



January /February 2021

# Prospective of the Pastor

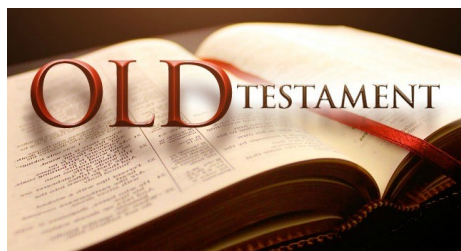
St. John's United Methodist Church  
The Messenger

I want to begin this article by wishing every reader a Happy New Year. It is my prayer that 2021 will be nothing like 2020 with all the challenges of the Coronavirus.

Recently someone asked me to explain Romans 7. In our conversation I realized this person had little understanding of the Old Testament system of worship. I made the comment at some point that much of the New Testament will remain vague and unintelligible unless we know the Old Testament.

When I finished this conversation, I pondered how many other believers wrestle with portions of the Bible because they do not make much sense to them. Some have told me plainly they do not attempt to read certain books of the Old Testament. Having said that, I must remind the reader that the Scriptures Jesus or Paul referred to in their teachings and writings were the Old Testament Canon. Somehow, we tend to think that Jesus and Paul had access to the New Testament before them when they wrote.

This inability to appreciate the Old Testament is no accident. When I was in seminary in the late 1960's and early 1970's a viewpoint floated around in many seminaries and religious magazines that the mod-



ern-day pastor only needed the Gospels and the Epistles as preaching and teaching substance. The Old Testament was either downplayed or ignored by many persons who were preparing for the pastoral ministry.

Others who did read the Old Testament took offense at a God who appeared angry much of the time. They were troubled by the of violence, evil and injustice that was recorded. They disagreed with Capital punishment, the use of war and other acts of violence they found there. Some became activists who labored hard in state legislatures for the removal of capital punishment and protested war.

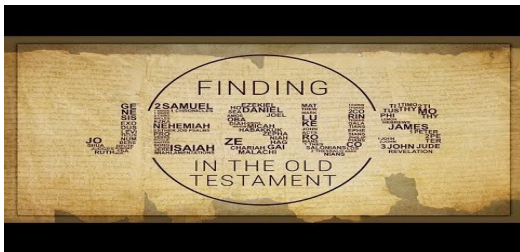
As I analyzed this negative view of the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit brought to my attention that whenever Jesus or Paul wanted Scriptural proof of their teaching, they went to the Old Testament for that proof. The more I study God's Word, the more I am convinced that all the treasured doctrines of grace, forgiveness and spiritual empowerment are clearly presented in the Old Testament; that what Jesus and Paul did in their teachings was to uncover these doctrines from the debris of tradition and poor exegesis. They reestablished the foundations of these precious doctrines.

Another vital contribution of the Old Testament is the establishment of law and order in society. The law as given to protect marriage and the right of personal property. God made it clear that to speak falsely or to be a false witness carried His strong displeasure. In the law, God was setting forth

personal, societal, and national boundaries. At the heart of all these laws was the protection of the individual.

In Romans 7: 7-12 Paul argues that the purpose of the law was to illustrate or to instruct us of such dangers as covetousness, murder and lying to mention a few. He concluded in verse 12, *“Therefore*

*the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”*



Paul saw the law as something good; not evil.

The Law was like the sun that shines through a window into a darkened room. When its rays reach that darkened room all forms of dirt, dust, cobwebs, and other undesirable elements are exposed. The sun’s rays did not create these undesirable elements, it only exposed them. That is what the law does to the human conscience. It exposes sinful tendencies that often exist in our hearts and minds. When this happens, we feel uncomfortable because what was hidden from public view has been exposed to our consciousness. And often with that consciousness comes guilt and condemnation.

But grace is present in the Law. When covetousness is exposed in my heart by the commandment, I am in the position of making a moral change. I do not have to continue in a state of covetousness. By God’s grace I can turn this negative into a positive value that will bring hope and blessing to myself and to others.

Conviction by the Holy Spirit of what is wrong in my life is the first step to salvation. So long as I am not aware of doing anything wrong, I will not be motivated to make any change. Conviction is the doorway to repentance and repentance is the path of radical change in the way I think and live.

Law and order were written into the fabric of

our Constitution as a Nation. It is my prayer and passion to do all I can to help people understand this positive and necessary influence for our society.

Pastor Ivan L. Schwenn

January 2021

## BLUE BIRD BUS COMPANY

The Blue Bird Bus Company can be traced back to the Houston County Motor Company and a small Georgia Ford car distributorship founded and owned by Albert Laurence Luce located in Perry, Georgia, Houston County’s seat. Mr. Luce also owned a Ford distributorship in nearby Fort Valley, Georgia.

