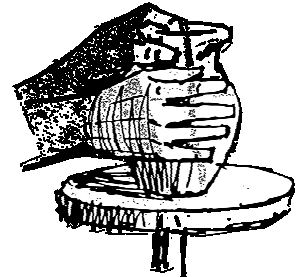


His Workmanship at Westside

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”
—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

God Despised Their Worship, *Isaiah 1*, by Brent Kercheville

The prophet Isaiah spoke to the nation of Judah around 700 BC. His messages explained the problem of sin and the future hope to come when Christ would arrive. In the first chapter the prophet cried against sin. This cry helps us to know what God is looking for from His people.

The Lord's Displeasure (Isaiah 1:10-11). Isaiah began with a serious insult to the nation, calling them a spiritual Sodom and Gomorrah. The people, like Sodom, offended the Lord with their sin, self-will, and godlessness. God said Judah's sacrifices were not truly for Him but for themselves. Hear the threefold decrying of these sacrifices: —“What are the multitude of these sacrifices to me?” —“I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams.” —“I do not delight in the blood of bulls.” These sacrifices meant nothing to God, added nothing to God, and did nothing for God. This should amaze us, because God commanded these sacrifices. Page after page in the book of Leviticus we read the commands for the sacrifices that God required. Consider what God was saying here: “You are giving the sacrifices I've commanded, but I've had enough of them. I have no joy in these sacrifices you are bringing.” There is worship that God does not delight in, does not want, and

will not accept. Worship that is for ourselves, for our joy, and for our pleasure is not worship at all. Only acts that are for God, His joy, and His pleasure are worthy to be called worship.

The Lord's Rejection (Isaiah 1:12-15). Isaiah further decried their worship as nothing more than the noise of shuffling feet and clacking of hooves on the pavement. There is plenty of religious activity, but God is not pleased with their actions. Their worship was merely an incessant noise to the Lord. Their offerings were worthless. Their incense was an abomination. The Lord could not endure their iniquity and solemn assemblies. Why did God hate their worship? The people were coming to God in worship while their lives were happily continuing in sinful living. Their unconfessed, unrepentant sins made their worship intolerable to God. In fact, God was offended by hollow worship. God hates worship when we are not approaching with repentant hearts. “Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates,” v. 14. “My soul hates”—He hates it with all His heart. All God saw was their blood-stained hands. Therefore, their prayers were blocked because they did not have repentant hearts, v. 15. Their prayers were ineffective because they were not matched

with godly lives. Even with many prayers, God will not listen

because unrepentant sins block our relationship with God.

The Lord's Requirements (Isaiah 1:16-17). The Lord declared what he wanted the people to do to obtain his favor. Consider three requirements for setting ourselves right with God:

First, clean it up. “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean.” Hearts need to be cleansed. God is calling for repentance in obvious ways. Clean up your lives. Stop thinking you can continue to practice your sins and still remain in God's favor. God does not want our worship if it does not come from repentant hearts. Further, “remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes.” Repentance not only removes evil deeds but also cleans up the residual evil and damage our sins caused. (That's called “making amends” in twelve-step groups.) True repentance tries to make things right again. This is why Zacchaeus is held up as an example of repentance leading to salvation, Lk 19. He did not just stop the evil acts. He cleaned up the evil of his deeds. He decided to repay fourfold anyone whom he had defrauded. God wants more than sorrow. God wants hearts that correct the evil committed and actions that make restitution. Our worship becomes

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“Bring no more futile sacrifices... I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting,” —Isaiah 1:13, from p. 1

beautiful to God when we work to set right the evil we have done. This is what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift,” Mt 5:23–24. God wants repentance-driven worship. God wants us to make our hearts and hands clean, inside and out.

Second, God wants us to abandon the old life. Stop the old lifestyle, because God will not accept us if we continue in the old life. We must develop a new mind. “Learn to do good,” v. 16. God’s people need to adopt a new way of thinking, not conforming their minds to the pattern of this world, cf. Rm 12:2.

