In past weeks, I have written about devouring predators, deceptive posers, and dangerous pawns in the political and cultural realms (along with "progressive' Christian revisionism). Those voices are negatively impacting Christians by undermining and distorting the Christian worldview, as well as normalizing policies and practices that directly oppose biblical truth and values.

This week, the "Shark Bites" callouts relate to different individuals and theological practices within the "big tent" of Evangelical Christianity. Even with people having a high view of scripture and the ability to communicate well (written and/or verbally), it does not assure that their influence is always good. In fact, some people with whom we have a high degree of doctrinal alignment on most core biblical teachings, have either made well-intended but unintentionally bad interpretations of God's Word, horrible applications of biblical principles, or worse, intentionally misled people resulting from personal pride, a desire for carnal pleasure, financial prosperity, or power and control. **When a person's competency and giftedness are elevated above Christ-like character, then we have a recipe for disaster**.

One current example is **Mark Driscoll**, co-founder

of *Acts 29* church-planting movement, founding pastor of the now defuncted Mars Hill Church (1996-2014, Seattle, Washington), and the founding (2016) and current pastor of Trinity Church in Scottsdale, AZ. I have known about Driscoll since 2010 at the previous church where I served, when he was at the peak of his influence. For transparency, to reduce my research time, I entered the prompt into Duck.ai search assistant, "**Who is Mark Driscoll and what is a summary of his ministry successes, failures, and current status?**" I was generally aware of most of the two pages of content, but here is the final summary paragraph: "*Driscoll's ministry record combines extraordinary organizational and communications success with serious leadership failures. He demonstrated an ability to build large, influential ministries and mobilize devoted followers, but Mars Hill's collapse exposed the dangers of celebrity-driven leadership, weak accountability, and treating numerical growth as proof of institutional health. In 2026, he is not retired or formally barred from ministry: he leads a sizeable and expanding Arizona church, while remaining one of the most polarizing figures in American evangelicalism.*" In my opinion, his was a case of high-profile authoritarian spiritual abuse…. orthodox teaching, but serious character flaws that "bit" others.

There are also problems in the camp of our strongly

charismatic brothers and sisters. **Kathryn Krick**, an author, preacher, and self-proclaimed "Apostle" at 5F Church (started by her in 2017) in Los Angeles, CA, leveraged her digital media presence (*Tik-Tok* & YouTube) to rapidly grow her deliverance and healing ministry. The supposed manifestation of the Spirit at her book signings, as well as the claims of miracles and demonic deliverance have lacked transparency and independent verification. Her influence has rapidly grown into an almost cult-like following. Christian commentators and podcasters like **Mike Winger** and **Allie Beth Stucky** have both called attention to her dangerous tendencies that "bite" people.

Even here in our region of North Carolina, I personally know of a church and pastor (with whom I probably have a high percentage of agreement on Bible doctrine) who seems to have clearly overreached his spiritual authority to a controlling and even abusive level. So, **how should we respond?** First, if you observe a clearly identifiable sin in a leader, appropriately confront it. Secondly, if a leader's behavior patterns and biblical teachings are not aligning with scripture, at the appropriate time, address it. If you have done those things, and conservative authoritarianism continues, manifested either by "fundamental legalism," "Pentecostal emotionalism,"

“liturgical intellectualism,” or any combination thereof, then flee… run from it. Unity is grounded on truth and trust; preference or opinion should not cause division.

Blessings! Jeff