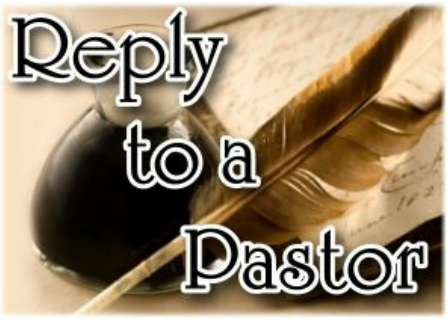
WAY OF LIFE LITERATURE

O Timothy

"Keep that which is committed to thy trust..."

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

Volume 33 - Issue 1 - January 2016



"What I look for in a church is that the pastor and the music people are properly educated in the music issue, that they understand what contemporary music is and why it is spiritually dangerous, that they are educating the church members in this issue, and that they are committed unhesitatingly and publicly to keeping contemporary music out." **Page 8.**

Digging in the Walls: *A month's worth of news items, republished from Friday Church News Notes.* **Page 12.**

QUESTIONS FOR CHURCHES ON THE MUSIC ISSUE - By David Cloud

We are living in a time when multitudes of churches are changing their stance, and music is often a major part of the change.

If ever there were a time that pastors and church music people need to be properly educated, it is today.

The following are some challenges.

1. Have you developed a clear biblical standard of music and taught it to the church? Have you developed biblical principles that can be applied to music and that can be used to determine where to draw lines today?

2. How do you apply the issue of biblical separation to music today?

3. What have you done to educate yourself and your church about Contemporary Christian Music?

4. Are you vigilant about the music being used in the specials and at the youth conferences and Bible colleges to which you send your young people?

5. Are you informed enough to educate to your people about the popular contemporary musicians who are

influencing independent Baptist church members? Examples are Hillsong, Chris Tomlin, Mat Redman, Stuart Townend, the Gettys, Michael W. Smith, Tim Hughes, Graham Kendrick, MercyMe, and Third Day.

6. What could be dangerous about a little soft rock?

7. What is beat anticipation and why is it dangerous?

8. What is the objective of contemporary worship music as far as what it seeks to do between the worshiper and God?

9. What type of chording sequence does contemporary worship music favor and how does it fit into its objective?

10. Why do contemporary worshipers almost always love all forms of rock rhythm, from Peter, Paul, and Mary to Eminem?

11. What role does contemporary worship music play in the one-world "church"?

12. How many of the prominent contemporary worship musicians take a stand against ecumenical associations with Rome?

13. Is there any significant difference between using old Protestant hymns such as Luther's and using contemporary worship music?

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14. Why has Frank Garlock long warned about the type of sensual vocalization (scooping, sliding) that is increasingly popular in independent Baptist churches? See for example the following segment of the Christmas 2013 program at Lancaster Baptist Church - http://www.wayoflife.org/scooping/

15. What is the greatest danger of borrowing from contemporary worship?

16. Do you make yourself familiar with the lyrics and associations of the CCM songs that your people might want to use in your church?

17. Do you make yourself aware of what leaven might be hidden in the lyrics of CCM songs from the influence of the theology of ecumenism, kingdom now, Pentecostalism, Charismaticism, Roman Catholicism, etc.?

18. Are you teaching your people how to identify these false teachings and avoid them?

19. How is it possible in this day and age for a church to "adapt" contemporary worship songs without the young people going online to find out more about the songs and the musicians and thus to come into contact with and be influenced by the full-blown ecumenical rockers and the "real" renditions of the music?

20. What changes are happening to churches that you know of that are using contemporary music?

21. What is to keep your church from going down the slippery slope of compromise down which many independent Baptist churches have already gone?

22. Is a man/ministry that publicly influences other independent Baptist churches with teaching about and practice of using CCM publicly accountable for that teaching and practice?

The answers to these questions can be found in our new book *Baptist Music Wars* and the two accompanying video presentations, *The Transformation Power of Contemporary Worship* and *The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship*.

For information on the influential contemporary bands and artists see *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians*. All of these are available at www.wayoflife.org. The eBook and eVideo editions are free.

The following is excerpted from ***THE BIBLE AND ISLAM***. In light of today's news events, we do well to ask what the Bible says about Islam. Islam controls a large part of the world and is on a jihadic rampage that hasn't been seen in hundreds of years. This far-reaching book describes Islam's beginning and history, the doctrine of Allah, the Quran, Islam and salvation, the three stages of jihad, the Koran's doctrine of abrogation, Islam and Judaism, Islam and Christianity, Sharia law, jihad and world conquest, Islam and the slave trade, Islam as a judgment on apostate Christianity and apostate Israel, Islam's divisions and internecine hatred (Sunni vs. Shiite, etc.), Islam as a preparation for the Antichrist, the Antichrist and the Middle East problem, and Muslim nations in prophecy. The book explains what is happening in the Middle East, and where these events will ultimately lead. 160 pages. Available in print and as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

Under Muslim rule, non-Muslims are called *dhimmis* and are treated differently than Muslims. Dhimmi means "protected person," but the protection is dubious, to say the least.