Third, we must set new objectives for our lives and have a complete change of priorities. “Seek justice,” v. 17. Jesus commanded us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness/justice, Mt 6:33; Lk 12:31. God’s people must change their pursuit from worldly things to godly things. We replace our former deeds with good justice; we “seek” righteousness. God specified what needed to be made right. Judah needed to correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, and plead the widow’s cause. Right the wrongs, and do what God has called you to do!

The Lord’s Invitation (Isaiah 1:18-20). As always, God is ready to meet us with grace and mercy when we turn to Him. Listen to His beautiful invitation: “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool,” Is 1:18. This is a compassionate call. “Let us resolve our differences. Let us settle the matter.” There is hope. But the hope is found in God’s way, not in our ways. Our sins, which are filthy like blood-stained scarlet, can be made as white as snow. We can be made pure. We

can be made clean. If we will present our sin-stained hands to God in confession and repentance, He will wash us clean, and our worship will be acceptable again.

If we will be willing and obedient, we will receive life and blessings, v. 19. But if we refuse and rebel, then we will receive death and judgment, v. 20. The only thing that keeps us from renewal with God and cleansing of sins is our own stubbornness. God has not hidden



the means for cleansing. God’s appeal is not unreasonable. God is asking us to be open and responsive to Him.

Stop the old life, and cease to do evil. Develop a new mind, learn to do good. Seek justice, and set new objectives and priorities. This is what makes worship acceptable to God. Our worship is unacceptable when it does not come from the overflow of repentance. Our hope is found only in God’s way.

Abundant Life Church Ad

by Larry Hafley

The Abundant Life Church of Houston, TX, has a billboard which says: “We will not condemn you. We will not criticize you. We will only love you.” Doubtless, the church’s aims are pure, their goals sincere. However, they equate criticism and condemnation with a lack of love. The universal assumption of our age is that if one finds fault he is full of hate and devoid of love. Is this true? If so, this idea indicts God Almighty Himself, “For whom the Lord loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives,” Heb 12:6. Furthermore, Jesus said, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent,” Rev 3:19.

Note the contrast: The Abundant Life Church says, in effect, “we will not re-

buke, chasten, and scourge you; we will only love you,” but God says, “Because I love you, I will criticize you, condemn you, and call you to repentance!” Which philosophy do you accept? Which one represents the wisdom of men? Which approach and appeal is of God? Remember, “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,” 1 Cor 3:19.

Most will select the soothing ad of the Abundant Life Church. (How sad it is that even some churches of Christ have been deceived by this “touchy-feely” religion.) “Speak unto us smooth things” is the cry of those who do not want their errors to be corrected, Is 30:9. It allows the sinner to escape rebuke and avoid judgment. Are you in an adulterous marriage? “We will not criticize or condemn you.” Do you want to drink, dance, and dress like the world? “We will not criticize or condemn you.” Do you want to adopt or accept homosexuality? “We will not criticize or condemn you.”

Does a parent love his child if he refuses to be critical of its behavior? “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly,” Pr 13:24. If the Abundant Life Church truly loves mankind, it will criticize and condemn sin in the lives of men, for that is part of the nature of true, godly love.

- Did Jesus refuse to criticize and condemn the religion and worship of those in His day, Mt 15:1-14; 16:6, 12; 21:45; 23:2-33?
 - When he was speaking “as the Spirit gave [him] utterance,” did the apostle Peter use the Abundant Life Church’s method to reach people? Did he refuse to condemn and criticize? No, he said, “You have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain [Jesus],” Ax 2:23. Later, the Jews said, “You...intend to bring this man’s blood upon us,” Ax 5:28. Obviously, they felt criticized and condemned!
 - Stephen did not subscribe to the advice of our day. He said, “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You do always resist
- continued on p. 3



Psalm 133:1

God's harvest we'll glean in 2016 "Please let me go to the field and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." —Ruth 2:2

Abundant Life Church Ad, from p. 2 *the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you,* Ax 7:51.

