government and nongovernmental, high-tech and low-tech, small and large, educational and professional services... They are people just like you.” (Kouzes and Posner, p. 295)

Therefore, it is certainly a roadmap to better leadership that can be accomplished by anyone willing to address the challenges of their leadership.

In application to the issue of this study, which is church leadership, there are numerous applications. A church leader must indeed model the way by fully understanding what values he or she has as related to the church and values as applied to mission of the church. An exemplary leader must also set the example by illustrating those same values expected of the followers – in this case the deacons or elders, staff and pastor(s). The members of a church should have a high understanding of the shared vision of the church. They need to be able to envision the future of the church and its leadership must be able to inspire that shared vision and enlist their followers into sharing that vision. Church leadership should always be looking for new innovations and ways to spread the Gospel. For example, churches who failed to realize trends in digital marketing, modern worship, and social media, many times failed completely as a church and were absorbed by other churches. Therefore, though social media, digital screens, and modern practices were risky at first, the rewards in surviving the trends were great. Church leadership must be able to enable others to be part of the process

in seeking new innovation, changes and improvements in the worship service and spreading of the Gospel. When faculty and staff feel that they are a part of the institution's vision and success, they will be more productive and the institution can only profit from the process. There are many opportunities for church leadership and staff to reap the rewards of their own successes, yet, the church leadership must have a personal interest and part in these awards and the recognition of their followers. Therefore, the applications of Kouzes and Posner to church leadership is boundless and the book itself a valuable resource for church leaders.

In the context of McDowell Bible College, under which this magazine is published, the educational institution's vision was three years in development. First, a need for the institution had to be determined. There are many institutions of higher learning, each addressing a segment of society in their own manner. Just developing another online college was just originally just an exercise in programming, rather than an actualization of some design or purpose. Therefore, its purpose was determined through much research. It was found that there was a need for a free or very low-tuition college to meet the needs of poor pastors of churches who have little or no ministerial training. Within the U.S. it was determined that, even in the 21st century, there were many pastors with only a high school education serving churches in leadership positions without proper credentials, and many times without sufficient knowledge to serve them. When looking overseas, the need greatly expanded. Some of these needs are met through missionary activities of various denominations and organizations. Often, they were more equipped to handle language requirements than we envisioned being able to encompass at this stage, depending only on English. However, inquiry by students overseas found that there were many pastors with such needs who had sufficient training in English to succeed at our institution. Therefore, the main vision and goal of our institution is to provide education for the ministry education needed by these pastors. For example, on student from Ethiopia, whose second language is indeed English, had high scores in high school and college and significant English skills, however, he was unable to afford any more college to meet his ministry education needs. He was provided a scholarship and was the first student to fall into this new vision. This vision of supplying the needs of poor pastors has been accepted by volunteer staff and faculty and it has encouraged more volunteerism, thus allowing us to provide more such scholarships in the future. Embracing the vision, we have attracted others to this ministry, and it is hoped that we have found our niche in higher education as well as our missionary vision. We answered the questions posed by Kouzes and Posner below:

“Visions are projections of one's fundamental beliefs and assumptions... A vision of the future is much like a literary or musical theme. It's the paramount, persistent, and pervasive message that you want to convey, the frequently recurring melody that you want people to remember; and whenever repeated, it reminds the audience of the entire work. Every

leader needs a theme, an orienting principle around which he or she can organize an entire movement.”

For McDowell Bible College, it is the ability to provide a free or low cost, quality education to those who need ministerial training. For your church, what is your dream?

In summary, the five practices of an exemplary leader and all the facets pointed out in the work of Kouzes and Posner are valuable tools for leadership. That they are secular in nature and fail to point out the importance of a Divine leadership inspiration, they nonetheless offer a valuable resource for leadership.

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**The heart of man plans his way,
but the LORD establishes his steps.**

Proverbs 16:9

CP Sermon Series

The Churches of Revelation—Thyatira

Sin in the Church

Revelation 2

¹⁸ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: ‘The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹ I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. ²⁰ But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works. ²⁴ But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. ²⁵ Only hold fast what you have until I come. ²⁶ The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. ²⁸ And I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

The apostle John passes on Jesus’ letter to the church at Thyatira. “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write”. Again, the angel may be an angel overlooking church at Thyatira, or more likely, a reference to the pastor of the church.

Much of what I bring to you today about Thyatira will be from writings several biblical commentaries with a significant assistance from Guzik in locating many of these sources. Thyatira was the smallest and least important of the seven cities Jesus addresses in Revelation 2 and 3. We have no historical reference of political or religious persecutions of the Christians of Thyatira, however, it can be assumed that anywhere in the Roman Empire, Christians of that day were under scrutiny. Barclay writes that “The elder Pliny dismissed Thyatira with the almost contemptuous phrase ‘Thyatira and other unimportant cities.’” However, this city had many trade guilds and each of these guilds worshiped their own patron deity from the Greek and Roman pantheon of gods.

