



Please Stop
Saying That!

Those of us who have been around for a few years are often asked for advice from younger people or other friends who are dealing with important decisions.

For years I have heard well meaning people, often followers of Christ, give this advice to the one asking the question,

“Follow your heart. Follow your heart and you will never go wrong.”

PLEASE STOP SAYING THAT!

That is some of the worst advice you could ever give anyone.

Why?

Consider what the Bible says about the heart of man.

Jeremiah 17:9 **“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”**

If the Old Testament reference is not sufficient for you, then consider the words of Jesus in Mark 7:20-22:

“And he said, **That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness**”

Considering what the Bible tells us about the condition of the Human heart, we should NEVER advise anyone to “Follow their heart”!

Some might say, “Well. A Christian has Jesus in his heart so that should be ok for a Christian.” And the resounding answer to that would be another big NO!

We who follow Christ have a basic human sinful nature in this flesh but we also have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The Apostle Paul acknowledged that in Romans 7:14-24 and tells us of a spiritual warfare that goes on in our bodies between the flesh and the Spirit. **“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”** (ESV)

To follow our hearts would still be wrong but to follow the Holy Spirit is just what Jesus would tell us. Look at what He told His Disciples (and us) in John 16:13:

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“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

So the Christian answer to the questioning person should never be “Follow your heart:. It should be “Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If you do that you will never go wrong!”

On a personal note, I think I gave some pretty good advice to the 1991 Graduating Class of Ashland Paul Blazer High School in their Baccalaureate Service at Putnam Stadium. I shared with the graduates the wisdom of Solomon from Proverbs 3:5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (certainly better than “Follow Your Heart”)

C. J. Adkins

Deacons Of The Month...



Kenneth Adkins



Josh Spurgeon



Doris Wellman	4 th	Betsy Cotton	19 th
Abbi Blake	7 th	Cazzie Robertson	20 th
Pat Hawley	8 th	Josh Spurgeon	21 st
Devin Adkins	8 th	Natasha Beckett	23 rd
Sallie Smith	9 th	Michael Cline	26 th
Frances Adkins	9 th	Silas Spurgeon	26 th
Jim Hawley	11 th	Buddy Lynch	28 th
Myrtle Sebastian	11 th	Laura Bishop	29 th
Dan Purrington	14 th	Jim Bailey	31 st



The Persecuted Church
From: “The Alabama Baptist Paper”

NAIROBI, Kenya — Muslim relatives of a Christian evangelist on Feb. 6 beat and tied him up to be burned to death after he returned home for a funeral in eastern Uganda.

Malingumu Bruhan, 34, returned to Kaliro District for his grandfather’s funeral in Muhira village, Nawaikoke, and then accepted his uncles’ request to stay and visit, as they said they had not seen him for a long time, he told Morning Star News.

Other visitors had left when Bruhan’s uncle, Ndifakulya Musa, began rebuking him, he said.

“My uncle accused me of embarrassing them by holding Christian evangelistic, open-air meetings and debates with Muslims,” Bruhan said. “He accused me of being an infidel by converting to Christianity, and that Allah will reward them in Jannah [garden paradise] if they kill me.”

Bruhan remained quiet as the verbal attacks and threats continued. His uncles began to beat him and making plans to burn him alive, but another convert rescued him.

Bruhan is a well-known evangelist in the region for his public debates with Muslims about Christianity and Islam. He said he has survived 11 murder attempts “by God’s grace.”

Muslims make up no more than 12% of Uganda’s population, with high concentrations in eastern areas of the country, and Uganda’s constitution and laws provide for religious freedom. Still, Open Doors ranks Uganda as the 69th most difficult country in the world to live as a Christian.

KAYUNGA DISTRICT, Uganda — A man in Uganda is suspected of hanging his wife and two children after she and one child converted to Christianity from Islam, Morning Star News reported.