According to the Quran, dhimmi especially applies to "People of the Book," referring to Jews and Christians, who were treated somewhat differently than idolaters.

A dhimmi is allowed to live in Muslim territory in exchange for submission and payment of a heavy *jizya* tax. The Quran says: "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (*Quran* 9:29).

Exercise of the dhimmi law has varied from place to place and time to time, both in history and at the present. For example, in the late ninth century, Tariqu al-Hakim, the sixth Fatimid caliph in Egypt, required all Christians to wear a four-pound cross around their necks and Jews to wear a four-pound carving of a calf (for having worshiped the golden calf) (Rodney Stark, *God's Battalions,* p. 90).

Sometimes Christian dhimmis have been allowed to keep their churches (but not build new ones or repair old ones), but they have always been forbidden to evangelize. For a Muslim to declare faith in Christ is apostasy, which is an unforgivable sin and punishable by death under sharia law.

After the Muslims conquered Syria in the seventh century, the dhimmis had to wear special identifying clothing and clip the fronts of their hair. They were not allowed to own weapons, ride on saddles, display crosses or Bibles, or hold public religious ceremonies. They had to take in any Muslim traveler and give him three days' food and lodging (Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet,* p. 105).

Even the most minor infraction of the dhimmi rules "left the door open for the resumption of jihad."

In practice, dhimmis have been treated in whatever way the ruling Muslims see fit, and they have had no judicial recourse. They are at the "mercy" of their masters, but history tells us that more often than not, the Muslim masters were like the Babylonians, of whom Jeremiah said, "they are cruel, and have no mercy" (Jer. 6:23).

The dhimmi law is enforced with great rigor today by the Islamic State. The following is a description of what is happening under Islamic State rule in Syria, as told by Christian refugees who fled to Jordan. "Their village was occupied by rebel forces, who proceeded to announce

that they were now under an Islamic emirate and were subject to sharia law. The Christian residents were offered four choices: (1) renounce the 'idolatry' of Christianity and convert to Islam; (2) pay a heavy tribute (*jizya*) to the Muslims for the privilege of keeping their heads and their Christian faith; (3) be killed; (4) flee for their lives, leaving all their belongings behind. Some Christians were killed, some fled, some tried to pay the *jizya* and found it too heavy a burden to bear after the rebels kept increasing the amount they had to pay, and some were unable to flee or pay, so they converted to Islam to save themselves. The scenario reported by Syrian refugees is a re-enactment of the historic fate of Christians across the Middle East" ("A Conversation with Christian Syrian Refugees," *Religious Freedom Coalition*, June 1, 2013)

The following is excerpted from ***THE BIBLE AND ISLAM***. In light of today's news events, we do well to ask what the Bible says about Islam. Islam controls a large part of the world and is on a jihadic rampage that hasn't been seen in hundreds of years. This far-reaching book describes Islam's beginning and history, the doctrine of Allah, the Quran, Islam and salvation, the three stages of jihad, the Koran's doctrine of abrogation, Islam and Judaism, Islam and Christianity, Sharia law, jihad and world conquest, Islam and the slave trade, Islam as a judgment on apostate Christianity and apostate Israel, Islam's divisions and internecine hatred (Sunni vs. Shiite, etc.), Islam as a preparation for the Antichrist, the Antichrist and the Middle East problem, and Muslim nations in prophecy. The book explains what is happening in the Middle East, and where these events will ultimately lead. 160 pages. Available in print and as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

According to Islam, humanity is divided into those who accept Muhammed as the prophet of Allah and those who do not. Those who do not are the Kafirs.

Kafir is the word that is used in the Quran, and it is a strong word. It is the word for Allah's enemies. It is the word for those who resist the truth. Kafirs are unclean, evil, cursed, ignorant liars and partners of Satan.

"It is usually translated as unbeliever, but that translation is wrong. The word unbeliever is neutral. But the attitude of the Quran towards unbelievers is very negative. ... Kafir shows the common political treatment of the Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, animist, atheist and humanist. What is done to a pagan can be done to a Jew or any other Kafir" (*A Simple Koran*).

A Kafir is hated.

"They who dispute the signs of Allah without authority having reached them are greatly hated by Allah and the believers. So Allah seals up every arrogant, disdainful heart" (Surah 40:35).

A Kafir can be enslaved.

"Muhammed then said, 'Saed, give these people [the Jews of Medina] your verdict.' Saed replied, 'Their soldiers should be beheaded and their women and children should become slaves.' Mohammed, pleased with the verdict, said, 'You have made a ruling that Allah or a king would approve of'" (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* hadith 5,58,148).

A Kafir can be mocked.

"On that day the faithful will mock the Kafirs, while they sit on bridal couches and watch them. Should not the Kafirs be paid back for what they did?" (Surah 83:34).