There is some biblical renown as Acts 16:14-15 mentions Lydia of Thyatira, who was a seller of purple cloth from the city of Thyatira. Walvoord writes, “Thyatira was famous for the manufacture of a purple dye, and numerous



Ancient ruins of Thyatira, now in Akhisar, Turkey

references are found in secular literature of the period to the trade guilds which manufactured cloth.”

Jesus describes Himself to the church at Thyatira. “These things, says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.” In Jewish thought, to be the son of anything meant you had the nature of that thing, therefore His deity is implied. The sons of the sorceress of Isaiah 57:3 had the nature of the sorceress. The apostle John himself and his brother James were called sons of thunder Mark 3:17. As they had a strong nature like thunder. So, the Son of God has the divine nature, the nature of God. Jesus chose this the description of Him, “Who has eyes like a flame of fire” from the presentation in Revelation 1:14 to emphasize the idea indicating His judgment against these sinners.

The ancient ideal of purity is taken from Revelation 1:15 with “His feet like fine brass”. Brass is considered pure and highly refined in the fire. As fine brass would be strong and unmovable, the strongest in old ancient times, Jesus also is steadfast.

Thyatira was the least significant city among the seven cities Jesus addressed, yet they were not hidden to Jesus. Like each one of the churches, Jesus said to the church at Thyatira “I know your works.” Jesus lauded them for their qualities of love and faith, but he found their service and patience even more admirable. “As for your works, the last are more than the first.” It is essential that churches have love and faith, but Jesus found their level of service and patience to be of much importance.

Nonetheless, Jesus did find fault with the church at Thyatira. It is this fault that is the theme of the sermon today. You see, there was sin within the church of Thyatira. We don’t know for sure if everyone in the church was aware of the sin and chose to ignore it, which would have been a sin itself, or like in many churches, the sin of some members was hidden. Since Jesus found no fault with those who did not participate in the sin, I suspect it was members who hid the sin from their fellow members.

Now that is the way it is today, churches are riddled with sinners. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Yet, there are those who have sinned and failed to repent. It is those Jesus speaks of in this letter.

“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet-

ess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.”

If you recall your Jewish history from 1 Kings 16-21 and 2 Kings 9:30-37, Jezebel was a queen who was the daughter of Ithobaal I of Sidon and the wife of Ahab, King of Israel. Jezebel incited her husband King Ahab to abandon the worship of Yahweh and encourage worship of the deities Baal and Asherah instead. Jezebel persecuted the prophets of Yahweh, and fabricated evidence of blasphemy against an innocent landowner who refused to sell his property to King Ahab, causing the landowner to be put to death. For these transgressions against the God and people of Israel, Jezebel met a gruesome death—thrown out of a window by members of her own court retinue, and the flesh of her corpse was trodden by horses and in one secular source said to be eaten by stray dogs. In any event, the bible says that there was nothing left but her skull, feet and palms of her hands left to bury.

You see Thyatira had a Jezebel. It was probably a metaphor and the name of the woman was not really given as Jezebel. It was a metaphor of a woman who tried to turn others to sexual immorality and away from Yahweh towards false gods and the practice of eating food sacrificed to those gods. This was serious.

The name Jezebel had a powerful association. If we call someone a Judas or a Hitler it means something strong. It was also a strong thing to call this woman Jezebel. Walvoord writes, “She was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who attempted to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal... Jezebel herself had a most unenviable record of evil.”

Some ancient Greek manuscripts state the phrase that woman Jezebel as your woman Jezebel or your wife Jezebel. Based on this, some think that Jezebel was the pastor’s wife, or that Jesus meant Jezebel was the pastor’s “woman” in a symbolic sense. It is a rare, but not unheard of story within the modern church for a pastor to marry a woman and be brought down or to lose their calling.

One of the best preachers that I have heard in my lifetime was Brother John Buchanan, Jr. of Centercrest Baptist Church in Centerpoint. He was a dynamic preacher who regularly brought people up the aisle and helped to build a church filled to the aisle. However, he was single then. Now I want to clarify, I certainly would not call the woman he married a Jezebel, she was certainly a good Christian woman. However, she did convince him to leave the ministry and enter politics. One might speculate about how many souls would have been won to Christ had Brother John Buchanan continued to preach the gospel. Would he have eventually been another Billy Graham? We will never know now.

How many servants of God been led astray by a Jezebel or even just lust after things. I recall the movie Great Balls of Fire, where Jimmy Swaggart was suggesting that Jerry Lee was going to hell for playing the Devil’s music, but had a different tune when presented a Cadillac from Jerry Lee.

Many years later, the tele-evangelist business was going through a particularly tough time. The scandals over

Jimmy Bakker and Pat Robertson just seemed to be quietening down when news broke of the sins of Jimmy Swaggart. America’s best known television Christians have fallen into disrepute.

