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## **2026 Brave New Year: Deception and the Last Days, Part 5: Lies About Sexuality, Lies About Jesus, and a Call to Courage**

Pastor Gene Giguere

<b>Introduction</b>
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1) Good morning, Church!

So, we’re continuing our mini-series called, *2026 Brave New Year: Deception and the Last Days*. We’ve looked at the way AI has moved into our world and is carefully re-shaping it, and even how it’s beginning to shape the Church. We looked at Paul’s prophecy that the prerequisite for the emergence of the Antichrist is the apostasy, or a great falling away, within the Church. I’ve been trying to make the case that the predicted great “falling away” is occurring right now and right before our eyes (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**).

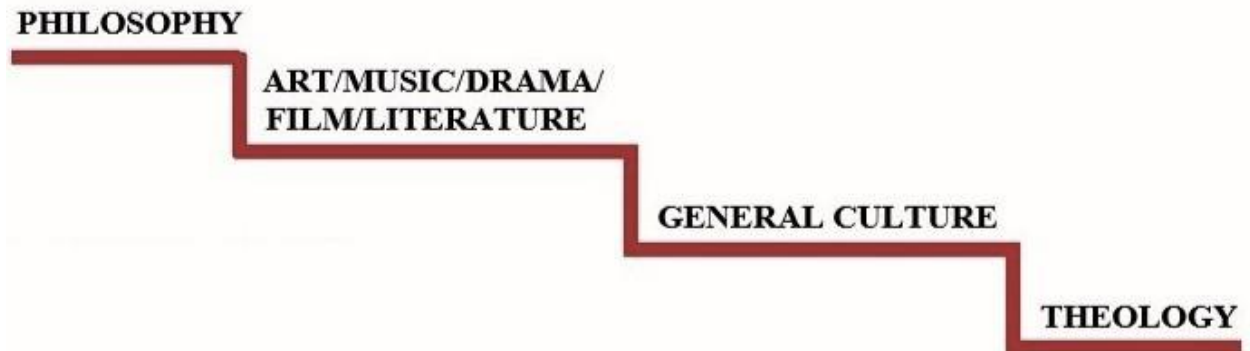
The most ubiquitous spirit-trend of the last days will be deception. Deception is all around us today, and much of it poses as Christian truth!

2) Paul warned the Church that “the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**).

Over the past few weeks, I’ve been documenting some of the lies preachers are telling in the name of Jesus. Lies about money and wealth. Lies about worship and the Christian worship service. Lies about human sinfulness. And lies about God Himself – His nature, and what He requires of us. I believe that these lies indicate that the predicted great “falling away” is here. I want to continue in this theme this morning before returning to the connection between technology and the prophecies of the Last Days.

## Lies About Sexuality

- 1) In his masterful book, *The God Who is There* (1968), Dr. Francis Schaeffer described how new ideas come full circle to acceptance in our culture. He suggests that we should think of it, not as a simple horizontal line, but as a staircase:



He wrote:

“Each of the steps represents a certain stage in time. The higher is earlier, the lower later. It was in this order that the shift in truth affected men’s lives. The shift spread gradually ... People did not suddenly wake up one morning and find that it had permeated everywhere at once ... [I]t spread as represented in the diagram, from one discipline to another, beginning with the philosophers and ending with the theologians. Theology has been last for a long time. It is curious to me, in studying this whole cultural drift, that so many pick up the latest theological fashion and hail it as something new. *But in fact, what the new theology is now saying has already been said previously in each of the other disciplines.*”<sup>1</sup>

So, this is a picture of the Church adapting to the demands of the culture, rather than visa versa. The Church is called by God to hold the standard of revealed truth. And so, the Church is always *the last place* to accept new ideas. When new ideas – new ‘truths’ – find their way into the Church, they’ve come full circle.

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<sup>1</sup> Schaeffer, Francis A., *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 1.8–9, italics his.

- 2) As I'm sure we all know, one place we've seen this happen in our own day is in the area of human sexuality. This is a place where the Word of God has been severely attacked and, I'm sorry to say, where truth has been eclipsed by the desires of our godless culture. Many churches have formally approved lifestyles that God's Word clearly identifies as sinful – and even calls an “abomination” to God (**Leviticus 18:22**).