A Kafir can be schemed against.
"They plot and scheme against you [Muhammed], and I [Allah] plot and scheme against them. Therefore, deal calmly with the Kafirs and leaven them alone for awhile" (Surah 86:15).

A Kafir can be deceived.
"Mohammed asked, 'Who will kill Ka'b, the enemy of Allah and Mohammed? Bin Maslama rose and responded, 'O Mohammed! Would it please you if I killed him?' Mohammed answered, 'Yes.' Bin Maslama then said, 'Give me permission to deceive him with lies so that my plan will succeed.' Mohammed replied, 'You may speak falsely to him'" (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* hadith 5,59,369).

A Kafir can be terrorized.
"Then your Lord spoke to His angels and said, 'I will be with you. Give strength to the believers. I will send terror into the Kafirs' hearts, cut off their heads and even the tips of their fingers" (Surah 8:12).

A Kafir can be beheaded.
"When you encounter the Kafirs on the battlefield, cut off their heads until you have thoroughly defeated them and then take the prisoners and tie them up firmly" (Surah 47:4).

A Kafir can be annihilated.
"So the Kafirs were annihilated. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds!" (Surah 6:45).

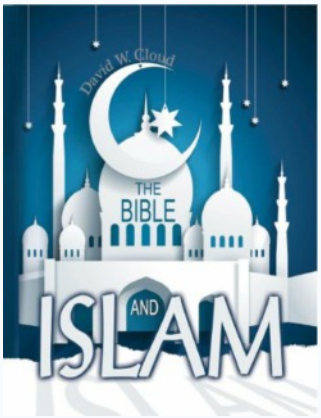
A Kafir can be killed.
"If they do not keep away from you or offer you peace or withdraw their hostilities, then seize them and kill them wherever they are. We give you complete authority over them" (Surah 4:91).

A Kafir can be crucified and his hands and feet hacked off.
"The only reward for those who war against Allah and His messengers and strive to commit mischief on the earth is that they will be slain or crucified, have their alternate hands and feet cut off, or be banished from the land. This will be their disgrace in this world, and a great torment shall be theirs in the next except those who repent before you overpower them. Know that Allah is forgiving and merciful" (Surah 5:33).

A Kafir can be made war on and humiliated.
"Make war on those who have received the Scriptures but do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day. They do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden. The Christians and Jews do not follow the religion of truth until they submit and pay the poll tax [jizya], and they are humiliated" (Surah 9:29).

A Kafir cannot be befriended.
"Believers should not take Kafirs as friends in preference to other believers. Those who do this will have none of Allah's protection and will only have themselves as guards. Allah warns you to fear Him for all will return to Him" (Surah 3:28).

A Kafir is not to treated with kindness.
"Oh, you who believe, do not take My enemy and yours for friends by showing them kindness" (Surah 60:1).

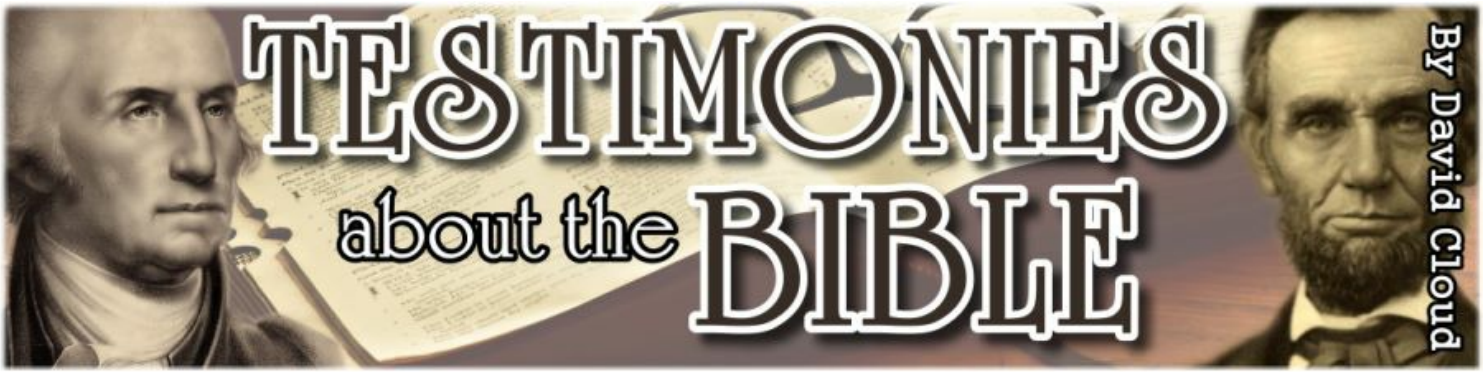


ISLAM and the BIBLE

Islam is in the process of doing what it failed to do earlier in its history, which is to conquer Europe. It is winning this objective by immigration, prolific breeding, and crafty politics, all made possible by the spiritual blindness, lack of wisdom, and pacifism of Europeans in general. The most "radical" form of jihad is supported by a large portion of the Islamic world.