The weekend of February 20-21, 1988 was a bad one for Christians. The Sydney Morning Herald and its magazine The Good Weekend had a five page article debunking the Rev Peter Popoff whose television ministry of miraculous healing was exposed as nothing other than stage conjuring.

In the same edition was a long article feting Roman Polanski, the renegade film director, in which Polanski attacks the hypocrisy of Pat Robertson’s sexual ethics. Later in the newspaper there was an unpleasant piece questioning the finances of a Christian school in the outer suburbs of Sydney. And then that night, or the next day, the story broke of the sins of Jimmy Swaggart. Publicly, on television, Jimmy Swaggart confessed to his sin against his wife and against God.

One sin can kill a lifetime of ministry to the Lord. Beware of the Jezebels within the ranks of the church. They abound even more in these modern times.

Jesus states that this Jezebel of Thyatira called herself a prophetess. Which means, she only claimed to be one. Yet, it seems the Christians there received her as a prophetess, and that is why Jesus gave them this warning. Jesus said this would happen in Matthew 24:11: Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. Those words were first spoken with a view to the end times, but there have always been those who call themselves prophets in the church, but are not.

Jesus said of Jezebel, “To teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.” Here, Jesus described the specific sin of this woman “Jezebel.” Mainly, she was an immoral and ungodly influence on others, and led others into sin. Jezebel led others into immorality and idolatry. Speculating about this, because of the strong trade guilds in Thyatira, the sexual immorality and the eating of things sacrificed to idols was probably connected with the mandatory social occasions of the guilds. Perhaps a Christian was invited to the monthly meeting of the goldsmith’s guild, and the meeting was held at the temple of Apollo. “Jezebel” would allow or encourage the man to go – perhaps even using a “prophetic” word – and when the man went, he fell into immorality and idolatry.

The draw to the guilds and their meetings was powerful. Barclay wrote, “No merchant or trader could hope to prosper or make money unless he was a member of his trade guild.”

Nonetheless, Christians were expected to stand in the face of this kind of pressure. One ancient Christian named Tertullian wrote about Christians who made their living in trades connected to pagan idolatry. A painter might find work in pagan temples or a sculptor might be hired to make a statue of a pagan god. They would justify this by saying, “This is my living, and I must live.” Tertullian replied, *Vivere ergo habes?* “Must you live?”

Jesus called his people My servants: This shows how terrible Jezebel’s sin was. She corrupted the servants of Jesus, and they belong to Him. Jesus said, “But whoever

causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” (Mark 9:42).

Later in this letter, Jesus would also reveal a link to the work of Jezebel and false doctrine: this doctrine... the depths of Satan, as they say (Revelation 2:24). It seems that this Jezebel led others in the church at Thyatira to discover depths of Satan.

And I gave her time to repent... and she did not repent: Jesus’ greatest accusation was that this “Jezebel” did not repent. She apparently rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in her heart, calling her to repentance.

In these words we see both the mercy and judgment of our Lord. Time to repent shows mercy. God gives us time to repent, we should deal with others the same way. And she did not repent speaks to the judgment of God. God gives time to repent, but it is not an unlimited time.

There is a time when God says, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever (Genesis 6:3). This means that when God gives us time to repent, we must take advantage of that time.

It wasn’t necessarily a large group following Jezebel. A little leaven affects a whole lump of dough, and a few in immorality and idolatry will corrupt the whole church – especially if they influence others the way this Jezebel did.

What Jesus wants the church at Thyatira to do. Indeed, I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come. Jesus also told them how long to hold fast: till I come. We are to hang in there and stand strong for Jesus until He comes. It is only then that the battle will be over.

In verses 26-28 there is the promise of a reward. And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations; “He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels”; as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

But, the Devil does not need a Jezebel to take down a church. Churches fall apart all the time over little sins and hypocrisies. The only way to prevent this is for all of us to spend time each day in prayer and bible reading. We all are human, prone to sin, yet, the more time we spend with the Lord, the harder it is to sin.

And more now than ever before, everyone needs the fellowship of other Christians in a local church. If you have strayed from the church or if you have never felt the comfort and strength found in Jesus, come to Jesus and you will have the power you need to go down the straight and narrow path. Come to Him today.

If you are reading this today and want to know more about the Good News of Jesus Christ, go to <https://www.thewordchapel.org> and click on “Are You Saved?”



More ancient ruins of Thyatira

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second black pentagon chief and is being replaced by a white man. Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan Caine is picked by Trump to replace Brown, who according to his military biography, was a career F-16 pilot who served on active duty and in the National Guard, whose most recent assignment was associate director for military affairs at the CIA. Also among those in military leadership fired during what is now being called the "Friday night massacre" was Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the first woman appointed to that position.