**Leviticus 18** sandwiches homosexuality between incest (**Leviticus 18:6-18**) and bestiality (**Leviticus 18:23**), sexual sins roundly condemned by God.<sup>2</sup> Many pulpits will tell you that homosexuality is not an abomination to the Lord, which begs the question: ‘So, are incest and bestiality – also called abominations – now acceptable Christian lifestyles?’

These things were never known among the people of God; they were ported over by the pagan, godless nations around them. And so, **Leviticus 18** ends with the words: “Keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God” (**Leviticus 18:30**).

- 3) **Romans 1** describes those who have rejected the true and living God in these words:

“Women [who] exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error” (**1:26b-27**).

“For this reason,” Paul writes, “God gave them up to dishonorable passions” (**Romans 1:26a**).

In another place, the Bible warns,

“Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals ... will inherit the kingdom of God” (**1 Corinthians 6:9, 10b**, NASB95).

To break down that part about homosexuality a bit more ...

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<sup>2</sup> It is part of the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26), and its sexual prohibitions are largely paralleled by Leviticus 20, where there is more emphasis on the punishment of these sins.

“Do not be deceived; neither ... effeminate

[μαλακός – the *passive* partner in a homosexual act, one made *effeminate by perversion* (see the NASB95 margin note)],

nor homosexuals

[ἀρσενικοίτης – the *active* partner in a male homosexual act] ...

will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10b, NASB95).

This is an extremely detailed warning by the Apostle!

The Berean Standard Version has, “Neither ... men who submit to or perform homosexual acts ... will inherit the kingdom of God.”

- 4) Paul is not being unloving; he loves these people enough to tell them the truth and urge them to flee immorality and run to Jesus!

‘Do not be deceived,’ he warns them, ‘such people *will not* inherit the kingdom of God!’ But today’s false teachers have a different view.

Now, why would the enemy want to take this tack? Because, as the one who blinds the minds of unbelievers, he longs to keep the lost from the deliverance that is only found in repentance.

Watch what can happen if, rather than affirming people in their sin, we simply speak the truth in love. This is what can happen when God’s people are willing to simply *speak the truth in love*.

**Ephesians 4:15:** “Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

In other words, *spiritual formation*, or ‘growing up into Christ’ – Who, by the way, *is the Head*: HE leads!

**Ephesians 4:25a:** “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor.”

*When we deny that homosexuality is a sin that needs to be repented of, we rob those held in its bonds of the opportunity for repentance necessary for salvation.*

Is it any wonder that the devil, who blinds the minds of unbelievers (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), loves this ‘you have nothing to confess’ message? This woman found what the devil, and every Christian within the hearing of my voice already knows: Jesus changes those who come to Him. And perhaps most audaciously, the devil has been literally marking his victory over these churches by planting flags in front of every one he conquers.

### More Lies About Jesus

1) Now, the lies of modern preachers don’t end there! In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (**Matthew 5:17-19**).

Well, forget all that! False teacher Andy Stanley doesn’t even think we have to obey the Ten Commandments.

So, just wondering (see **Exodus 20:2-17**):

✠ It’s now OK to have other gods besides the true God (1<sup>st</sup> Commandment)?

✠ It’s now OK to make for myself a carved image in the likeness of things in heaven or in the earth or in the water and bow down to them (2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment)?

✠ It’s now OK to take the name of the Lord God in vain (3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment)?

Even though **Exodus 20:8** says: “For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain”?

- ✠ It’s now OK to dishonor one’s father and mother (5<sup>th</sup> Commandment)?
- ✠ Or to murder and commit adultery (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Commandments)?
- ✠ Or to “covet” my neighbor’s house and wife and anything that is my neighbor’s?

Has he lost his mind?

- ✠ Even the Sabbath, the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment has not been abrogated, but adapted by the Lord to the New Testament Church.

**Hebrews 4:9** says, “*There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.*”

Yes, the Commandments were given to Israel, but they’re all restated in the New Testament!<sup>3</sup>

Now, how is Andy Stanley able to get away with such an asinine teaching? Because the people in his Church have not been taught well enough to know they’re being deceived.