• Paul loved the Corinthians, 2 Cor 2:4; 12:15. However, he consistently criticized and rebuked them, 1 Cor 5:1ff; 11:18-22.

Yes, Paul loved the souls of men, but it was not "love" as defined by the Abundant Life Church. Paul's love made Felix "tremble" in fear as Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," Ax 24:25. True love is not always embracing. At times, it must be confrontational, Ax 17:2, 3, 16, 17, 22-31.

When we examine these examples, we see that the popular philosophy and practice of the Abundant Life Church is not of God. Let us resolve, therefore, to love men enough to tell them the truth, to love them enough to show them their sins and warn them of the eternity that awaits them if they die outside of Christ, Is 58:1; Jn 8:24; 2 Tim 3:16-4:4.

Rejoice Lanell Cox put on her Lord Jesus Christ in baptism last Sunday. Pray that all our children will walk with God all the days of their lives!

The **Shreves** are expecting their first baby in April. The **Addys** are expecting their third child.

Bereaved The **DeHut** family lost their child, **Cooper**, to a genetic disease last Friday. He will be buried in Indianapolis near his brother **Whit**, who also expired of this disease. His father, **Jeremy DeHut**, preaches the gospel, and the family (mother **Anna** and siblings **Cianan**, **Sabina**, and **Grayson**) are glorifying God as they receive His comfort and love.

Discipleship Here At Home

Houston Indicts Prolifers, from p. 4 they (1) allegedly created a fake driver's license in order to sustain their undercover identity; and (2) sent PP a letter inquiring whether it would sell fetal body parts to them—this was the whole purpose behind the investigation. Their defense is that they were doing the same thing that other investigative journalists do when they work undercover and they did not intend to break any laws.

Daleiden explained that his words and actions employed during his investigation were intended to "serve the truth." At just age 27, he has for several years been fearlessly attempting to save lives by exposing lies. A graduate of Claremont-McKenna College in CA, he says he is the child of a crisis pregnancy.

Daleiden and Merritt are also fighting a federal civil lawsuit against them from PP over those videos, alleging fraud, invasion of privacy, illegal secret recording, and trespassing, so the grand jury's action this week is a double blow.

With more than half a billion dollars in yearly taxpayer funding at stake, PP is worried about protecting its cash flow, and it has the motivation and resources to come down hard on those who endanger its business. Daleiden and Merritt did not begin their investigation without understanding that.

By the way, the Harris County Prosecutor, Lauren Reeder, is a PP director who sits on the board of an affiliate. Her connection to this case raises concerns that this conflict of interest is an attempt to silence and smear the Center for Medical Progress and its team. Texas Governor Greg Abbott says the state will continue its investigation of PP.

Daleiden's and Merritt have a sincere desire to end the slaughter of preborn babies by increasing public awareness of the horrors of abortion and its dark underbelly, the abortion business. Please pray for them as they navigate the turbulent waters to come.

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Judy Strand's** daughter **Shawntiel**—broke leg on ice
- **River** and **Forest Cox's** great grandmother **Martha Rowe**—in rehab after diabetic coma for knee strengthening
- **Kory Tope's** uncle, **Skeeter Schulz**—broke hip last month
- **Brittany Tope's** mother **Gayle**—biopsy of spot on liver shows breast cancer has spread; **Brittany's** grandmother—on dialysis
- the **Savarese's** grandchildren, **Frankie Kosik**, **Lorraine** and **Christian Harrod**—breathing difficulty, using nebulizer, or inhaler and steroids
- **Jordan Corray's** colleague and mentor **Craig Smith**—in ICU with brain injury after fall from roof; friend **Kylie Cabalka**—staph infection complications; out of ICU to rehab and making progress
- **Sarah McMurray's** mentee **Lakesha Griffin**—age 12; safety, stable home place
- **Connor Boyd's** friend **Christian Lyons**, high school freshman—leukemia
- **Berney Charo's** brother **Eliud**—prostate cancer
- **Judy Strand**—finished with chemo for liver transplant
- **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
- **Ernesto Gonzalez's** father **Fidencio**—stage IV lymphoma; to rehab center to gain strength
- **Mary Ellen White**—recovering at sister's house after hip replacement on Christmas Eve; cards to 5307 E. Yale Ave, #306, Denver 80222-6928
- **Letha Fink's** brother **Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, diagnosed with neuro-muscular disease
- **Bill Dennis**—made dr. appointment, improving
- **Larry Campbell's** FL partner **Terry Hargadine's** wife **Michelle**—recovering from mastectomy; **Terry**—recovering from knee replacement surgery
- **Kayla Knighten**, **Christine Adams's** daughter, needs our prayers; **Judy Strand** requests prayer for her son **Joe**; pray **Ed's** son **Rodney Schulz** and **Sheryle's** daughter **Tiffany** receive the gospel;
- **Sylvia Chapman**, **Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's** grandmother **Sue**, and Aunt **Connie Doss**—cancer returned