Modern jihadists have murdered tens of thousands, toppled two of the world's largest buildings in the world's most powerful nation, threatened presidents and prime ministers, and conquered territory amounting to millions of square miles. If it weren't for Bible prophecy, it would not be unreasonable to assume that Islam would eventually reach its perpetual objective of establishing a world caliphate. But this won't happen.

Free download @ www.wayoflife.org



"The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed" (Patrick Henry).

"Bible reading is an education in itself" (Lord Alfred Tennyson).

"The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian" (A.W. Tozer).

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible" (George Washington, first president of the United States).

"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man" (Abraham Lincoln).

"So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year" (John Quincy Adams).

"My advice to Sunday Schools no matter what their denomination is: Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties; write its precepts in your heart, and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for the progress made in true civilization and to this we must look as our guide in the future. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people' (Proverbs 14:34)" (Ulysses S. Grant).

"That Book (the Bible) is the rock on which our Republic rests" (Andrew Jackson).

"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education" (Theodore Roosevelt).

"A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of the Bible" (Woodrow Wilson).

"I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book that you can by reason and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man. It is the best Book which God has given to man" (Abraham Lincoln).

"In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength" (Robert E. Lee).

"The grand old Book still stands; and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned and pondered, the more it will sustain and illustrate the pages of the Sacred Word" (Charles A. Dana).

"If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity" (Daniel Webster).

"The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world" (Charles Dickens).

"The Bible is the truest utterance that ever came by alphabetic letters from the soul of man, through which, as through a window divinely opened, all men can look into the stillness of eternity, and discern in glimpses their far-distant, long-forgotten home" (Thomas Carlyle).

"There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history" (Sir Isaac Newton).

"I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God, written by men who were inspired. I study the Bible daily" (Sir Isaac Newton).

"I have known ninety-five of the world's great men in my time, and of these eighty-seven were followers of the Bible. The Bible is stamped with a Specialty of Origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors" (W. E. Gladstone).

"That book accounts for the supremacy of England" (Queen Victoria).

"All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more and more strongly the truths contained in the sacred Scriptures" (Sir William Herschel).

"The secret of my success? It is simple. It is found in the Bible" (George Washington Carver).

"The Book of Proverbs is a far better guide for a young man in business than Adam Smith or the *Times* newspaper" (David Thomas, 1884).

"The Bible contains knowledge, wisdom, holiness and love" (Thomas Hartwell Horne, 1780-1862).

"The Bible is no mere book, but a Living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it" (Napoleon).

THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

by David Cloud

One of the many reasons why the Bible is the most amazing and exciting book on earth is its prophecies.

The Bible unfolds the future in great detail, and The Future According to the Bible deals in depth with every major prophetic event, including:

- The Rapture
- The Judgment Seat of Christ
- The Tribulation
- The Antichrist
- Gog and Magog
- The Battle of Armageddon
- The Two Witnesses
- Christâ s Return
- Muslim nations in prophecy
- The Judgment of the Nations
- The resurrection body
- The conversion of Israel
- The highway of the redeemed
- Christâ s glorious kingdom
- The Millennial Temple
- The Great White Throne judgment
- The New Jerusalem.

The first two chapters deal at length with the amazing prophecies that are being fulfilled today and with the church-age apostasy.

Knowledge of these prophecies is essential for a proper understanding of the times and a proper Christian worldview today.

More Information @ www.wayoflife.org

Several weeks ago I received the following communication from a pastor in Florida:

"A few weeks ago a family started coming to my church and told me the reason they left their former church was because of the music standards falling. I am not a proponent of one leaving their church but I do understand that standards are very important and many are falling by the wayside. I feel that I am very conservative in music, dress, preaching, preachers, etc so I figured that maybe this family would find a place to settle down. After a few weeks of them coming and saying how much they enjoyed everything we had a 3 day meeting with an evangelist we have used for years.

"All of a sudden this family flew the coop! They won't answer the phone or return a call so I said oh well, easy come easy go! Today I received a letter explaining that they would not be back because the evangelist sang 'he touched me' which he says was written by Bill Gaither. I don't know and don't really care; it's not a song that I will defend or detract. As far as Bill Gaither is concerned I've never knowingly listened to him or his group, and never will, I don't listen to long haired hippies sing. I have gone over the song in my head and cannot find anything blatantly wrong with it other than it's a little vague.

"My biggest issue is that he says in his letter that I need to come to you so that I can learn about music. Now while I am no academic I do study and pray and think about issues like this and I see that this family will almost certainly be going the 'home church' route due to their stringent following of what they have read and seen on your website.

"Please don't misunderstand me, I agree with most of what I've seen, but if it is driving families away from the local church something is wrong!