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<sup>3</sup> Each of the Ten Commandments are reaffirmed in the New Testament, though not always with identical wording. The original commandments given to Israel at Mount Sinai which reflect the moral Law of God are consistently upheld and restated in the New Testament as being foundational for Christian living. Jesus affirmed this in the Sermon on the Mount: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). The first four Commandments reference the believer’s relationship with God – have no other gods, don’t create idols for worship, honor His Name, and observe the Sabbath. These concepts are inherent in such New Testament teachings as ‘love God with all your heart’ (Matthew 22:37) and warnings against idols (1 John 5:21). The last six commandments deal with our relationships with other human beings – we’re to honor our parents, and not murder steal or commit adultery, to not lie about others nor covet. These too are all restated: honor your father and mother (Ephesians 6:1–3); don’t murder (Romans 13:9); don’t commit adultery (Matthew 5:27–28); don’t steal (Ephesians 4:28); don’t bear false witness (lie, Ephesians 4:25); don’t covet (Colossians 3:5, Hebrews 13:5). And while the Fourth Commandment – to observe the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8–11) – is not explicitly restated in the New Testament, Christian tradition has always understood this to encompass the believer’s moment-by-moment rest in Christ (Hebrews 4:9–10). It is ridiculous for any Bible teacher to assert that the Ten Commandments have been abolished. Rather, they have been reaffirmed through Jesus who fulfilled the Law and made its moral principles the basis of New Covenant doctrine. As Paul put it, “The law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good” (Romans 7:12). Finally, all of the Ten Commandments are gathered up into Jesus’ two Great Commandments: love God and love your neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40).

2) Hey did you know Jesus had to be “born again” just like the rest of us sinners? Well, doesn’t the Bible say He “became sin” for us? Uggghhh! Where to begin! Todd White says that Jesus “became sin” means He became “an inventor of evil” and full of pornography and a hater of God and lost and Satan worship and bestiality on a tree and sex trafficking on a tree.”<sup>4 5 6</sup> There’s a word for that kind of teaching: demonic!

When Paul writes, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (**2 Corinthians 5:21**), he did NOT mean Jesus actually became sin itself.

For that to be true, the whole of Scripture would have to be wrong, because it declares Jesus over and over again to be holy and sinless and without blemish (**1 Peter 2:22, Mark 1:24, Acts 3:14, Revelation 3:7**). “In Him there is NO SIN” (**1 John 3:5**). He is “the same yesterday, today and forever” (**Hebrews 13:8**). He was, is, and always will be the Second Person of the Godhead (**John 1:1**).

Nor does it mean that Jesus *became a sinner* even for a moment. Jesus never stopped being God for a single second and God cannot sin. Jesus bore the punishment for *our* sins in His own body (**1 Peter 2:24**), not His own sin!

Nor does it mean that Jesus was ever *guilty of any actual sin*. Jesus was never – and never became – guilty. Were He guilty, then He would have *deserved to die*. Thus, His death would not have had any more merit than that of any other guilty sinner.

Paul’s words, that Jesus “became sin for us” means that *He became sin by imputation*.<sup>7 8 9</sup> Judicially, not physically. He didn’t “become” a child pornographer”; He bore the terrible penalty of the child pornographer’s revolting sin upon the cross. Jesus didn’t become “lost” or become a God-hater

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<sup>4</sup> Below from the excellent summary by Houdmann, S. Michael, ‘What does it mean that Jesus became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21)?’; <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-became-sin.html>

<sup>5</sup> Todd White: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvOBQ6dVdgI>, at the 6:16 mark.

<sup>6</sup> For the Joyce Meyer clip: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lb\\_FFOSWrs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lb_FFOSWrs)

<sup>7</sup> Chafer, Lewis Sperry, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), p.191.

<sup>8</sup> Miley, John, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1892), p.499.

<sup>9</sup> George, Timothy, and David S. Dockery, eds., *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), p.154.

or have to be “born again,” as Joyce Meyer and Benny Hinn and these other heretics teach. That’s sheer blasphemy!

That Jesus “became sin for us” is explained by the very next words that follow them in the verse (**2 Corinthians 5:21b**): “So that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” On the cross, our sin was imputed to Christ; that’s how He paid our sin debt to God. He had no sin in Himself, but our sin was imputed (attributed) to Him. So, as He suffered, He took *the just penalty* that our sin deserved. And now, when we come to Him in faith, Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us, just as our sin was imputed to Him. Now we can stand before God sinless, just as Jesus is sinless. We are not righteous in ourselves, but Jesus’ righteousness is applied to us.