Commentary

See the pattern here, a minority and a woman? "He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader", so why did you fire him? This is just another power grab of many. It appears to me that those supporters of Donald Trump from the Nazi party, the KKK and other extreme right-wing groups devoted to the return of white supremacy, got the most bang for their vote when they supported Donald Trump. However, it parallels his opinion during the first term when he commented on the clash between demonstrators against police violence and the white supremacists in Charlottesville by saying there were, "very fine people on both sides."

The Trump administration has a bad habit of firing too many people in leadership in the government, however, when he goes after the military for political reasons, Commander-In-Chief or not, he is way out of bounds. We currently have a huge brain drain going on in the U.S. the last few weeks, as government employees in leadership positions are being forced from their positions. Why are they being fired? It is the strategy of Project 2025 to replace everyone in leadership in the government with "Yes-men" for the president and greatly strengthening the power of the Presidency over the government. Trump wasn't blowing smoke when he told us that he "would be a dictator on day one."

While campaigning for president, Trump disavowed Project 2025, yet now he is following the playbook page by page. In the first few weeks in office, he has stripped the guardrails, and unfortunately the brains, of the government, eventually replacing them with supporters - if replacing them at all. This is especially true if they are a part of the government that protects the American people from fraud, waste and abuse or enforces equal opportunity, like all the inspectors-generals and diversity watchdogs he has already fired. In reality, Trump is still angry because a former chairman in his first term refused to use the military to attack peaceful demonstrators who were

embarrassing him outside the White House. That commander reminded Trump that the military is forbidden to use force against civilians unless there is an insurrection - such as the one he incited against Congress. Will the next one?

What now? Do we go back to the days when blacks and other minorities were the last picked for promotions and hazed; when women in the military were constantly looked down upon, regularly sexually harassed (if not assaulted); when white was right. As late as 1969, I recall a personnel NCO of a battalion unit who assigned southern white soldiers to the headquarters, but sent "Yankees and niggers", his words, to the DMZ or other units outside of Seoul. I guess he felt he could confide truth to me because I was a white soldier from Alabama. Why not just remove blacks and women back into separate units from white men like it was back in World War II for African Americans and until the seventies for females?

I have not always been a fan of the Army's affirmative action program, especially regarding promotions. I recall when I was the only non-Hispanic name on a promotion list of 21 NCO's promoted to Sergeant First-Class, simply because the promotion board member in my career area was a Hispanic sergeant major. He could not justify turning me down as I had too much experience and a masters degree extremely rare for enlisted. I recall badly inexperienced women being promoted so fast, that sergeant majors would not deploy them to important assignments simply because the women were too inexperienced to handle them. There were abuses.

However, you cannot turn back the clock. Minorities and women make up a high percentage of our military, and to try and take them back to the "good ole days" when whites reigned is not only bad for morale but will cause huge damage to military readiness. Of course, that is just one old 20-year soldier's opinion. Having had the additional duty of equal opportunity NCO in two units, I find this a really backward step.

Zelensky Responds to Putin's Puppet

Washington, DC Feb. 20, 2025 -

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has responded to criticism of Kyiv by Donald Trump, by saying that Trump is "living in a disinformation space" created by Russia. This was in response to Tuesday's remarks by Trump where he incorrectly said that Ukraine was responsible for the war with Russia and that Zelensky's popularity rating was only

4%. Several Democrat and Republican law makers were quick to respond by saying that Putin is responsible with the war in Ukraine, one saying that Putin should be arrested for war crimes if not executed. Fact checks on Zelensky's rating shows it at 57%, much higher than Donald Trump's own rating, which has sunk quickly in his first weeks to an underwater unfavorable of 48.3% vs. 46.4% favorable.

Commentary

It is embarrassing to see a president of the United States siding with our decades long enemy Russia. Putin is trying to make a land grab to bring back the old Soviet Union, the "evil empire" of Reagan days. At the very least, a president of our nation should support a democratic government like Ukraine over a dictatorship like Putin's government, who kills his opponents and ends freedom of speech and press in Russia. Since when did the U.S. side with those attacking democratic nations. But, it appears Trump's grievance with Zelensky because he refused to make up dirt on Hunter Biden has taken on a very dangerous direction. And then again, there is what he owes Putin for his help in winning his first election through election interference from Russia's trolls on U.S. social media. Shame on you Putin Puppet!

"I want to tell you and your people that you are the ally I have been hoping for all my life. Not a single American died defending Ukraine. You took our weapons... And I am very proud that you are our ally,"

Trump Attacks Zelensky/Ukraine

Washington, DC Feb. 19, 2025 -

Armed with Russian talking points from his recent talks with Putin, President Trump continued his attack on President Volodymyr Zelensky today accusing him of taking advantage of our country as we have supported him in his defense. Trump claims he has done a "terrible job" leading Ukraine in the war against Russia. He went on to trash him by writing on truth social, "Think of it, a modestly successful comedian, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, talked the United States of America into spending \$350 Billion Dollars, to go into a War that couldn't be won, that never had to start, but a War that he, without the U.S. and 'TRUMP', will never be able to settle". Using the Russian talking points once again, he questions Zelensky's legitimacy, "He refuses to have Elections, is very low in Ukrainian Polls, and the only thing he

was good at was playing Biden 'like a fiddle', a Dictator without Elections, Zelenskyy better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left."

