

WKDW-FM 97.5, North Port, FL, 10-11 AM  
Weekly Wednesday Night Bible Study  
Cybercast this Sabbath, Ocala, FL.

## *Pastor's Letter August 28, 2020*

*Lessons from the Secret Service*

*Are You Ready for **What if...***



Secret Service Agents Protecting Donald Trump from a Sudden Assault

One of the most difficult jobs on earth is managing the protection of the President of the United States. "Every time the president leaves the White House, we have to move the White House with him," said Jonathan Wackrow, a former Secret Service agent, who has helped protect every living President.

The protection of the President falls squarely on the shoulders of the elite Secret Service... an elaborate team of highly skilled marksmen who have additionally been trained as an elite fighting force that must be ready at an instant to size up potential problems and navigate the President out of all incoming danger. The average American has utterly no idea how many tens of thousands of hours that often go into planning each Presidential trip.

As Jonathan Wackrow continues, “To the average American, presidential protection conjures up the image of a stone-faced Secret Service agent hovering near the commander-in-chief's podium or running alongside his limo”.

But the effort to keep any president safe once he is in office goes far beyond that, with heavy military involvement, a fleet of aircraft, unseen weapons, and drones. It involves logistics on top of logistics. — and a very hefty price-tag...**5 billion dollars a year!**

Confidential budget and planning documents reviewed by NBC News detail the precautions taken to ensure the president survives any kind of threat — from contaminated water to incoming missiles.

When the President moves, a minimum of seven airplanes may be involved:

- Air Force One, with the code name Comet, goes, along with two backups.
- The presidential limo, nicknamed The Beast, and two backups — all sealed to withstand chemical or biological weapons or planted bombs on streets — are loaded onto giant C-17 cargo planes.
- And 22 armored SUVs and vans are airlifted to transport Secret Service and White House staff.
- Five helicopters — including Marine One for the president — also are packed up, along with other presidential trappings like the White House podium.

**“The Secret Service is thinking about every problem in advance and coming up with every type of contingency plan that you can think of.”**



## What If ?

The smartest minds in secret service protection have continually asked endless questions as they have mapped out every possible scenario that could unfold in a crisis.

Bags of blood identical to the President's are brought on board along with every medical device imaginable including oxygen tanks, an operating table, anesthesia, medical doctors, plus extra food, food tasters, fuel, rockets, missiles, radar, an elite fighting force, and, yes, three limos – two serving in decoy motorcades.



### Asking What If?

What if the President's entourage is attacked by nerve gas?

What if a hostile nation launches a surface to air missile against Air Force One?

What if someone rams the side of the Presidential limousine in downtown traffic?

What if the President is seriously wounded, which hospital does he go to?

What if the vehicle the President is riding in suddenly has a mechanical problem?

What if the President suddenly wants to stop the motorcade to shake hands with people?

What must the Secret Service do to secure a golf course that the President is playing on?

What if the President ditches his security detail?

What if traffic jams make forward motorcade progress, impossible?

What if a child in the crowd gives the President some Girl Scout cookies?

What if hostile enemies suddenly shoot gallons of paint to cover the windshield in the motorcade?

What if a Muslim extremist charges the motorcade, brandishing a weapon?

How does the Secret Service protect the President when throngs of people begin to separate the President from his protection?

But By the Same Token . . .

## ***What If?***

What if we get falsely accused?

What if we are diagnosed with a terminal disease?

What if we are fighting loneliness if we get isolated?

What if we get turned down for a Feast help?

What if we are denied time off of work to keep the Holy Days?

What if one of our relatives suddenly denies the faith?

What if we get a job transfer 8 hours from the closest congregation?

What if the engine of our car dies and we have no funds to get something else?

What if we have \$100 to our name and an unexpected bill comes for \$2,000?

What if we have no place to live?

What if we encounter the condition described in Matthew 10:36?

What if we need to get closer to God?