So, as Houdmann puts it, “God made Him ... to be sin for us” simply means that, even though Jesus was sinless, for our sakes, He was treated *as if He were not*.<sup>10</sup>

- 3) Paul instructed pastors to “declare these things; [to] exhort and rebuke with all authority” (**Titus 2:15**). Like Paul, we’re to preach the Gospel and do the work of evangelism – urging the lost to come to Jesus. In fact, we’re all to “go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that” Jesus has commanded us (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

Or maybe, maybe we shouldn’t even worry about getting them saved; maybe we should just help them live “a great life.”<sup>11</sup>

- 4) Paul wrote that Eve, the first woman, “was deceived and became a transgressor” (**1 Timothy 2:14**). He wrote that it is impossible for God to lie (“God, who cannot lie,” **Titus 1:2**, NASB95). And Jesus said that Satan is the liar and the father of lies (**John 8:44**).

I’ve shown you before in long form that the Reverend Rebecca Todd Peters vehemently disagrees. In a sermon, called *The Disobedient Daughters of Eve* (January 26, 2025), she claims God is the one that lied and Satan was the one

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<sup>10</sup> Houdmann, S. Michael, ‘What does it mean that Jesus became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21)?’; <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-became-sin.html>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWnOIIVhnqw>, at the 3:34 mark.

seeking to enlighten the poor woman. In fact, Eve is the one who most made us “like God” by disobeying Him.<sup>12</sup>

- 5) Compounding her blasphemy, this woman also preached a message where she twisted the Beatitudes we find in Jesus’ beautiful Sermon on the Mount into a grotesque pro-choice mantra.

She repeats several times throughout the sermon, “If Jesus were giving [the Sermon on the Mount] today, he might also have said, ‘Blessed are those who end pregnancies, for they will be known for their loving kindness.’”<sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> Mark it down: this is the advocacy of murder without the need for repentance in the New Testament Church of 2026.

- 6) While the worship service should always be about glorifying God and exalting Him, one could be forgiven for thinking that it – and even the whole of the Christian life, for that matter – is about *us*.<sup>15</sup> There you have it!

Don’t go to Church for God, or because He commands you not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together (**Hebrews 10:25**). Go to Church *for you*, because, after all, God *worships you* and only *wants you to be happy*.

- 7) Church, Paul warned, “The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**).

✝ *It is a myth* that the Ten Commandments no longer matter.

✝ *It is a myth* that the worship service should be more like the world so we can attract unbelievers.

✝ *It is a myth* that Jesus Christ doesn’t care about our sexual behavior.

✝ *It is a myth* that God is no longer angry at sin.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MK9WKj4NNug>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanCouncilOrg/videos/abortion/1262544278441571/>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent\\_news\\_id=9511](https://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent_news_id=9511)

<sup>15</sup> Victoria Osteen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbZHGMe31s>; “God Worships Me”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqOxw0iBe-s>.

- ✝ *It is a myth* that God can lie.
- ✝ *It is a myth* that the Bible is the gateway to financial wealth or physical health.
- ✝ *It is a myth* that abortion is actually health care; it actually constitutes the murder of a human being created in the image of God.
- ✝ *It's a myth* that we no longer sin or are sinners once we come to Jesus – anyone who says so does not have the truth in them.
- ✝ *It is a myth* that it's compassionate and loving not to tell people the truth about what is and is not sin.
- ✝ *It is a myth* that God is honored in anyway by replacing songs of worship with goat music.

“[They] will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

I believe that these lies stand as evidence that the promised great Falling Away is occurring right before our eyes.

- 8) Let me be very clear with you: *The people leading these churches are not saved people!* I'll remind you of the quote I read to you last time which has been attributed to Charles Spurgeon. It's very relevant to our day: A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the church will have clowns entertaining the goats.”<sup>16</sup>

And that's precisely what we're seeing today. The apostasy, ἡ ἀποστασία, the great defection from Christ, the great falling away of the Church, is happening as I speak. Counterfeit Christianity is evident in every Church that calls people to assemble, but never calls them to the cross. These are the “many” who will