"I know that Bill Gaither is no good, as well as many other songwriters but does that mean that God cannot use them? If so why did God use Baalam? Did he not prophesy of Christ? Was his prophecy invalid because of his own failure; I think not. I believe this is the reason why we can use hymns by the Wesleys, Luther, Faber, and others, because they were simply the instruments an omnipotent God chose to use. This same man told me about Stuart Townend, who I would not probably have a lot to do with, but did he not write a hymn with more truth than even Amazing Grace?

"I am not here to defend him either! I know as a pastor that sometimes what we say has unintended consequences so we must be very careful in all that we say either to encourage or to discourage. I think that we go too far in our discouraging and some will feel as if they are the only ones who have it right.

"These dear people have two children who are no longer in church while living in the Bible belt because of one song that a man sang! I believe it is far more important to be in church than to divide over something as trivial as that, but that is the end result from what I can see of all the purifying of all things musical. Again I appreciate the information but we must be careful of the unintended consequences."

REPLY FROM BROTHER CLOUD

Hello, Pastor.

Thank you for taking the time to write about that situation.

Since I don't know you, your church, or the family in question, there is not much I can do other than offer a couple of general comments:

1. If this family doesn't honor the local church properly, and if they go "the home church route," it is not because of me and my teaching. You would not charge me with such a thing if you would read my book "The House Church" or my report "I Am Not Your Pastor" or my free eBook "Keys to Fruitful Church Membership." I have been a strong supporter of the local church since I was saved 40+ years ago. I am a pioneer Baptist church planter in South Asia, where my wife and I live. The church is the pillar and

ground of the truth. I teach people that the church is so important that if they can't find a good one within commuting distance, they should find a way to relocate. I have never given any encouragement to perpetual church hoppers.

2. I assume that this family found your church in the first place through my church directory. Since you filled out the questionnaire and listed on our directory (that's the only way a church can be listed), that family doubtless assumed you would be likeminded with us on the matter of music. We consider the music issue to be so important that there are five questions on our questionnaire about it, as follows:

- Do you use contemporary praise music in any aspect of your church life (youth meetings, worship services, etc.)?
- Are you opposed to the practice that is being popularized by churches such as Lancaster Baptist Church in Lancaster, California, in "adapting" contemporary praise music by toning down the rhythm?
- Are you opposed to using songs by worldly one-world church ecumenists such as Stuart Townend, Don Moen, Chris Tomlin, Hillsong, Darlene Zschech, Jack Hayford, Graham Kendrick, Casting Crowns, MercyMe, etc.?
- Are you totally committed to traditional sacred music?
- Do you reject contemporary Southern Gospel?

Being likeminded with us on the matter of music would mean that you are 100% opposed to contemporary Christian music, that you are well-informed as to its nature and danger, and that you make no excuses for and have no sympathy with those who are using it. I must say that I don't discern that from your e-mail.

3. I can't be blamed for any lack of wisdom on the part of people who read my writings, no more than you can be blamed for lack of wisdom on the part of your church members. I would not leave a church just because of a couple of questionable songs, and I would not counsel anyone to leave a church for such a reason. Exceptions don't make rules. What I look for in a church is that the pastor and the music people are properly educated in the music issue, that they understand what contemporary music is and why it is spiritually dangerous, that they are educating the church members in this issue, and that they are committed unhesitatingly and publicly to keeping contemporary music out.

4. Along this line, it appears by your comments in the email that you could benefit by pursuing better education in this important matter. None of the arguments you used get to the heart of the issue of contemporary music. For example, you cite the use of hymns by Wesley and Luther, but contemporary worship hymns are of an entirely different character. The people who are writing the contemporary hymns represent and promote the end-time, one-world "church." Practically all of them (including Stuart Townend and the Gettys) are in fellowship with Rome. I have never known of a Baptist church that has become Lutheran by using Luther's hymns, but I have known of dozens that have become contemporary by using contemporary hymns.

Could it be that this family discerned that you are dangerously uneducated in this issue and that you aren't open to being educated? I don't know. I'm just throwing that out as a possibility. As I said, I don't know any of the parties concerned, and I only have your side of the matter. It appears from your email that you are rather flippant about potential dangers in music (e.g., "I don't know and don't really care"). You should get better educated about music for your family's sake and your church people's sake and for the next generation's sake. One reason I care so deeply about the music issue and its effect on churches is because of my grandkids and the fact that I desire that there be sound Bible-believing churches when they are grown. We are witnessing a wholesale collapse of biblical separatism among fundamental Baptist churches. For example, Highland Park Baptist Church, where I was educated in the 1970s, is a full-blown contemporary church today, and music was at the heart and soul of that change. I have documented many examples of this in my free eBook *The Collapse of Biblical Separatism*.

I will be glad to send you a gift copy of my new book *The Independent Baptist Music Wars*, with the two video presentations that accompany it. This contains research that you won't find anywhere else. All you have to do is promise me that that you will read the book and watch the two videos carefully with an open and prayerful heart.