A neighbor in Bwetyaba village found Shamira Nakato, 27, and her children — 3 and 8 years old — hanged in their home on Dec. 28, the report states.

On Christmas Day, Nakato went to a church service while her husband was out of town. After Nakato and the children attended a church service the next day, she told the pastor she wanted to embrace Christ.

On Dec. 27, she went to a special prayer day. Her husband, Hamidu Kasimbi, returned from his trip early. He pulled Nakato out of the church and was seen beating her. Later, sources heard screams coming from Kasimbi’s house two different times.

The next morning, the mother and children were found hanged inside the home, a source said.

Security agencies are seeking Kasimbi, who has disappeared.

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Yes. Many Baptists Observe Ash Wednesday, Too

There are times when Westmoreland Baptist church has chosen to observe Ash Wednesday. The whole concept of Lent and Ash Wednesday jump out to most of us Baptists as “Catholic Stuff”, but although we do not put a lot of emphasis on Lent, The meaning behind Ash Wednesday should be powerful and relevant to ALL Christ Followers. There is much symbolism and value to the time of prayer, fasting, and repentance that should apply to all of us.

Author Joe LaGuardia starts this article with a charge that many of us have just accepted as true.

Charge: Baptists don’t celebrate Ash Wednesday.

That was the reason given to me a few years ago by a local Christian bookstore employee in explaining why they didn’t have any Ash Wednesday resources.

I had stopped by the store looking for Ash Wednesday items for children – stickers, pencils and so on – and I was caught off guard by the store clerk’s response because I know many Baptists who observe Ash Wednesday, including me.

Many churches throughout the South, not to mention the North, also practice Ash Wednesday, so perhaps we need to set the record straight.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the season of Lent – a time in the Christian calendar that eventually leads to Holy Week, or the week between Palm Sunday and Easter. It lasts 40 days and emphasizes repentance, confession and fasting.

We follow Jesus into the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) and recall Israel’s wanderings in the desert to live “not by bread alone, but by the very Word of God,” to feast on the spiritual manna of God’s forgiveness.

Ash Wednesday, therefore, inaugurates Lent by re-enacting the Jewish tradition of repenting with ashes.

This is an ancient custom, one in which a penitent sinner sprinkled ashes on the head as a sign that he or she was no match for God (Esther 4:1-3 for example; or, more dramatically, Jeremiah 6:26).

Although Jesus came to give God’s children “a garland instead of ashes” (Isaiah 61:3), this practice became a part of the Christian church as early as 130 AD.

These days, many churches are casting off rituals such as Ash Wednesday in order to get at the “relationship” one has with God. Why practice these “rituals” when so many people no longer desire religiosity?

I can’t answer that on behalf of all Christians, but for me, Ash Wednesday and the rest of the Christian calendar represent a structure that provides rich meaning in my own journey of faith. It gives me a skeleton upon which to hang some healthy spiritual muscles.

To say that Ash Wednesday is not relevant is like saying my family tree has no relevance in shaping who I am as a person.

When I join Christ’s church in practicing those time-tested traditions, I feel like I belong to something larger than myself.

It gets me out of the self-centered, individualistic cult that Christianity has become for far too many communities of faith.

I’m not saying that a church is wrong for not practicing Ash Wednesday. After all, there is beauty in the mosaic of diverse communities that sustain faith on their own terms.

Rather, I am saying that a nose in the body of Christ should not tell the arm what to do no more than the arm should look down on the nose because the nose can be snotty sometimes.

What matters most is that a variety of worship styles can bolster one’s relationship with God rather than hinder it.

For instance, I experience faith in a kinesthetic worship setting. I like to use all five senses, not just sing songs or hear someone preach.

I like the feel of the ashes on my forehead, the smell of burning candles on the altar, the look of the purple frontal (tablecloth) on the communion table and the sitting-and-standing routine in the order of worship that helps engage my whole being.