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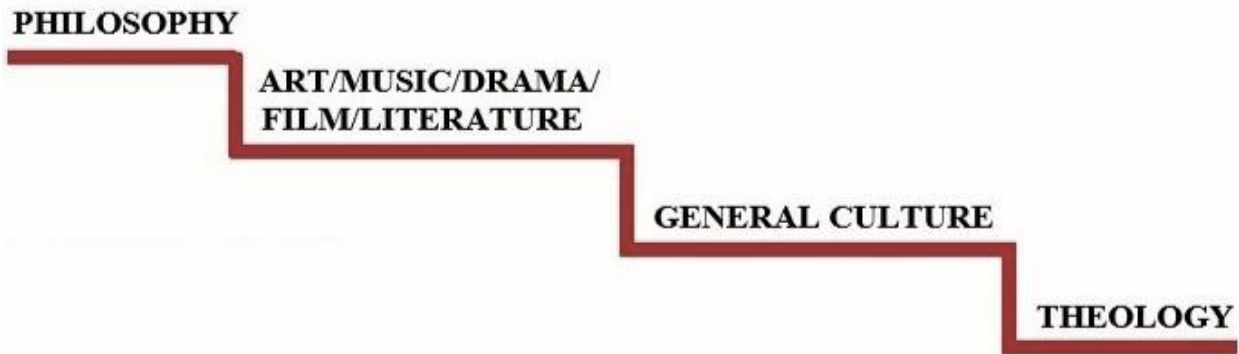
<sup>16</sup> The quote “A time will come when instead of shepherds feeding the sheep, the church will have clowns entertaining the goats” is attributed to Charles Spurgeon in multiple sources. However, a critical examination by *Lifeway Research* indicates that no verifiable record exists of Spurgeon uttering or writing this exact phrase. The quote appears in various articles and sermons posthumously, but its origin remains unconfirmed in Spurgeon's known works. Therefore, while widely cited, the statement cannot be definitively traced to Spurgeon's original writings or sermons.

come to Jesus in the day of judgment calling Him ‘Lord’ – but to whom He will say, ‘Away from ME! I never knew you!’

As I’ve said recently, when it was written, more than 30% of the Bible was unfulfilled prophecy. So, let me update Paul: ‘The time is NOT *coming* when people will not endure sound teaching ...’ (2 Timothy 4:3). That time HAS COME!

**Conclusion**

1) Now, I began this morning by showing you the way Dr. Francis Schaeffer described how new ideas come to full acceptance in our culture.



I think we’ve demonstrated that for you this morning. I’ve spent this time showing you these things today because I want you to see that God's Word is absolutely true: "*the whole world lies in the power of the evil one*" (1 John 5:19).

*What a person believes will come out in his or her art.* Next week I’ll show you one more thing before I reconnect the end times with modern technology – and it’s a mindblower!

If Schaeffer’s paradigm teaches us anything its this: every song we hear, every film we enjoy, every book we read, every television show we watch comes from an idea that was in someone’s head that being presented to you for consideration. When Led Zepplin’s song *Stairway to Heaven* says (even, unbelievably in Christian worship services),

“Yes, there are two paths,  
you can go by,  
but in the long run,  
there’s still time to change the road you’re on,”

We have to ask, is that idea true? How the devil would love every lost person on the planet to believe, “There’s still time to change the road you’re on.”

- 2) Some philosopher sitting in some Ivy League office begins writing about the way traditional concepts of Good and Evil need to be redefined. That which traditional Christianity calls ‘Good’ is actually ‘Evil’ because it limits the potential of human ambition. The ‘meek will inherit nothing’; ‘the strong will inherit the earth’ – just look around.

The next thing you know, paintings and books and films appear unapologetically glorifying human ambition over Christian ideas of selflessness and compassion and sacrificial acts of kindness. Ideas like ‘turn the other cheek’ are mocked.

And then, before you know it, there’s a prime-time TV show pouring that same idea into the general culture. And after that gets into the bloodstream of the godless culture for a little bit, some dopy preacher, who is as lost as the people she’s lying to, gets behind a pulpit and says that *God* is the liar and the *devil* is the one who really wanted to help us achieve our potential to be wise and strong and like God!

And there it is; it’s come full circle: from the godless minds of the philosophers to the godless minds of the clerics. The same has happened with abortion, homosexuality, and every other detestable idea that God hates, and yet has found its way into the Churches.

- 3) By the way, I’m not being hyperbolic nor *imaginative* with my scenario. The idea Christian concepts of Good and Evil need to be redefined was the grand thesis of Friedrich Nietzsche’s book, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886). Nietzsche, whose philosophies Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Socialists adapted into political science, and which came to clash with the German Evangelical Church.

