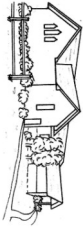


**NORTHWOODS
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24

And I am sure of this, that He who began a
good work in you will bring it to completion
at the day of Jesus Christ. Phil 1:6

THE NORTHWOODS NEWS

The Great Falling

Away

By Rich Cesal

This is a difficult subject since the most general understanding of *apostasy* is "a willful falling away from, or rebellion against, Christian truth. Apostasy is the rejection of Christ by one who has been a Christian." *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*.

The dictionary defines *apostasy*:

1. renunciation of a religious faith
2. abandonment of a previous loyalty

The Greek noun *apostasia*, means 'a defection or revolt'; it is the formal disaffiliation from or abandonment or renunciation of a religion by a person. *Apostasia* is found twice in the New Testament in 2 Thes 2:3 "unless the falling away (apostasia) comes first . . ." And in, 1 Tim 4:1, it says, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith (apostasia), giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."

First, a little clarity of the meaning of "falling away" or "depart from the faith." Literally, the term would mean as the definition suggests, a falling away from the Christian faith. However, we know from the totality of the Scriptures that this is impossible. The Bible tells us that God has chosen His people before He created anything and wrote their names in the Book of Life. If God has your name in the Book of Life, you cannot fall away. If that were so, it would mean that God does not have the power or the will to do what He said He would do and that would make Him out to be a liar. There can be no falling away from genuine faith.

The Westminster Confession says in Chapter XVII on the perseverance of the saints:

I. They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father.

So what is the great apostasy all about? Will we know when it comes? We turn to 2 Thes 2:3, "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition." This is further supported in 1 Tim 4:1. The coming of Judgment Day will be preceded by a falling away large enough to be significant since Paul mentions it not once but twice.

Paul goes on to say that the coming of the lawless one, will under the power of Satan, present to those who did not believe the truth, strong delusion so that they will believe the lie and pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thes 2:12). Apparently, Paul is referring to those who are falling away to be people who have heard the truth but refused to believe it.

When I was growing up, public and universal acknowledgement of God was everywhere. Radio programs would not hesitate to mention or have a theme referencing God or Christian stories. All the evening programs like, Jack Benny, The Shadow, Gangbusters, etc. would honor Christmas by having a heartwarming Christmas story at least loosely based on the birth of Jesus instead of their normal fare.

I remember in Chicago a radio program that came on early in the morning called the "NBC Breakfast Club". The host was a man named Don McNeil. He had a spot known as Inspiration Time where he would stop the program for a moment of prayer, "Each in his own way." On the Monday after Pearl Harbor, during the Inspiration Time, he made the comment "that the greatest single gift we people in America have is faith in God. Let us keep Christmas and its poignant meaning in the hearts of men. Remember, let's be happy on the Christ Child's Day."

As we look back on the latter half of the twentieth century, we find an erosion of Christian ethics and values which had dominated our nation since its founding. At the time of the Second World War, there was a general belief in God. I didn't know anyone in school or out of school who wasn't attached to some church even if their family didn't attend often. In the Marine Reserve, we would have an occasional weekend meeting where we practiced war but on Sunday morning there was a church service provided.

Do you think if our country was being founded today that we would put "In God We Trust" on our coinage? Or that the Ten Commandments would be carved into any of the government buildings? That the senate would elect a chaplain to open every session with a prayer? When the senate first convened in 1789, one of its first "orders of business" was to convene a committee to recommend a chaplain. Kind of important to them to do that almost immediately. Every chaplain since the first has been a Christian. Do you think this will continue? On one of the buildings on the University of Wyoming campus, is a verse from the Bible.

Contrast that with the situation today. We as a country have all but eliminated any talk of God or most certainly Christ from the public square. As a boy in elementary school, I remember the singing of Christmas carols and the celebration of the birth of Christ. There certainly is a great falling away and this is not only an American phenomenon, for we see it throughout what was the Christian world. But is this the 'Great' falling away?