Albert L. Luce was born on June 26, 1888 in La Grange, Cook County, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Albert attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Following his studies at Northwestern, Albert moved to El Centro, California where he was a distributor for Maxwell motor cars. Albert enlisted in the U. S. Army during World War I, serving in Company I of the 126<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

When the 126<sup>th</sup> Infantry returned to the U. S. in 1919, his experience as a Maxwell distributor enabled him to get the Ford Motor Company franchise in Fort Valley, Georgia. He later got the dealership in Perry, Georgia as a second franchise.



Albert Laurence Luce married Helen Tryphena Mathews on June 23, 1920. Helen Mathews was the daughter of Rev. George Mathews, one of the founders of the Indian Springs Holiness encampment. Their marriage was blessed with the birth of three sons, George Edgar Luce, Albert L. Luce Jr. (aka Buddy), and Joseph Parley Luce.

In 1925 the Penn Dixie Cement company requested a vehicle to transport workers to and from their cement plant.

Mr. Luce equipped a Model T chassis with a wooden



bus body he received from the North Carolina Thomas Car company. He was concerned that the quality of this wooden body would not stand up under the rigors of the rough roads.

In 1927 Albert Luce investigated building a better bus with the help of a local blacksmith. Using steel channels and angle iron for the framework, they built a prototype of other experiments to follow. Due to the Great Depression, few buses were in demand. The same was true of the sales of automobiles so that by 1931 he closed down his franchise in Fort Valley and consolidated all his automobile business and bus body-building to his franchise in Perry, Georgia.

In 1932 he sold both of his dealerships and invested his last \$12,000.00 in capital in the construction of 25 bus bodies most of which were sold to transport children to and from school. His inspiration to starting a new company to build buses came from his wife's support and the family's strong Methodist faith.

With the shortage of money, they built the 25 bus bodies in a rented peach-packing shed. Even after he sold all 25 bus bodies, He had depleted his working capital to \$5,000.00. The remaining assets were tied up in his house and the bus building equipment.

His son, known as Buddy (A.L. Luce Jr.) recalls that one day his dad went to the local bank for a payroll loan of \$110.00. But the bank turned him down as they had no money to loan. He left the bank thinking how he was going to tell his employees that they would have to close the Blue Bird shop. As Mr. Luce stopped in the street to pray, a friend

approached him and recognized the anguish in the face of Albert. They spoke for a moment and that friend gave Albert a check for \$110.00 and that saved the company from closure.

In 1934 and 1935 the bus building business improved, although it was seasonal. So many of the Blue Bird employees were farmers who worked in the factory during the production season. The bus building was moved from the peach-packing facility to a livery stable where a form of an assembly line was developed.

In 1935 A. L. Luce approached the Fort Valley City Council stating that he planned to build a factory to manufacture School Bus Bodies and wanted to know if the Council would consider some inducement in the way of taxes and licenses. The petition was approved, and that same year lumber was purchased on credit from a company in Perry, Georgia and a 27,000 sq. ft. plant was erected by Luce's own employees.

During this period, Mr. Luce became interested in converting the Blue Bird factory to manufacture all steel school bus bodies. He further resolved to replace curtains that covered the windows in rain and other inclement weather with actual glass windows that would not leak.

The first all-steel bus body with windows came into existence in 1937.



During World War II there was a great demand for buses for the military. However, the military had restrictions on the weight caused by metal so parts of these buses had wood installed to lighten them.

In 1945 a tragic fire destroyed the Blue Bird factory but much of the equipment and buses were salvaged by the employees. A temporary assembly line was installed in a building nearby. In the months that followed Mr. Luce was successful in locating a scrap metal dealer in Knoxville, Tennessee who had

nearly 100,000 tons of steel beams and trusses for sale. Mr. Luce purchased the lot and shortly thereafter a new, all-metal assembly plant was erected in Fort Valley.

Six months after the tragic fire, A. L. Luce suffered a heart attack that nearly took his life. When he recovered sufficiently to get back to work for a short time each day, Buddy called the management team together asking them to help keep his dad from stress. Several policies resulted from this. Among them was the employees were given an additional 30-minute rest from their work each day. Company chapel services were held every Wednesday during the lunch hour.

Many changes have taken place over the years in the styles of buses being build. The Blue Bird Company expanded to open sales offices in all 48 continental states and in over 60 several foreign countries. They had grown to become the number one school bus manufacturer in the U. S.

Eventually, A. L. Luce turned the company over to his three sons; Buddy (A. L. Luce Jr.), George and Joe.

One of the things not known was that during the most difficult period of the development of the Blue Bird Company, A. L. Luce was determined to set aside a portion of the Corporate earnings for charity. The Blue Bird School Bus Foundation Inc. is a nonprofit corporation with a mission to enrich charitable services in the community, region, and the world.

After the death of George Luce, who died in 1990, Buddy and Joe put the company up for sale. Merrill Lynch Capital Partners acquired 82% and a group of company managers acquired the remaining 18%. During the 1990's Blue Bird was the leader in the U. S. school bus market.