On Tuesday, Trump stated, "Today I heard, 'Oh, well we weren't invited.' Well, you've been there for three years. You should've ended it in three years. You should have never started it. You could have made a deal."

CP is looking into the validity of Trump's claims, and in our effort to bring Christian level of truth to modern events offer the following. First, according to an article on the U.S. Department of State website dated January 20, 2025, the U.S. has provided To date, we have provided \$65.9 billion in military assistance since Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and approximately \$69.2 billion in military assistance since Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014. We have now used the emergency Presidential Drawdown Authority on 55 occasions since August 2021 to provide Ukraine military assistance totaling approximately \$27.688 billion from DoD stockpiles." So, how does that come out to \$350 billion for Ukraine. Note, our own State Department's website puts the blame on Putin's Russia for starting the conflict, not Zelensky nor Ukraine.

As for Zelensky and elections, Snopes puts that innuendo to rest by stating, "What these claims omit, however, is that Ukraine has been under martial law since 2022, when Russia invaded the country. Ukraine's constitution - adopted in 1996 - outlined the principles of rule under martial law. Those principles were later reinforced and outlined in a law passed by Ukraine's parliamentary body, the Verkhovna Rada, in 2015 that clearly states that under martial law, the authority of elected officials cannot be terminated." It is not up to Zelensky and being attacked by Russia certainly warrants martial law since there are Russian sympathizers and operators in the country who would certainly aid Russia in their efforts.

Commentary

Putin is laughing once again at the stupidity and sheer ignorance of his puppet from America. No, Zelensky is not a dictator, his is simply following the dictates of his own constitution. Would that Trump also owe as much allegiance to our own Constitution as he does to himself. He is currently the only leader of the two trying to be a "dictator on day one", his words. He is the only one daily violating the constitution as he continues to write illegal executive orders.

When our own leader rails against

European allies built up over 75 years, and more recently Ukraine defending Europe from Russian aggression, it is dangerous and embarrassing. Republicans should be equally embarrassed, because Putin's Russia, ruled by the real dictator who simply kills his opposition and who removed all freedom of speech and press in his country, is just as Reagan stated about the Soviet Union - an "evil empire". Our "Manchurian Candidate" from Moscow is once again confused about his loyalties. In addition to my embarrassment and warning of danger, I suggest with a leader like Trump, who admires Kim Jung Un and Putin, we may quickly become the new "evil empire" in the eyes of our allies. Yet, many of my fellow Evangelicals voted for him. I have quoted this in the past, but I hope it sinks in one of these days: "When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan", Proverbs 29:2. in my opinion as a minister and seminary educator, based on his own immoral and traitorous actions, Trump is the single-most wicked president in U.S. history.

Thousands Protest Against Trump's Actions in the First Weeks in Office

Washington, DC Feb. 17, 2025 -

Thousands of protesters, opposing many of the actions in the early weeks of Trump's second administration, took to the streets in cities across the nation today. He is being called a "king" and a "dictator", using Trump's own words to describe himself. The problem is, most Americans remember that our country was founded on the principle that we do not want a "king" or authoritarian ruler. Only those right-wing radicals who want to make "America White Again", and those who want to keep all their wealth at the expense of the middle-class and poor, actually support these extreme actions.

"King" - in fact, it is very concerning when Trump states, "He who saves his country does not violate any law." Many reflect back to Nixon who said anything the president did was legal, though he found out he was wrong and had to leave the office. "No king, no crown, we will not back down" chanted demonstrators. Many among these demonstrators were people who once kept our government going, but were fired without cause.

According to Reuters, as of Valentine's Day, there were 10,000 fired due to the efforts of Trump giving a blank check to Elon Musk to thin out the ranks of government employees in the name of DOGE or the so-called unofficial, unfunded, and

unrecognized by congress "Department of Government Efficiency". In fact, it is following the playbook of Project 2025, which Trump disavowed when running for president. Most noted about this purge is an obvious attempt to get rid of all guardrails against corruption, fraud, waste and abuse in the form of many inspectors general and the thinning of agencies that could give Musk problems in his own enterprises, such as the FAA (limits on SpaceX launches), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (Tesla assisted driving fatalities investigation), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (allegedly using Testla funds to build his personal house). Already, the Trump administration had to go back and try to re-hire essential employees, such as those responsible for nuclear safety and those researching a cure for the bird-flu pandemic. Bird-flu has caused the price of eggs to skyrocket, in those lucky areas where they are available on the shelf.