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Christian Harrod**; **Addison Tope**; **Rocco Jr. Ann Cox**; **Logan Corray**; **Pat Wilkes**—asthma
- Orchid Cox**—chronic blood clot condition
- Jonathan Hadders**—RA
- Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease
- Kirk Johnson**—MS; **Amanda Mailloux**—IBS
- Menards**—**Lloyd** diabetes, Alzheimers; fell; home hospice care with CNAs
- Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; oxygen
- Cheryl Reames**—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
- Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
- Judy** and **Mike Strand**—hepatitis treatment
- Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness

Travel LiLian Kok and Pat Campbell are in FL. **Mina Gonzalez** is traveling to FL today.



Exposing current trends abortion

Why the Houston Grand Jury Indicted the Wrong Team, by Jim Daly

By now you've likely heard that two of the investigators behind the undercover Planned Parenthood videos were indicted by a grand jury in Houston last Monday. Bizarrely, instead of indicting PP with wrongdoing, the Harris County grand jury indicted the journalists for offering to purchase human organs from the abortion provider as part of their investigation.

David Daleiden, the pro-life investigator and founder of the Center for Medical Progress, and Sandra Merritt, the videographer, last summer published a series of undercover videos exposing the morbid business of Planned Parenthood, and both now face a second degree felony charge of "tampering with a governmental record," (using fake names and fake driver's licenses) with penalties of 2-20 years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine for each, and Daleiden faces one year in jail for a misdemeanor charge of violating the state's "prohibition of the purchase and sale of human organs." Their cameras caught Melissa Farrell, the director of research for PP Gulf Coast, seemingly admitting to multiple felonies, including making a profit from human organ trafficking and altering the abortion process unnecessarily in order to get "the best specimens."

Let that sink in for a moment. Planned Parenthood was exonerated, and the pair who brought to light their scandalous and potentially illegal activity have now been charged with a crime. Rarely have I seen such a vivid example of the prophet's warning of people "who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" Is 5:20. Heritage's Hans von Spakovsky said, "In other words, a private individual whose only intent is to expose possible illegal activity is under indictment for actions in connection with an undercover video operation, but the illegal actor itself—Planned Parenthood—is off the hook."

Daleiden and Merritt were part of an undercover team posing as potential buyers of fetal remains for medical and bioscience research. They visited with officials of PP in several locations around the country and discussed prices and details surrounding the harvesting of various organs from aborted babies for research. The videos were shocking, and several governors quickly called for investigations of PP's dealings with medical researchers in the market for fetal body parts. As a result, several states have stopped doing business with PP, and several more are in the process of doing so. Congress even passed a law defunding PP, but it was vetoed by President Obama.

Texas was one of those states where top government officials were outraged by what they saw on the videos. It began (and still is) investigating PP. It also asked the district attorney in Houston to begin an investigation of PP's Houston affiliate using the grand jury system.

The grand jury charges stem from the pair's undercover work, in which
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DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

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Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, studies on the attributes of God: "Show Me Your Glory," Jim Reingrover
- **sermon**, "Preaching through First Corinthians, (PTFC): Christians Are Not Mere Men," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **prayer, praise, reading**

Wednesday night study:

The Thessalonian Letters