Study the five stages of the German *Kirchenkampf* [the ‘Church Struggle’] which occurred from 1933 to 1945.<sup>17</sup> As early as 1933, Hitler made efforts to assimilate the churches into the culture of Nazism. Read about the courage of the Confessing Church and men like Martin Niemöller, which led to the creation of the *Barmen Declaration*, which laid the foundation for resistance against all attempts to make the Evangelical Churches an instrument of Nazi policy.”<sup>18</sup>

Read the *Barmen Declaration*. It teaches us that ideas that stand in opposition to the Word of God MUST be resisted, even at the risk of death. Dieterich Bonhoeffer, Richard Wurmbrand, Sabrina Wurmbrand – and countless others - all took a stand against the godless ideas of their own evil age and defended the Truth. They stood in the way of ideas that had run down from philosophers to artists to the general culture and, with their very bodies, prevented them from entering the Church!

In July of 1937, the Confessing Church was banned and Martin Niemöller arrested. Between 1939 and 1945, Bonhoeffer imprisoned and executed, more clergy were imprisoned, a Priest block was established at Dachau and Hitler’s henchmen Martin Bormann and Adolf Wagner ordered crucifixes to be removed from all the classrooms in Bavaria. Clergy were drafted into the military to keep them from preaching and Church publications were either censored or banned.

But you know what? Pastor Martin Niemöller understood that he would one day have to stand before the Lord Jesus. Read the *Barmen Declaration*; it will strengthen your resolve; it will strengthen your heart!<sup>19 20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lueker, Erwin L., Poellot, Luther, Jackson, Paul, eds., *Christian Cyclopedia* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), on *Kirchenkampf*.

<sup>18</sup> Cross, F. L., and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 397.

<sup>19</sup> It’s introductory appeal to the German people: “Be not deceived by loose talk, as if we meant to oppose the unity of the German nation! Do not listen to the seducers who pervert our intentions, as if we wanted to break up the unity of the German Evangelical Church or to forsake the Confessions of the Fathers! Try the spirits whether they are of God! Prove also the words of the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church to see whether they agree with Holy Scripture and with the Confessions of the Fathers. If you find that we are speaking contrary to Scripture, then do not listen to us! But if you find that we are taking our stand upon Scripture, then let no fear or temptation keep you from treading with us the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God, in order that God’s people be of one mind upon earth and that we in faith experience what he himself has said: “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Therefore, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ekd.de/en/the-barmen-declaration-303.htm>

In response to the Nazi regime's attempt to co-opt Christianity through the "Führer Principle" and racial ideology, the 1934 declaration boldly declared:

“Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death.”

This means *there is no other Lord*—no political leader, no nation, no ideology, and no power—whose authority supersedes Christ's. It was not a call to withdraw from the world, but to live faithfully within it under Christ's lordship—free from the idolatry of nationalism or the culture.

The declaration's message was clear: *We have no Fuhrer but Jesus—not in politics, not in culture, and not in power.* He is the only way, the only truth, the only life.

- 4) When a new idea comes into the Church it started somewhere outside of the Church. And so, we have to be VERY, VERY careful. We have to guard our souls. We can't avoid them; they're in the very air. In the very radio and television waves, beaming from satellites and racing on the information superhighway. And the air, Paul said, is controlled by a prince: the ...

“prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”  
**(Ephesians 2:2-7).**

Church, it's time to live like that's true, to fight like that's true?

To stand for the truth as if we truly believe it?

To press our very bodies to the door closed against the encroaching darkness, yes, with our own *bodies* if need be?

It should shame us to look at these followers of Jesus through the ages who put their lives on the line to defend the Lord Jesus Christ against error and to then consider how few believers today are willing to take a stand for *anything*.

Another great German, Martin Luther, once wrote:

“If I profess with the loudest voice . . . every portion of the Word of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him. Where the battle rages there the loyalty of the soldier is proved.”

Yes. Words are not enough.

Jesus is calling us to a complete commitment.

That’s the true “‘Cost of Discipleship’ – another German, Dietrich Bonhoeffer – wrote that.

He wrote, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” The theologian Bonhoeffer wrote those words in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, up against the backdrop of Nazism. His words signified Jesus’ own words that true discipleship requires a total surrender of one’s life, ambitions, and comfort. It implies a metaphorical, or even *literal*, “death-to-self” to live to Christ. It emphasizes the fact that truly following Jesus is not a path of ease, but one of sacrifice, where one lays down his or her own agenda to pick up the Lord’s agenda.