I have prayed for you and wish you the best in God's will. From my perspective, the greatest need of the hour is for godly, biblically-qualified, well-informed, courageous church leaders, and no one can make such a man but God. As Dr. Lee Roberson used to say, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."

David Cloud.

CONCLUSION

The pastor never replied to my offer.

THE BLAZING FAST CHEETAH - By David Cloud

The cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*), member of the cat family (*filidae*), is the fastest land animal on earth, capable of running about 70 miles per hour. It can accelerate from zero to 40 miles per hour in three strides!

It was one of the many exciting creatures I saw on a three-day photo safari to Kruger Park in South Africa in 2015. The cheetah is one of Kruger Park's Super Seven (elephant, rhinoceros, leopard, lion, cape buffalo, cheetah, wild dog), and we saw six of the seven each of the three days, something almost unheard of!

"Once abundant all over African and Indian savannas and grasslands, this magnificent animal is now rare and only found in Africa and the Middle East" ("Cheetah," animalcorner.co.uk).

Hunted almost to extinction for its beautiful skin, the cheetah was put on the Critically Endangered Species by the IUCN. There are an estimated 10,000-12,000 cheetahs left in the wild today, mostly in Africa. In Asia, there are only about 100 cheetahs remaining. There are 680 cheetahs in zoos worldwide, 227 of them in the U.S.

It is a beautiful creature with a tawny, buff, or golden coat sprinkled with evenly spaced black spots. Its handsome head is set off with black stripes running from below each eye to the corners of its mouth. (In contrast, the leopard is lighter colored and lacks the black stripes on its face.) The spots on the cheetah's tail merge to form four to five rings at the end.

From its head to its tail, it is built for speed. It has a long, lean body (five and a half to seven feet long, weighing 85-145 pounds, and standing about 32 inches tall), large chest and narrow waist, a small, streamlined head, a lightweight skeleton, large muscles, a springlike spine that flexes and straightens to allow its hind legs to achieve huge strides, large nasal passages to take in huge amounts of air, long legs, and large, powerful lungs, liver, and heart.

It can produce four strides per second, and each stride can reach an amazing seven to eight meters. After a chase, the cheetah's heart rate is 200-250 beats per minute, and its breaths are 150-200 per minute (as contrasted to its resting breath rate, which is 20-30 per minute).

Its long tail (28 inches) acts as a counterweight and rudder, enabling the cat to keep its balance and to make sudden, sharp turns at high speed.

The cheetah is largely a day hunter that uses its sight to find prey. Unlike other large cats, such as lions, the cheetah does not have good night vision, but its large, forward-looking eyes provide binocular vision so that it can see details at a distance of five kilometers. "The retinal fovea of the eye is of an elongated shape, giving a sharp wide-angle view" ("Cheetah Facts," bigcatrescue.org).

The cheetah's hearing is also excellent, and it can pick up higher frequencies than humans.

The black marks beneath its eyes shield them from daylight glare. Some sports players imitate this with black eyeliner.

The cheetah's eyes have a stabilization feature to keep them in sharp focus while the creature is running at high speeds ("Cheetah," animalcorner.co.uk).

Though the cheetah is blazing fast, it is limited to a high speed run of about 300 yards. Thus, it creeps as close to its prey as possible to begin the chase.

It trips its prey by hooking the back legs with a swipe of its front paw. "There is a large curved dewclaw on this paw, which helps to trip prey up" (Charlette Guillain, *Cheetahs*, p. 18). It kills its prey by gripping the throat with its teeth and jaws and strangling it.

The cheetah's claws are semi-retractable (not fully as some other cats). This assists in taking off quickly and maintaining traction.

The cheetah needs to drink infrequently (every three or four days), as it gets most of its water from its prey.