By firing leadership figures in an effort to replace them with Trump "yes-men", they have actually caused a brain drain on the government, removing those experienced enough to actually run it efficiently. It is likely that some very smart and educated Americans will seek employment in other countries if they cannot get work in the U.S. Once gone, these experts will be lost to us.

"Efficiency" is a misnomer, as there is nothing efficient concerning the chainsaw approach to the cuts. Musk's own image of him holding up a chainsaw at a conservative conference illustrated his approach. Many of the cuts are personal. Gone are many who do not readily support Trump policy or those who were a guardrail against his excesses in the first term. Gone is anyone who supports equality and diversity within the government ranks. Sadly, much of the cutting is to help alleviate the debt burden caused by tax cuts for the wealthy Americans and corporations, who are doing well. The rich pay little or no taxes already due to the numerous loopholes (Trump himself did not pay taxes for at least 18 years). All of this is at the expense of the people who actually run this country, whose income was already shrinking under inflation. Now, thanks to Trump, even that income is gone.

Reuters quotes a former veteran and governmental worker, "I've done a lot for my country and as a veteran who served his country, I feel like I've been betrayed by my country." Thousands more agree and are protesting these actions throughout the nation.

Not all protests are against Musk and Trump, some are against those congressmen too scared of being "primaried" to speak up. Conservative Republican con-

gressmen are getting slammed about these actions as they hold townhall meetings in their home states. The folks at home feel that these elected officials are not doing enough to stand up to Musk/Trump efforts to fire people and defund governmental programs that affect them.

Commentary

Colossians 4:1 states, "Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." But the thing that Trump never does, and keeps a team of lawyers on hand to protect him against lawsuits or through the use of bankruptcy to steal, is treat others as in Luke 6:31, "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." ESV

If anyone had been paying any attention during the campaign, Trump promised to come in and be a "dictator on day one". He promised retribution against his detractors. He promised to remove all illegal aliens with mass deportations. He promised to get rid of those who would support equity and diversity in the government. He is keeping his promises. Yet, those who voted for him seem surprised and are answering in interviews that they are shocked to see him doing the things he promised in his campaign. Well-informed Americans, those who look for news from sources other than Fox or Newsmax, have learned a long time ago in his first term that he at least tries to do what he says he will do.

There is nothing Christian about separating children from their parents and deporting them. There is nothing Christian about firing 10,000 people and leaving them without a way to sustain themselves for no other reason than they want to get rid of enemies to their agenda and give tax breaks to the ultra-rich. There is nothing Christian about reversing decades of improvement in equity and diversity which changed the white-male domination that impeded advancement of minority and female governmental employees previously. There is nothing Christian about stopping aid to the poor, sick and inflicted peoples of the world by cutting USAID. In fact, we as a wealthy Christian nation have a biblical obligation to help those in need.

"But what about the poor unborn babies?" I hear that again and again from my fellow Christians trying desperately to defend their vote. What about the young girl who has to bring her baby to term despite being raped by her uncle? What about the mothers who died because giving birth was too dangerous and she could not get medical help? What about supporting an immoral and irreligious leader,

when there are numerous prophecies and stories in the Bible against it? His opponents, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, have a strong faith in God and go to church regularly. Trump only shows up to church very rarely and usually only for political purposes. What about the thousands that one study stated would not have died during the pandemic if Trump had handled it better? What about the thousands of Ukrainians who have died due to attacks by Russia, but Trump would support Putin and erroneously use Russian talking points to attack the victim - traitor! What about going down the slippery slope due to rewarding Putin with land he stole. He won't stop there, peace-treaty or not. What about the two digit-inflation we will be looking at, according to informed financial experts, due to Trump tariffs? What about thousands in poor countries who will die because they can no longer eat and can no longer get much needed vaccines because Trump defunded USAID? What about the thousands of government workers who may be evicted from their homes due to lack of income due to no fault of their own?

I hope that my fellow Christians take a hard look at the immoral, would-be dictator most Evangelicals supported in the last three elections. I hope that they realize that abortion and gays are only a tiny fraction of Christian concerns, and that morality, patriotism, American strength, reputation amongst and support of our allies are equally, if not more important. The only time Article 5 of the NATO treaty was invoked is when NATO came to our support after the 9-11 attack against the United States, yet Trump would drop out if it was up to him. This supporter of Putin and Kim Jung Un to the detriment of our own allies and our reputation would have been enough to get Trump impeached by both parties two decades ago, as was his incitement of an insurrection against the U.S. Congress. Trump is no patriot. His only allegiance is to himself.

Trump has no moral conscience. No leader in the past could be elected president who had three wives, each of the previous being left for a younger woman contrary to Christ's teachings. No previous presidential candidate would be considered after numerous episodes of adultery and sexual assault for which he has paid out large amounts of money to cover-up, and one of which he was found guilty in a court of law. No good Christian would have voted for a convicted felon in the past, but many did in 2024. Yet, most Christians voted for him. Where are your Christian principles?