Bonhoeffer wrote this while opposing the Nazi regime, illustrating that obedience to Christ may demand the ultimate sacrifice, as Jesus modeled for us at the cross. And so, on April 9, 1945 at age 39, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged in the courtyard of the detention building at the Flossenbürg concentration camp. Executed by the SS on orders from Adolf Hitler just weeks before the camp’s liberation.

Just before his execution, he led a brief worship service for his fellow prisoners. His last words were, “This is the end—[but] for me, the beginning of life.” May the Lord help us to end so well. Amen.

## **Addendum: *The Barmen Declaration***

### **A Brief Introduction**

A document of extreme importance in the modern era of the Church, the *Barmen Declaration* was the *Confessing Church's* stance against the encroaching attempts by the German (Nazi) government to influence it.

After Hitler's rise to power, churches were pressed by the government to make the Church more Aryan. This included adopting the so-called 'Führer Principle' and removing Jewish-Christian pastors and Church leaders from positions of authority. Essentially, the Churches were put upon to fall into lockstep with the German government.

In large measure, these attempts were successful. Much of the German Church, responding to both the government and the general culture of the time, fell in line with the Nazis, even hailing Hitler as a prophet to the German people. Those who were a part of the "German Christian" movement mixed Nazi racial theory with Bible doctrine.

Others, however, standing upon the Word of God as their sole authority, refused. Theologians Karl Barth and Hans Asmussen wrote the *Declaration* and the *Confessing Church* approved it at Barmen. It was a bold and dangerous thing for them to declare in that political climate.

The *Barmen Declaration* has been outlined by its six theses:

1. The only source of revelation is the Word of God — Jesus Christ. Any other possible sources (earthly powers, for example) will not be accepted.
2. Jesus Christ is the only Lord of all aspects of personal life. There should be no other authority.
3. The message and order of the Church should not be influenced by the current political convictions.
4. Leadership in the church is not dominion; it is in service of its ministry entrusted to all its members; there can be no special leader (no 'Führer') apart from that ministry.
5. The state should not fulfill the task of the Church and vice versa. State and Church are both limited to their own business.

6. Therefore, the *Barmen Declaration* rejects (i) the subordination of the Church to the state and (ii) the subordination of the Word and Spirit to the Church.<sup>21</sup>

### ***The Barmen Declaration***

#### **An appeal to the Evangelical congregations and Christians in Germany**

The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church met in Barmen, May 29-31, 1934. Here representatives from all the German confessional churches met with one accord in a confession of the one Lord of the one, holy, apostolic church.

In fidelity to their confession of faith, members of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches sought a common message for the need and temptation of the church in our day. With gratitude to God they are convinced that they have been given a common word to utter.

It was not their intention to found a new church or to form a union. For nothing was farther from their minds than the abolition of the confessional status of our churches. Their intention was, rather, to withstand in faith and unanimity the destruction of the confession of faith, and thus of the Evangelical Church in Germany.

In opposition to attempts to establish the unity of the German Evangelical Church by means of false doctrine, by the use of force and by insincere practices, the Confessional Synod insists that the unity of the Evangelical Churches in Germany can come only from the Word of God in faith through the Holy Spirit. Thus alone is the church renewed.

Therefore, the Confessional Synod calls upon the congregations to range themselves behind it in prayer, and steadfastly to gather around those pastors and teachers who are loyal to the confessions.

Be not deceived by loose talk, as if we meant to oppose the unity of the German nation! Do not listen to the seducers who pervert our intentions, as if we wanted to break up the unity of the German Evangelical Church or to forsake the confessions of the Fathers!

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<sup>21</sup> Introduction, mine; the six-point summary from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barmen\\_Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barmen_Declaration).

Try the spirits whether they are of God! Prove also the words of the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church to see whether they agree with holy scripture and with the confessions of the Fathers.