As we read in the Bible, Israel had a habit of falling away again and again. Israel usually rebounded after each of these episodes. But it got to a point where we are told in Habakkuk that God raised up the Chaldeans that were a 'terrible and dreadful' people. Israel was forced into exile for 70 years. God then restored Israel again to a sovereign nation. Then when Israel (the nation) rejected Christ, Israel as a nation was ended in 70 AD as the Christian dispensation took hold.

In those earlier days mentioned above, it cannot be said that most people were Christians although they certainly professed to be. But more and more we find a boldness in proclaiming that Christianity is only one way to God and that in fact Christianity is a myth. Just the other day in the paper there was an article that said more than half the nativity scenes on public grounds somewhere in California were taken over with atheist billboards asking why you believe in a myth. So it seems the state can support the atheist religion but not Christianity.

In the past there were several Great Awakenings which started in England with the Wesley brothers and George Whitefield. This emphasis on spiritualism spread to America where Jonathan Edwards preached his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God". In England, the revival was so fierce that mule skinnners were said to have trouble with their mules because the mules could not understand the new less salty language.

Now the prophecy is given that just before the end times, when time ends and eternity begins and Judgment Day takes place, there will be a great falling away. People will generally not recognize their creator and the Christ will be vilified as never before. I don't know if we are there yet but certainly we must be getting close. God has shown however, in the past to be very patient. As 2 Pet 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." This refers to the saving of all those whom God has elected to be saved. The Bible tells us that 'the fullness of the Gentiles must come in,' (Rom 11:25) and until then the end will be delayed.

Here in Cheyenne on any given Sunday morning, you find children playing in their yards rather than attending Sunday School. It used to be that parents would send their children to Sunday School even if they themselves would not attend church. Now, there are many of these children who have never been in a church in their whole lives. How are

these children, when they grow up and marry, going to raise their children? You can see the growth here of non-belief. It's no wonder that the general population has turned from an up front belief in God and Jesus to an all out rejection of biblical Christianity.

Science is now the battle cry which puts biblical Christianity to rest. It is Science that proves the universe is billions of years old. It is Science that tells us that man is the last of evolutionary development. It is Science that tells us that we are what our genes tell us we are. It is Science which shows Christianity to be a myth. People put their entire trust in Science which in reality proves none of these things. Our schools put this Science above all other schools of thought and will not allow any opposing arguments.

When will God finally say, enough is enough, as He did in the book of Habakkuk? Is the end near? Has the falling away gotten to the point that God will send His Christ to bring eternity and justice to a highly corrupted and sin filled world?

The secularized "Christian" world as depicted by John MacArthur in the article *The Lord of the Church* presented later in this newsletter shows the sorry state of the church in this country. Seeker-sensitive, prosperity, and no-lordship churches have all but destroyed a biblical basis for their existence. Surely, if we are looking for a great apostasy we have found it even in the church. But of course, God can yet bring another revival. Ω

As funny as this cartoon is, it is also very sad since it demonstrates one of the reasons for apostasy. In this technological age, we have become lazy and anxious for things to get done quickly. We look for gimmicks to aid us in the pursuit of laziness. Why go to church when you can lounge around in your pajamas and sort of catch a church service on TV.

Here is a story about the hymn, "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder." This story comes from the book by Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul*.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. John 11:25

This old favorite was inspired by disappointment. James Black was calling roll one day for a youth meeting at his Methodist Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. One name didn't answer—young Bessie, the daughter of an alcoholic. Crestfallen at her absence, James commented, "O God, when my own name is called up yonder, may I be there to respond!" Returning home, a thought struck him while opening the gate. Entering the house, he went to the piano and wrote the words and music effortlessly.



Years later, this song comforted a group of traumatized children in a Japanese concentration camp. In his book, *A Boy's War*, David Mitchell, tells of being in boarding school in Chefoo, China, during the Japanese invasion. On November 5, 1942, the students and faculty were marched from their campus and eventually ended up in Weihsien Concentration Camp.