Biden was a good president who lowered unemployment and improved the post-pandemic, post-Trump economy. Unlike

Trump who only went to church six times in the four years of his previous term, Biden attended church more times than any president in the last sixty years or more, according to one study.

Trump is not really a Christian. The fact that he stated in an interview that he has done nothing wrong that would require repentance, pretty much supports his irreligious beliefs. Remember, no real Christian would refute Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" ESV. No, Franklin Graham and other pastors out there, it is not right to vote for him just because you can get more restrictions on abortion and gays. Moral character is very important in choosing a leader as the Bible attests. A country that supports an immoral leader will not be reflected well in the eyes of the Lord. Why should He support us, when we support an evil leader who is not a man of God, ignoring a man and two women who are devout, practicing Christians of good character and moral values?

Already Trump has increased unemployment, increased inflation daily with his tariffs and firing of the bird-flu researchers and others who try to keep it in check. What were you thinking, Christians? I know. You are getting your news from limited sources that make you feel good and reflect your own prejudices, like Fox and Newsmax. You think Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are evil. Why? Because, Fox and Newsmax and other Republican puppets told you so. You may as well get your news from Chinese news sources, which often have less propaganda than you see in right-wing American media. The real Christians in the last three elections were on the Democratic side of the elections.

Wake up America! It is going to be a rough ride, but I will be here to help you understand it along the way from a biblical and conservative theological perspective. Can you honestly say you voted for the Christian for president? I can, because I did not vote for Trump. It should be your priority as well: to vote for the Christian, rather than the immoral candidate.

*February commentaries are
are all from the CP editor.*

Christian Press Sunday School Series

Read and Study the Entire Bible with Weekly Lessons

Introduction to Our Study

Beginning with the April 2025 lesson, we will begin a detailed study of the entire Bible that will span a little over six years. These studies will be placed on our website within a month of publication, therefore, you will be able to catch up if you join later in the study. This will allow readers to avoid missing any of the instruction.

Courses will be set up to include all of the books of the Bible studied in 12 week courses, with a one week generic "Sunday School" lesson between each course for a total of four courses per year. The courses will compose of the same books of the Bible covered in the McDowell Bible College (MBC) courses and schedule on dates that align with four MBC terms per year. On the right is an outline of the courses as we predict they will be scheduled.

The course material will appear first in our hardcopy magazine, then will appear later on the website, as an incentive to MBC and Christian Press supporters, however, except for the delay, these courses are free to all.

This study is of the protestant Bible which has 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. "Protestant Bible" is shorthand for a Bible which contains only 66 books. This does not include the Apocrypha, a collection of ancient books written between 200 BC and 100 A.D., which by the very definition of apocryphal means they were of doubtful origin. It also does not include the seven deuterocanonical books accepted in the Catholic Bible. Deuterocanonical means pertaining to or constituting a second canon which is not accepted by Protestants.

Early English bibles did contain an Apocrypha which was soon removed in future versions due to the Westminster Confession of 1647 which excluded the Apocrypha from the canon due to its doubtful origin. A few Protestant denominations allow the Apocrypha in their lectionaries such as the Anglican and Lutheran churches and minor portions may appear lectionaries used by a few other denominations. Evangelicals, in general, accept only these sixty-six books.

What is important is that the 39 books of the Old Testament follow closely with the Jewish Hebrew Bible canon. The books of the New Testament depicted here follow the original canon determined by the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.), therefore offer the most authoritative collection as determined by early church fathers.

Next month we offer the book of Genesis. This is the foundational text for both Jews and Christians, providing the origins of the world and of mankind. It is critical also to understand the New Testament and the Gospel, because it explains the fall of man and the original sin. It is important to get a foundation for the Old Testament as it tells the story of the Jewish patriarchs. We look forward to having you here next month to begin this great journey through the Bible.

CP Read and Study the Entire Bible Tentative Schedule

2025

Apr-Jun: BIB1801-Genesis

Jul-Sep: BIB1802-Exodus

Oct-Dec: BIB2803-Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

2026

Jan-Mar: BIB1804-Joshua, Judges and Ruth

Apr-Jun: BIB2805-1 and 2 Samuel

Jul-Sep: BIB2806-1 and 2 Kings

Oct-Dec: BIB2807-1 and 2 Chronicles

2027

Jan-Mar: BIB1808-Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther

Apr-Jun: BIB4809-Job

Jul-Sep: BIB3810-Psalms, Song of Songs and Other Biblical Poetry and Lyrics

Oct-Dec: BIB3811-Wisdom of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

2028

Jan-Mar: BIB3812-Isaiah

Apr-Jun: BIB3813-Jeremiah and Lamentations

Jul-Sep: BIB4814-Ezekiel and Daniel

Oct-Dec: BIB4815-Minor Prophets I Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah