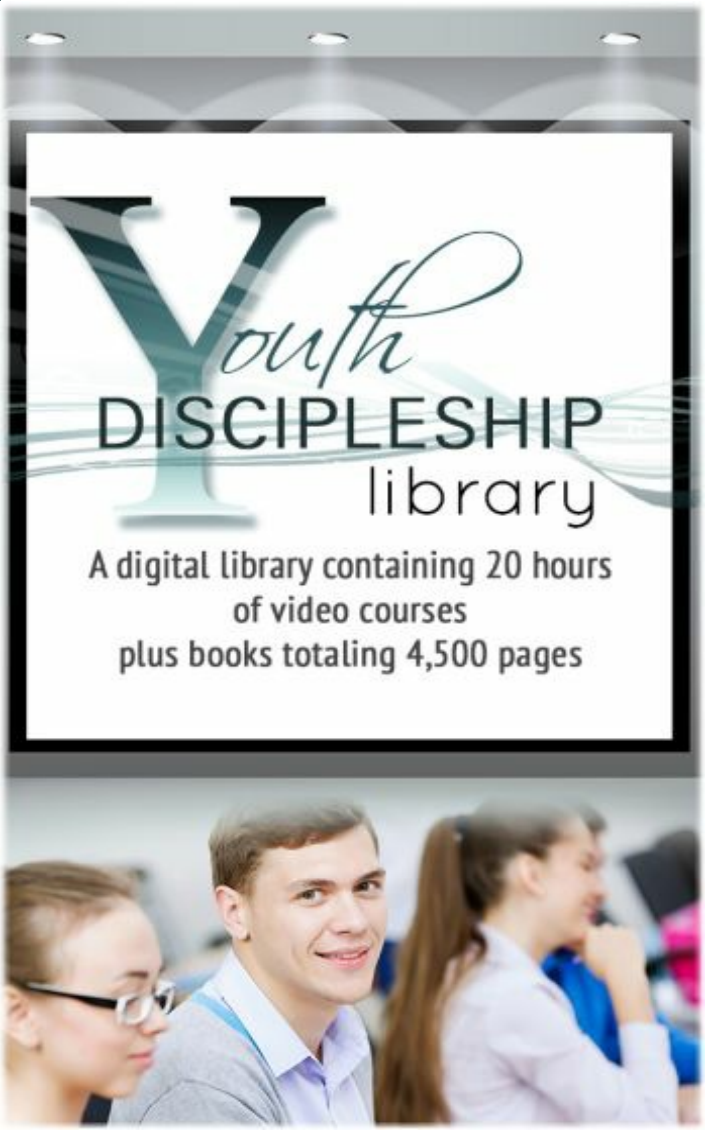
The cheetah is not an aggressive animal like a lion, leopard, or tiger and is rarely dangerous to humans.

In fact, cheetahs are smart animals that respond well to human training. They have been used as hunting animals by Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Chinese, Indians, and others. For example, cheetahs were used by Akbar the Great, third ruler of the Mughal dynasty in India. He moved around his empire with a large army, "holding court in a splendid camp laid out like a capital city but composed entirely of tents." On these journeys he engaged in hunting, using cheetahs to pursue deer and other prey.

Unlike a lion or tiger, the cheetah doesn't roar (lacking a floating hyoid bone in its neck). For this reason it is labeled a Lesser Cat rather than a Great Cat. It purrs, hisses, chirps, and growls. The chirps are used to communicate with other cheetahs.

It can even mimic some bird calls, an ability it uses to attract unsuspecting birds.

The baby cheetah grows a mantle on its back that acts as protection against the weather. It disappears after three months. The cubs are constantly in danger to predators such as lions, jackals, hyenas, even large birds. The baby cheetah learns to hunt from its mother for about two years and doesn't become fully proficient until about three years.



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DIGGING IN THE WALLS

God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to dig in the walls of Israel's temple and observe the evils being done in secret by apostate religious leaders of that day. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall ... And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw. ..." (Ezek. 8:7-10).

Ezekiel was then instructed to preach against the errors of the leaders and to tell the people the things he had witnessed.

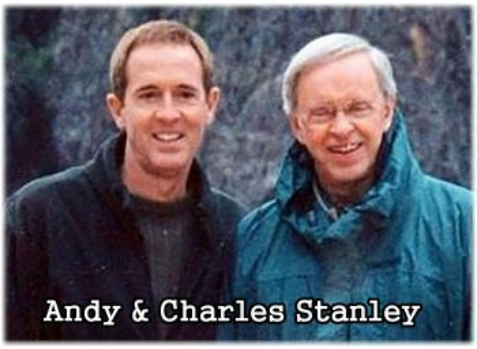
"Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. ... Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the Lord had shewed me" (Ezek. 11:4,25).

The hour in which we live is very similar to that of Ezekiel's day. Many of those who profess to be the people of God are apostate. It was prophesied in the New Testament Scriptures that such would be the case in the closing hours of our age. This will culminate in the brief worldwide rule of an utterly apostate Harlot "church" (2 Tim. 3-4; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Pet. 2-3; Jude; Rev. 17).

As in Ezekiel's day much of the apostasy of our hour is hidden from the view of the average Christian. We intend by God's grace to "dig in the walls" of modern ecumenism and to expose and cry out against the things we find. In this section we also report on secular events which are relevant to Christians. May God give us ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to obey. Is the truth of God not worthy of defense?