Among the students was Brian Thompson, a lanky teenager. One evening about a year before the war ended, Brian was restless, waiting for the evening roll call which was long overdue. A bare wire from the search light tower was sagging low, and some of the older boys were jumping up and touching it with their fingers. "Whew, I got a shock off that," said one. Brian decided to try. Being taller than the others, his hand was drawn into the wire, and it came down with him. When his bare feet hit the damp ground, the electricity shot through him like bolts of lightning. His mother, who had been interred with the students, tried to reach him, but the others held her back or she, too, would have been electrocuted. Finally someone found an old wooden stool and managed to detach the electric wire, but it was too late.

At roll call that night, when the name "Brian Thompson" was called, there was no answer. David Mitchell later wrote: "Our principal and Mr. Houghton led a very solemn yet triumphant funeral service the next day. The shortness of life and the reality of eternity were brought home to us with force as Paul Bruce related that Brian had missed the roll call in camp but had answered one in Heaven. How important it was for us to sing and know, 'When the Roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.'"

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and
time shall be no more,
And the morning breaks, eternal, bright and
fair;
When the saved of earth shall gather over on
the other shore,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

*Refrain: When the roll, is called up yonder,
When the roll, is called up yonder,
When the roll, is called up yonder,
When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there.*

On that bright and cloudless morning when the
dead in Christ shall rise,
And the glory of His resurrection share;
When His chosen ones shall gather to their
home beyond the skies,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

Refrain

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till
setting sun,
Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;
Then when all of life is over, and our work on
earth is done,
And the roll is called up yonder,
I'll be there.

Refrain

FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 5TH

9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10:30AM WORSHIP
 11:45 AM FELLOWSHIP DINNER
 5:00 PM EVENING SERVICE

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8TH

6:00 PM FEAST DINNER
 7:00 PM Combined Men's, Women's, and Youth Bible Study titled "A Practical Guide to Mormonism"

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 12TH

9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10:30AM WORSHIP
 CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER
 5:00 PM EVENING SERVICE

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 16TH

10:00 AM LADIES' BRUNCH AT THE LEWIS' HOME

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 19TH

9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10:30AM WORSHIP
 5:00 PM EVENING SERVICE

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8TH

6:00 PM FEAST DINNER
 7:00 PM Combined Men's, Women's, and Youth Bible Study titled "A Practical Guide to Mormonism"

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 26TH

9:15 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL
 10:30AM WORSHIP
 5:00 PM EVENING SERVICE

ANNOUNCEMENTS



February 14th or there about, Valentine Day Dinner—the adults will be having a Valentine Day Dress Up Dinner in the Fellowship Hall. There is a sign up sheet in the foyer.

FEAST - Family Eating And Studying Together. 6:00 PM every 2nd and 4th Wed. We start with a meal which is then

followed by a Bible study time at 7:00 PM. We have begun a new study which will combine the women and men into one class to be led by Daniel Vickery. The title of the class is *A Practical Guide to Mormonism*. Alex Davison will lead the little ones, Elli and John. Pastor Norgauer will lead the Confirmation Class. The JR/SR High will be joining the adults. Come and enjoy a time of the best kind of fellowship: God's people gathering around a meal and then gathering around the Word of God.

Nursery Schedule for February

5th - LAURA TWITCHELL
 12th - YVONNE NEWSOM
 19th - KELLEIGH ANDERSON
 26th - EILEEN BRUBAKER



Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.

Birthdays

Jennifer Hornung	3rd	Luke Newsom	23rd
Richard Cesal	11th	Bethany Cockrell	24th
Francis Reuer	20th	Dwight Cockrell	27th
Tim Anderson	21st	Alex Davison	27th

Anniversaries

Randy & Leslie Jenkins 7th
 Dale & Edie Vosler 14th

The Lord of the Church

by John MacArthur

The truth that Christ is Lord of His church may sound somewhat benign to a casual listener in our generation, but the struggle for Christ's authority in the church has come to us through the ages on a sea of blood. Thankfully, literal bloodshed over the issue is no longer very common. But faithful Christians are still waging a fierce moral and intellectual battle for Christ's lordship over the church.

One of the major early catalysts in the Protestant Reformation was a book by Jan Hus, a Bohemian Christian who preceded Martin Luther by a full century. The book was *De Ecclesia (The Church)*, and one of Hus' most profound points was proclaimed in the title of his fourth chapter: "Christ the Only Head of the Church."