2029

Jan-Mar: BIB4816-Minor Prophets II Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Apr-Jun: BIB1902-Matthew

Jul-Sep: BIB1901-Mark

Oct-Dec: BIB1903-Luke

2030

Jan-Mar: BIB2904-John

Apr-Jun: BIB3905-Acts

Jul-Sep: BIB2908-Romans and Hebrews

Oct-Dec: BIB3907-1 and 2 Corinthians

2031

Jan-Mar: BIB2906-The Early Pauline Epistles: Galatians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Apr-Jun: BIB2909-The Pauline Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon

Jul-Sep: BIB3910-The Pauline Pastoral Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus

Oct-Dec: BIB3911-The Non-Pauline Epistles: James. 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John and Jude

2032

Jan-Mar: BIB4912-Revelation

Top 10 Problems Plaquing Many Churches Today No. 10 Spiritual Failure
Continued from page 3...

Worship makes us stronger as Christians and more useful in Christ's kingdom. Though there is a social aspect in corporate worship, it should be that of the moral support and instruction from your fellow Christians as you continue to grow in your faith. Christian fellowship is one of the most rewarding factors in a Christian's life and necessary for your own maturation in God's Kingdom.

Evangelism is also a spiritual discipline and should be a part of every Christian's life. They should be readily able and willing to personally witness to others outside the church.

Yet, most church members would not even think to invite others to church, much less tell them about the Gospel. Having taught my motivated outreach class to several churches, I was always lucky to get even a dozen to show up when it was completed and we went out into the community. Usually only three to six would attend door-to-door visitations regularly.

Serving is not as bad and many in the church will volunteer to server in various roles, thus fulfilling this spiritual discipline need in their lives. From landscaping, to cooking at fellowships, to teaching bible study, to ushering, etc., many faithful members will usually do their part. However, often we hear where a handful of members generally do most of the work.

Stewardship, yes fellow Christians, is a spiritual discipline. You would be surprised but very few actually tithe (give 10%). The older members are best at meeting a regular tithe, whereas young adults may not even give 1%. Stewardship in sharing your gifts, like singing, teaching, etc. is also important, yet it takes effort to get some to do their share.

Fasting is also a spiritual gift modeled by Christ himself, but I admit, this is one that I find difficult, if not appalling to follow. It does offer physical and spiritual benefits to your

own well-being.

Silence and Solitude or meditation is also an important spiritual discipline. We all should take aside a few minutes a day, or even twice a day to spend meditating on the Lord. This can be done in conjunction with Bible intake and prayer. However, in this fast-paced world of constant distraction, Christians are finding it more difficult to do. Again, there is a serious age-disparity on meditation, with the young having been raised on cell

I offer a suggestion to you. Write down the spiritual disciplines in bold print into a vertical list, then give them a rating of one to ten, with one being the spiritual discipline you have the least trouble developing in your Christian life and ten being the most diffi-

phones and other distractions to the point where I am not exaggerating too much when I say that some would have a mental breakdown if in quiet for any length of time.

Journaling is certainly an old and somewhat outdated spiritual discipline. This is where one would jot down their thoughts on God and their own spiritual life. Although, this one could easily be done by the young as they are trained well in putting their personal thoughts on social media. They could then redirect themselves to writing a journal in a word processor or notepad towards thoughts more spiritual and how they can better their own lives in regards to God.

Learning is a spiritual discipline and aligns well with Sunday School or Bible study. Some may go so far as to take advantage of free classes in bible schools and seminaries that are offered those not seeking credits, but knowledge.

I realize some of these spiritual disciplines may be areas that would hit my top ten list themselves separately, but they are all considered by seminary training to be spiritual disciplines and are taught to pastors in training at some point in their studies.

I offer a suggestion to you. Write down the spiritual disciplines in bold print into a vertical list, then give them a rating of one to ten, with one being the spiritual discipline you have the least trouble developing in your Christian life and ten being the most difficult. Explore why this is so and "meditate" and "pray" on it.

Pulpit Humor



Those Deacons!

A deacon was presenting a gift from the congregation to a departing pastor about to leave for another ministry. "He was a diligent visitor among his people," said the deacon, "and many homes were happy when he left."

Two deacons were out hunting and came upon a game warden, "If you get lost on your hunt, fire a shot at 4 pm and every 30 minutes afterwards until you are found. Indeed the deacons were lost and at 4 pm they began firing the shots, but alas, two hours later, one of the deacons said, "If we are not found soon, we are going to run out of arrows."

A pastor was just called to a new church. He met with the deacons and one of them said, "Pastor, we have been discussing what to call you."

"What did you call the last pastor," the pastor asked.

"We called the last preacher 'Hog Caller'."

"They called me 'Shepherd of the Flock' at my last church, but you know your people better than I do," answered the pastor.

This saving seats in church is really getting out of hand!