Albert L. Luce was a devoted Methodist and strong supporter of the Indian Springs Holiness camp. His family followed that tradition. When I was a student and employed by Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky (1964-1973), George E. Luce was the chairman of the Board of Trustees

of the University.

When Lil and I were appointed as missionaries to Honduras in 1973 by World Gospel Mission, Joe Luce was active on the Board of Trustees of WGM and later chairman of that Board.

Before we were married, Lil had the opportunity to visit the Indian Springs Camp, the home of A. L. Luce in Fort Valley, Georgia and also had an extensive tour of the Blue Bird Bus factory in Fort Valley.

## **MONTHLY MOBILE FOOD GIVEAWAY**

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**

There is a free monthly mobile food/produce giveaway sponsored by the Interfaith Community Services and the Community Food Bank which is available through May 2021.

The Food Giveaways will happen at the El Pueblo Community Center, 101 W. Irvington, from

8:00 am - 10:00 am. on the following days:

No documentation is required!



**January 22  
February 26  
March 26  
April 23  
and  
May 21**

**Joseph - Son of Jacob**

M	P	R	A	H	P	I	T	O	P	S	Q	R	R	H	V	C	G
R	V	U	Z	Q	G	R	N	J	E	M	I	A	R	H	P	E	R
P	A	O	C	O	O	A	U	V	Z	H	O	A	R	A	H	P	A
Y	G	C	S	R	P	U	E	D	N	L	E	A	R	S	I	S	I
D	T	H	H	H	E	N	R	A	H	C	A	S	S	I	R	V	N
F	E	I	T	E	Y	V	D	G	E	K	G	R	V	O	E	Z	M
N	A	A	R	E	L	H	L	X	A	L	E	S	L	L	T	J	E
R	L	M	A	O	N	W	R	I	C	H	I	O	D	H	S	K	M
I	E	R	I	B	H	R	R	E	S	U	C	N	R	S	A	P	O
J	S	U	H	N	E	T	E	A	K	Y	P	N	E	B	M	R	S
W	A	I	B	B	I	N	U	T	N	A	D	B	T	S	Q	I	D
A	F	C	G	E	F	E	J	A	S	R	B	M	E	M	S	S	N
R	F	A	O	N	N	Z	M	A	E	I	A	S	R	A	I	O	A
D	L	N	T	B	E	F	E	H	M	N	C	I	P	E	R	N	H
E	O	A	D	H	O	T	P	B	A	I	C	M	R	R	J	E	R
N	C	A	Q	T	E	E	R	S	U	Y	N	E	E	D	U	G	R
U	K	N	A	S	H	R	S	I	T	L	S	O	T	Y	D	Y	V
R	S	O	S	S	Z	E	V	Q	N	P	U	N	N	A	A	P	I
C	C	S	R	E	H	T	O	R	B	G	R	N	I	F	H	T	C

**THIS ONE IS A BIT OF A CHALLENGE! GOOD LUCK!!!! (Based on Genesis 30-50)**

Words can forward, backward, vertical or diagonal within the puzzle.

- |             |          |             |             |         |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| ASHER       | NILE     | GAD         | BAKER       | FLOCKS  |
| GOSHEN      | POTIPHAR | BENJAMIN    | GRAIN       | PRISON  |
| BROTHERS    | HANDSOME | RACHEL      | CANAAN      | REUBEN  |
| CISTERN     | ISRAEL   | SEVEN YEARS | CUPBEARER   | DREAMS  |
| SHEPHERD    | DAN      | JACOB       | SIGNET RING | EPHRAIM |
| JUDAH       | EGYPT    | LEVI        | SIMEON      | PHARAOH |
| WARDEN      | FAMINE   | MASTER      | FATHER      |         |
| INTERPRETER |          |             |             |         |

## January/February 2021 Birthdays



### January Birthdays

January 1st Ronda Redmon Birthday  
January 4th John Gregory's Birthday  
January 4th David West's Birthday  
January 7th John O'Hara's Birthday  
January 24th Jackie Riegert's Birthday

### February Birthdays

February 4th Elaine Gokey  
February 18th Arthur Howard  
February 18th Mac McConnell  
February 21st Brenna Brockel  
February 25th Sally West

**A Worship Service is now being held at 9:30 a.m.  
on Sunday mornings in the church sanctuary  
(a maximum of 50 people can be in attendance  
(PLEASE WEAR A MASK)**

**Please check the St. John's website, watch for e-mail notifications, or  
call the church office for additional information!**

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE - Wed. February 17th 6:00 pm**

**St. John's United Methodist Church  
60 W. Veteran's Blvd. Tucson, AZ 85713-6128  
Pastor Ivan Schwenn  
pastorstjohnsumctuc@gmail.com  
520-792-6398 E-mail: stjohnsumctuc@gmail.com  
Website: stjohnsumctucson.org  
Office Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm (Monday and Friday)**