Do we think ahead and anticipate what might happen to us in the future? Can we approach our “checklists” with the same enthusiasm that the Secret Service pursues its contingency planning? The elaborate attention to detailed planning by the Secret Service should provide strong inspiration to all of us to strive to be more thorough in living our lives. How we approach some of our “What ifs?” could also become a matter of life or death.

If we get stranded somewhere, do we have extra study material that we can spend time on? We should. Can we take advantage of the extra time to pray more when the situation arises? Are we willing to save “for a rainy day” if we encounter unexpected financial setbacks – that will help us not lose our spiritual focus? Do we determine to review basic doctrine so that we will have clear purpose about our calling?

It may sound more egotistical but, in a sense, it could be argued that our “being about our Father’s business” is more important than the President’s being about the nation’s business. Unlike the President’s activity, our business, which should be God’s business in us, has eternal implications. Moreover, judgment is now upon the house of God. (I Peter 4:17)

We are all far from perfect and God knows our frame and acknowledges through David that we are but mere dust (Psalm 103:14) (Psalm 130 3) but our efforts do matter. II Corinthians 13:5 reassures us that God does not expect us to do everything important on our own.

## *SERVICES*

### **Ft Myers**

This Sabbath Mike Fike will give the sermon. Services will be held at the Baymont Wyndham Hotel, 9401 Marketplace Rd., Ft. Myers, FL., 33912, at 1:30 PM. We are glad to have Mike and Nancy with us for a little while longer. Tentatively they are slated to transfer to New Zealand, possibly in mid-November.

### **Ocala**

Services tomorrow will be held at 1:30 PM at the Marion Oaks Community Center at 294 Marion Oaks Lane, Ocala, FL., 34473. We will have a pot luck meal tomorrow and a speakers' workshop to follow. Rumor has it that Ross Winne may crash the scene.

### **Tallahassee**

Services this Sabbath may be held in Havana. To be sure, contact Mike McCarty at 850-491-1701. Next weekend, I will be there. We will have a pot luck meal on that Sabbath and meet at the Days Inn on Monroe (US 27) at 2:30 PM.

### **Vero Beach**

Services will be held at the SDA compound, 1644 27<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vero Beach, FL., 32960 at 2 PM this Sabbath. Jeff Lockhart will come up from Miami to give the sermon. Last Sabbath there was special as we had 3 happy visitors join us.

## *FROM THE HOME OFFICE*

Last Sunday, ABC faculty and staff gathered with the incoming students for the annual Welcome Picnic. To comply with local social distancing guidelines, the picnic was held outside. The next day, Monday, everyone gathered for the ABC orientation. One by one, faculty members spoke about guidelines and instructions for the ABC experience. Mr. Kubik mentioned that they were here not only to learn the Bible but also to *live* what the Bible teaches. We may not know all that's in the Bible, but the Bible fully knows everything about us. Our focus is what Paul admonished young Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). That's what ABC is all about.



Scott Asley addressing this year's incoming class of ABC students

## California Wildfire Report

California wildfires are affecting our brethren in Northern California. With over a million acres burned and over 600 separate wildfires burning, it is hard to imagine that we are now also experiencing the 2nd and 3rd largest wildfires in California history--having gone through in recent years what seems like an annual nightmare of destruction and uncertainty. Most fires were started by dry lightning strikes--over 12,000 in a week. The fires have claimed seven lives at last count and thousands of structures have been destroyed.



Smoke rising into the sky, viewed from the home of pastor Tim Pebworth in Santa Clara, California

Some members have evacuated, while others are near evacuation and still others suffer from some of the worst air pollution in the world at the present time. We have established alternatives



where members can evacuate and stay with other members and everyone is pulling together. We had planned to restart in-person, outdoor church services last Sabbath (we haven't had in-person church services since March 7), but the poor air quality delayed our start and the situation may cancel this week's services as well. We continue to be patient and thankful for God's protection.

Visibility is now very low (and it has been for a week), but when the fires first started you could see the smoke going up and then heading toward you. This photo is from my front porch where I watched a smoke plume rise from a new blaze.



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