Hus wrote, "Neither is the pope the head nor are the cardinals the whole body of the [true] holy, universal, catholic church. For Christ alone is the head of that church." Pointing out that most church leaders in his era actually despised the lordship of Christ, Hus said, "To such a low pitch is the clergy come that they hate those who preach often and call Jesus Christ Lord."

Hus' candor cost him his life. He was declared a heretic and burnt at the stake in 1415.

More than a hundred years later, already at odds with the papal establishment, Martin Luther read *De Ecclesia*. After finishing the book, he wrote to a friend, "I have hitherto taught and held all the opinions of Jan Hus unawares; so did John Staupitz. In short, we are all Hussites without knowing it."

Emboldened by his reading of Hus, the reformer took up the fight for Christ's honor as true head of His church. Luther wrote, "I am persuaded that if at this time, St. Peter, in person, should preach all the articles of Holy Scripture, and only deny the pope's authority, power, and primacy, and say, that the pope is not the head of all Christendom, they would cause him to be hanged. Yea, if Christ himself were again on earth, and should preach, without all doubt the pope would crucify him again."

In many ways, the question, who is Lord of the church? was the over-arching issue of the Protestant Reformation from the start. (That's what Luther was tacitly acknowledging when he said "we are all Hussites.")

Of course, Roman Catholic canon law still insists that the pope is her supreme earthly head and the ruling vicar of Christ in that capacity.

But the historic Protestant commitment to Christ's lordship over the church has also subtly eroded, and that is a trend that deeply concerns me. It's an issue I have written much about over the years.

For example, some evangelical leaders aggressively teach that it is not even necessary to confess Jesus as Lord in order to be saved. That's what the so-called "lordship controversy" is about. It would be hard to imagine a more obvious attack against the lordship of Christ over His church, but "no-lordship theology" has thrived for years and seems to be gaining strength.

Evangelicals also gave birth to the "seeker-sensitive" movement wherein church services are tailored to please trend-savvy unbelievers. Novelties ranging from circus acts to slapstick are deliberately injected into corporate "worship" in order to keep worldly minds entertained. That is a practical denial of Christ's lordship over His church, relegating His Word and ordinances to secondary status while granting hedonistic fashions the right to determine even the order of worship.

Feminists want to redefine the idea of headship, eliminating the idea of authority from the concept altogether. That, too, is a frontal attack on Christ's lordship over His church.

Bible translators and paraphrasers who tamper with the true sense of God's Word; emergent church leaders who question the clarity of everything Christ has said; and above all, preachers who seem to talk about everything but Scripture — all of them do what they do in direct defiance of Christ's rightful authority over His church.

One thing would do more than anything else to answer every challenge to Christ's authority: the restoration of clear, powerful, expository preaching to its rightful place at the center of all the church's activities. If we truly believe Christ is Lord of the church, then the church needs to hear His voice. His Word must be proclaimed and its content taught accurately, systematically, and unrelentingly whenever the church comes together.

Jan Hus said the same thing. Declaring that the lordship of Christ over His church means emphatically "that the Christian ought to follow the commandments of Christ," Hus then cited Acts 10:42 ("[Christ] commanded us to preach to the people") and called on church leaders of his day to preach the Word of God at every opportunity — even though a papal bull was then in force, strictly limiting how and where the Scriptures could be proclaimed.

The church today is badly in need of reformation again. And

Christ's lordship over His church is still the central truth we must recover, which requires the unleashing of His Word among His people again. We cannot merely float along with the latest evangelical trends and expect things to get better. Like Jan Hus and Martin Luther, we need to fight for the honor and authority of Christ as Lord of His church. Ω

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Here is some history regarding the determinations of the Supreme Court concerning religion which have greatly contributed to the national apostasy.