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Great News from the Association

We are on the MOVE!! Over the last month we have had Disaster Relief Training at Abundant Hope Baptist Church. From our church we have 9 trained in Chaplain, Mud Out, Chain Saw, and Assessment.

If you missed it and want to be come involved there is training at the state office in Teays Valley every Friday and Saturday in March. Friday is Chaplain training by me and Saturday is Mud Out, Chain Saw and Assessment. Train one or train all sections. WE ARE IN NEED OF SERVANTS IN THESE AREAS AND OUT OUR STATE MINISTRY. The goal is to spread the GOSPEL thru helps.

NEXT. ANY FISHERMEN OR FISHER WOMEN OUT THERE?

WELL. April 23rd from 10 am till 1 pm professional fisherman but most important, Brother in Christ, JIMMY HOUSTON, will be with us here at Westmoreland Baptist Church. He will speak on fishing, give some fishing wisdom, and demonstrations BUT with a Gospel presentation.

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU! Opportunity to reach out to your unchurched friends. More information coming soon!

Keeping your eyes on Him, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

Greater Huntington Baptist Association
Director Of Missions

Brady Lipscomb



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Ash Wednesday

It is a magnificent, inexplicable spiritual experience that actually has little to do with either ritual or religiosity.

Ultimately, Ash Wednesday reminds me that I am only human and that I, too, am in need of God's grace day in and day out.

We who follow Christ pick up our cross daily and sing "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go," but a formal time of confession always makes me all the more willing to do so even amid the failures and fragility of life.

Joe LaGuardia is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Vero Beach, Florida. He is the author of "Awe and Trembling: Reflections for the Christian Journey," a book of articles and homilies. A version of this article first appeared on his blog, Baptist Spirituality, and is used with permission.



Westmoreland Baptist Church

Welcomes its newest member.....

*Juanita
Adkins*

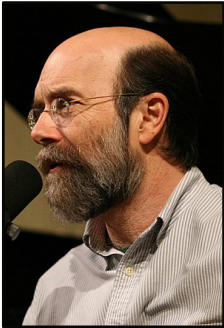




El-Shaddai

Michael Card (4/11/1957)

Michael Card is an American, Christian singer-songwriter, musician, author, and radio host. Card was born in Madison, Tennessee. He is the son of a doctor and the grandson of a Baptist minister. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in Biblical studies from Western Kentucky University. He is best known for his contributions in contemporary Christian music, which combine folk-style melodies and instrumentation with an in-depth study of the Bible. Since his debut in 1981, Card has sold more than 4 million albums and has written 19 No. 1 singles. He has also authored several books, including the Gold Medallion Book Award winner, "A Sacred Sorrow". Despite his success in music, Card has always maintained that his music career is secondary to his calling as a Bible teacher. He has distanced himself from the CCM industry by criticizing the promotion of personalities over musical content and the shifting emphasis away from God to sell more albums. Card's most famous song is "El Shaddai".



Michael Card

El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai [means "God Almighty, God Almighty"] El-Elyon na Adonai [means "God in the highest, Oh, Lord"] Age to age, You're still the same By the power of the name El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai Erkamka na Adonai [means "We will love You, Oh, Lord"] We will praise and lift You high El-Shaddai Through Your love And through the ram You saved the son Of Abraham Through the power Of Your hand Turned the sea Into dry land To the outcast On her knees You were the God Who really sees And by Your might You set Your children free	El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai [means "God Almighty, God Almighty"] El-Elyon na Adonai [means "God in the highest, Oh, Lord"] Age to age, You're still the same By the power of the name El-Shaddai, El-Shaddai Erkamka na Adonai [means "We will love You, Oh, Lord"] We will praise and lift You high El-Shaddai Through the years You made it clear That the time of Christ Was near Though the people Couldn't see What Messiah ought to be Though Your Word Contained the plan They just could not understand Your most awesome work was done Through the frailty of Your son
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