If you find that we are speaking contrary to scripture, then do not listen to us! But if you find that we are taking our stand upon scripture, then let no fear or temptation keep you from treading with us the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God, in order that God's people be of one mind upon earth and that we in faith experience what he himself has said: "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Therefore, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

### **Theological declaration concerning the present situation of the German Evangelical Church**

According to the opening words of its constitution of July 11 1933, the German Evangelical Church is a federation of confessional churches that grew out of the Reformation and that enjoy equal rights. The theological basis for the unification of these churches is laid down in Article 1 and Article 2 (1) of the constitution of the German Evangelical Church that was recognized by the Reich government on July 14, 1933:

- Article 1. The inviolable foundation of the German Evangelical Church is the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is attested for us in holy scripture and brought to light again in the confessions of the Reformation. The full powers that the church needs for its mission are hereby determined and limited.
- Article 2 (1). The German Evangelical Church is divided into member churches (Landeskirchen).

We, the representatives of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches, of free synods, church assemblies, and parish organizations united in the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church, declare that we stand together on the ground of the German Evangelical Church as a federation of German confessional churches. We are bound together by the confession of the one Lord of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

We publicly declare before all evangelical churches in Germany that what they hold in common in this confession is grievously imperiled, and with it the unity of the German Evangelical Church. It is threatened by the teaching methods and actions of

the ruling church party of the "German Christians" and of the church administration carried on by them. These have become more and more apparent during the first year of the existence of the German Evangelical Church. This threat consists in the fact that the theological basis on which the German Evangelical Church is united has been continually and systematically thwarted and rendered ineffective by alien principles, on the part of the leaders and spokesmen of the "German Christians" as well as on the part of the church administration.

When these principles are held to be valid, then, according to all the confessions in force among us, the church ceases to be the church and the German Evangelical Church, as a federation of confessional churches, becomes intrinsically impossible. As members of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches we may and must speak with one voice in this matter today. Precisely because we want to be and to remain faithful to our various confessions, we may not keep silent, since we believe that we have been given a common message to utter in a time of common need and temptation. We commend to God what this may mean for the interrelations of the confessional churches.

In view of the errors of the "German Christians" of the present Reich church government which are devastating the church and also therefore breaking up the unity of the German Evangelical Church, **we confess the following evangelical truths:**

1. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber... I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved" (John 10:1, 9).

Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in holy scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and in death. We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.

2. "Christ Jesus, whom God has made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so, in the same way and with the same seriousness he is also God's mighty claim upon our whole

life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.

**We reject the false doctrine**, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords - areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.

3. "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body [is] joined and knit together" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

The Christian church is the congregation of the brethren in which Jesus Christ acts presently as the Lord in word and sacrament through the Holy Spirit. As the church of pardoned sinners, it has to testify in the midst of a sinful world, with its faith as with its obedience, with its message as with its order, that it is solely his property, and that it lives and wants to live solely from his comfort and from his direction in the expectation of his appearance.

**We reject the false doctrine**, as though the church were permitted to abandon the form of its message and order to its own pleasure or to changes in prevailing ideological and political convictions.

4. "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:25-26).

The various offices in the church do not establish a dominion of some over the others; on the contrary, they are for the exercise of the ministry entrusted to and enjoined upon the whole congregation.

**We reject the false doctrine**, as though the church, apart from this ministry, could and were permitted to give itself, or allow to be given to it, special leaders vested with ruling powers.

5. "Fear God. Honor the emperor" (1 Peter 2:17).

Scripture tells us that, in the as yet unredeemed world in which the church also exists, the state has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace. [It fulfils this task] by means of the threat and exercise of force, according to the

measure of human judgment and human ability. The church acknowledges the benefit of this divine appointment in gratitude and reverence before him. It calls to mind the kingdom of God, God's commandment and righteousness, and thereby the responsibility both of rulers and of the ruled. It trusts and obeys the power of the Word by which God upholds all things.

**We reject the false doctrine**, as though the state, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's vocation as well.

**We reject the false doctrine**, as though the church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the state, thus itself becoming an organ of the state.

6. "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:20). "The word of God is not fettered" (2 Timothy 2:9).

The church's commission, upon which its freedom is founded, consists in delivering the message of the free grace of God to all people in Christ's stead, and therefore in the ministry of his own Word and work through sermon and sacrament.

**We reject the false doctrine**, as though the church in human arrogance could place the word and work of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans.

The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church declares that it sees in the acknowledgement of these truths and in the rejection of these errors the indispensable theological basis of the German Evangelical Church as a federation of confessional churches. It invites all who are able to accept its declaration to be mindful of these theological principles in their decisions in church politics. It entreats all whom it concerns to return to the unity of faith, love, and hope.