The "falling away" of the populous position on Christianity in America has no doubt been reflected in the justice system. Here are some quotes from Supreme Court cases concerning religion:

In *Lynch v. Donnelly (1984)* which challenged the legality of holiday decorations on town property, namely a crèche scene, the majority (5-4) held that the crèche did not violate the Establishment Clause. Here is the dissenting argument:

Justices Brennan, Marshall, Blackmun, and Stevens dissented. The dissenting opinion argued that the case did not pass the *Lemon* test. The secular display surrounding their secular purpose of celebrating of a national holiday could have been done without a clearly religious symbol that supports only one religion to the exclusion of others giving one group public approval of their views. Even if other religious groups are allowed to include "competing efforts [by religious groups] to gain or maintain the support of government" may "occasion considerable civil strife" The religious crèche is also placed in a central location within the display, which makes even less of the Court's idea that Pawtucket was just including all of the traditional images. The dissenting opinion also mentions that it cannot be compared to a religious display in a museum because it is not solely being considered as a piece of art but as a religious symbol as well. The government recognition of Christmas previously has only been to recognize the secular parts of Christmas, such as spending time with family. The minority also dissented, noting that "Those who believe in the message of the nativity receive the unique and exclusive benefit of public recognition and approval of their

views" and that the crèche provides "a significant symbolic benefit to religion..." The dissent argued "The effect on minority religious groups, as well as on those who may reject religion, is to convey the message that their views are not similarly worthy of public recognition nor entitled to public support. It was precisely this sort of chauvinism that the Establishment Clause was intended forever to prohibit."

In particular Justice Brennan writes, "By insisting that such a distinctively sectarian message is merely an unobjectionable part of our 'religious heritage,' the Court takes a long step backwards to the days when Justice Brewer could arrogantly declare for the Court that 'this is a Christian nation.' Those days, I had thought, were forever put behind us"

This is a reference to the case *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States (1892)* where Justice Brewer writes in the majority opinion that "beyond all these matters no purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national, because this is a religious people." Several pages later, after presenting a religious history of America, he follows up with the statement: "These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation."

Although our court system relies religiously (pun intended) on precedents, apparently words used in explaining decisions are not considered binding. Ω

The following excerpts are from a publication put out by The United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1942. The title of the booklet is *Song and Service Book for Ship and Field for the Army and Navy*.

The inside cover has quotes from Psalm 95, Isaiah 55, Psalm 145, and Psalm 51. The opposite page has this:

Washington's Prayer for the Nation

Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in the holy protection, that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large.

And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope

to be a happy nation.

Grant our supplications, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Written at Newburg, June 8, 1783, and sent to the Governors of all States.*)

The New York World Almanac of 1930 states that this prayer was also given at Washington's 1789 inauguration in the Old Federal Building on the North side of Wall Street, facing Broad Street.



The Preface reads:

The National Convention of the Chaplains of the Army and Navy in New York City, May 1940, voted approval of the suggestion of the committee on hymnal that effort be made to replace the word edition of the Army and Navy Hymnal with a service book containing selected hymns with musical score. Grateful acknowledgment is made for the cooperative efforts of the chaplains, publishers, and agencies serving the spiritual needs of our men on land and sea. The compilation has been made during a great national emergency, and the time element has necessitated haste. The prayers and other aids to worship have been selected, not to take the place of the prayer book or missal in the ministry of the chaplain, but to furnish aids for congregational participation in public worship. It is our hope that every chaplain will find sufficient data to enrich and extend congregational assistance at the services in the field and aboard ship. The orders of service are intended not only as a ready aid to the younger chaplains, but also as a guide to the faithful helpers who carry on divine worship in the absence of a chaplain. To the men, living and dead, who have hazarded their lives for America, to the lads who keep faithful watch today and tomorrow, and to the Glory of Almighty God, we dedicate this Song and Service Book.

Robert D Workman,
Head of Chaplains' Division,
Bureau of Navigation,
Navy Department.

William R. Arnold,
Chief of Chaplains,
War Department.

Ivan L. Bennett, Chaplain, U. S. Army,
Chairman of the Editorial Committee.

*Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our
Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that
He might deliver us from this present evil age,
according to the will of our God and Father, to whom
be glory forever and ever.*

Hallelujah, Amen.