

Stephen Strang: My Tribute to Doug Wead, My Mentor

Family and friends gathered in Orlando, Florida, Monday to celebrate the life of Doug Wead, who died of a stroke on Dec. 10 at age 75. We reported his death on Charisma News, and I recorded two *Strang Report* podcasts to give tribute to his life (available [here](#) and [here](#)), but I waited to write this tribute until I attended his memorial service. It was one of the nicest I've ever attended, as you can see by watching the video at [this link](#).

One of the tributes by his youngest son, Josh Wead, was so touching I published it as a "teaching article" on [c](#) about how Doug used to preach about this Scripture: "For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion" (Eccl. 9:4, NASB 1995). That means if you're alive, there's hope, which was a favorite theme of his.

In my four decades of covering the Spirit-filled communities, I've covered the death some great men and women of God from Kathryn Kuhlman to my longtime mentor Jamie Buckingham to Oral Roberts to Reinhard Bonnke. But none of them had the influence on me that Doug did in the early days. Doug was my first role model, and he encouraged me to keep going when I could have easily quit. In one of my podcasts, I tell how I saw him as a mentor. I ask my listeners if they are having a similar impact on the lives of others as Doug did on me.

My second podcast about Doug talks about his influence in Washington in a day when "evangelicals" were not a part of the political dialogue. I wrote an entire chapter in my book *God, Trump and the 2020 Election* titled "Washington and Evangelicals Before Trump." Most of the information for that chapter came from Doug, including some amazing stories such as

the fact several charismatic Christian leaders prophesied to then-Gov. Ronald Reagan that he would one day be president. There's also a story that Reagan was healed of severe stomach ulcers after he prayed that God heal him or allow him to die.

Doug was full of stories, many of them from his research for the books he wrote on presidents and their families. He loved to tell funny stories when he spoke. A video of his life gives a glimpse of his humor.

Like me, Doug grew up in the Assemblies of God. I knew him when I was a teenager through his aunt Joyce Strader, my pastor's wife. Over the years, I knew many of his family members, including his father, Roy Wead, who was president of Trinity Bible College in North Dakota. During that time both my father and mother, A. Edward and Amy Strang, served on the faculty at Trinity, and I once spoke in chapel there.

As I share on one of the podcasts, I first knew Doug as an Assemblies of God evangelist and budding author. I remember one message in which he said that even if you don't have faith, you can have hope because hope merely says "anything is possible." Of course, the Bible says that faith is "the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1a, MEV). That understanding of hope has encouraged me so many times over the years.

I admired the fact that when Doug was in his 20s, he wrote books like *Father McCarthy Smokes a Pipe and Speaks in Tongues*. That impressed me when I was a young journalist just learning the publishing industry. Then he got involved in charity work that opened doors into the political world, ending up on the staff of George H.W. Bush, for whom he was a bridge to the evangelical world. I was invited to the White House several times, including once for the National Day of Prayer in 1991, where Doug had me sit at the table with the president. I never asked for such an honor, but I knew he did it as a personal favor.

In the George H.W. Bush White House, Doug was to Washington, D.C., what Paula White Cain was to the Trump White House. In fact, Paula was at his memorial service, and she told me how helpful Doug was in helping her navigate some of the challenges she faced in Washington politics. In fact, they enjoyed a private joke. Doug told her the “evangelical leaders” always want access to the powerful in Washington (I’ve seen this myself), yet the Lord seemed to open the doors to Pentecostals (referring to himself, Paula and others).

Doug was a student of great men. He was a thinker and articulate. I always considered him on the same level as someone like C.S. Lewis, although not as famous. Doug wrote bestselling books, moved among the powerful in Washington and was frequently interviewed on national television news shows. He was always a witness for Christ, always looking out for the Christian community, which he believed was underrepresented long before what we now call “cancel culture.” I told one of his family members that from my vantage point as a journalist and a reporter of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement for nearly half a century, I think Doug is one of the greatest men in America to come from the Pentecostal community.

Let me close with a personal story of Doug’s impact on my life, which I share in more detail on one of the podcasts about him. In the mid-1970s, Doug ministered on the gifts of the Spirit, especially the gift of prophecy. He even wrote a small book about it. I believe he gave me a prophecy that I had forgotten but recently discovered. The “prophecy” was on the back of a photo he took of me, my wife Joy and our then-infant son, Cameron. It’s a delightful photo of Joy laughing and Cameron being grouchy that I’ve had framed all these years and seen many times. On the back, he wrote something I had forgotten but that encouraged me at the time.

Doug wrote: “to the young publishing giant who will pioneer in fields unknown to his religious publishing peers; indeed not only the religious world or even the publishing world will

contain him for he will be himself an industry (and you heard it here first 2/2/78)." He may have been saying that tongue-in-cheek, because I was anything but an industry. When he wrote it, I was barely 27, and *Charisma* was very small. But he apparently saw the hand of God on what I was doing and encouraged me. I can assure you that back then, I often felt like quitting.

I thank God for the life of Doug Wead, and I appreciate his influence on the literary world, the Christian community and the political world, but especially on me. I loved him, and I'll miss him.

Enjoy these interviews with Doug Wead through the years on my *Strang Report* podcast:

"How the Holy Spirit Used My Friend to Impact George H.W. Bush," Dec. 10, 2018

"The Faith and Humility of George H.W. Bush," Dec. 11, 2018

"Why This Christian Political Insider Is Telling the True Story of Donald Trump," Jan. 22, 2020

"Doug Wead Tells the Truth Behind the Impeachment Trial," Jan. 23, 2020

"Washington Insider Explains Why Donald Trump wanted to Stay in the White House for Christmas 2018," Dec. 24, 2020

"What Is Going on Now Since There Is a New President With Doug Wead," Jan. 26, 2021

"Doug Wead Says Christianity Is 'First Thing They Want to Silence,' April 15, 2021

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