SBC PRESIDENT ONE IN SPIRIT WITH CHARISMATIC MYSTICS AND CATHOLICS (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - I want to revisit the upcoming event discussed in last week's Friday Church News Notes, which is SBC President Ronnie Floyd's scheduled ministry at IHOP's OneThing conference December 28-31. For those who have eyes to see, this is an irrefutable witness to the spiritual deception that has permeated the Southern Baptist Convention. At the International House of Prayer, Floyd will join hands with one of the world's most radical groups of charismatic mystics, as well as with Roman Catholic praise musician Matt Maher. The International House of Prayer is most assuredly one in the spirit with Matt and his love for the mass and prayers to Mary. IHOP is passionate about "Jesus," but it is a false christ and a deceiving spirit masquerading as the Spirit of God. And this frightful reality is created by the soul-blinding power of contemporary worship. Even the most conservative elements of the Southern Baptist Convention have long been drunk on this music, unwittingly drinking of a deceiving spirit, an ecumenical spirit, a non-judgmental spirit, unwittingly building a bridge to the one-world church, so that today there is no ability to resist it. Even the most conservative Southern Baptist leaders, from Al Mohler to Charles Stanley, by their silence, support the bridge building done through contemporary music. Matt Maher, who will join the SBC president at the IHOP conference, leads the "Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament" at Catholic Churches, such as Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Tempe which is devoted to Mary, "the Mother of Life." The "Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament" refers to the worship of the consecrated host of the mass. Because of the supposed power of the Catholic mass to transform bread into the very body and blood of Jesus, the host is "adored" as Christ Himself. This is the type of apostasy with which every lover of contemporary worship music joins hands. Stuart Townend and the Gettys, whose music is promoted now by Bob Jones University, Frank Garlock, and the Hamiltons, are friends with Matt Maher and have joined him in ecumenical ventures. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

TWO GENERATIONS OF BAPTIST PASTORS: THE CONSERVATIVE AND THE EMERGING (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Charles Stanley and his son Andy represent two generations of Baptist pastors, one conservative and one emerging. Charles, 82, is the long-time pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta, while Andy, 56, is the cool pastor of North Point Community



Church in Alpharetta, an Atlanta suburb. One of their fundamental differences is their view of homosexuality. Charles believes that homosexuality is a sin and that homosexual marriage is absolutely wrong, based on the Bible, while Andy holds a broader, more "tolerant" view based on a "consensus." In the book *The New Rules for Love, Sex and Dating*, Andy says, "My purpose in writing this book was not to push a religious or even my Christian agenda." So much for God's command to "preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2)! At an event in April promoting his "change maker's" organization called Catalyst, Andy said, "We need to decide, regardless of what you think about this topic [homosexuality], no more students are going to feel like they have to leave the local church because they're same-sex attracted or because they're gay. That ends with us" ("Dr. Charles Stanley and Son Andy," *The Gospel Herald*, Apr. 23, 2015). "Conservative" Charles Stanley built the bridges to the emerging church on which the second generation is treading, particularly by his broad-tent SBC philosophy and acceptance of contemporary worship music. I visited First Baptist of Atlanta in the 1990s and they were rocking even then. Many older independent Baptist preachers are building the same bridges and the result will be the same. Already many of the younger independent Baptist preachers have crossed the bridges of compromise and are walking in dangerous territory.

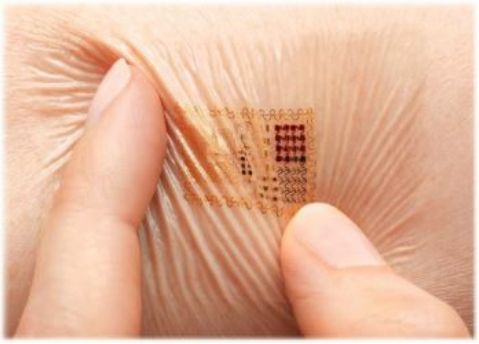
DESIGNER BABIES (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Genetic research has made fantastic strides in the past 20 years, and a new technology has opened the door for modifying DNA that was undreamed of not long ago. CRISPR/Cas9 is a technique of "cutting and pasting" pieces of DNA that holds the potential for biologists to cure genetic defects, eradicate diseases, and even create designer babies "whose genes have been carefully selected to make them smarter, stronger, or more beautiful" ("Scientists may soon be able to 'cut and paste' DNA," *Business Insider*, Nov. 19, 2015). The fear that biologists will "play God" is very real, since so many of them have no fear of God, claiming, in fact, to be agnostic at best. Hank Greely, a bioethicist at Stanford University, says,

"There's this idea that the human geneline is the sacred essence of our species, but that's nonsense, because we share most of our genes with other species." This frightful level of arrogant spiritual blindness is the rule rather than the exception in science today, and it is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3).

THOUSANDS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES HAVE POSITIVE VIEW OF ISLAMIC STATE (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- According to a 2014 study, 13% of refugees from Syria have a "positive" view of the Islamic State. The study was done last November by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, based in Doha ("Poll: 13% of Syrian refugees," AEIdeas, Nov. 20, 2015). Though 73% of the refugees were found to have a negative view of ISIS, this still would mean that there are thousands of ISIS sympathizers among the refugees flooding into Europe, America, and Canada.

BIOWEARABLE TATTOOS (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - A prototype biometric tattoo is being tested for use in the military and elsewhere to monitor body functions and collect and transmit electronic data. Designed by the software firm Chaotic Moon, "the tattoos are part of a new trend of 'biowearables'" ("Biometric Military Tattoos,"



Breitbart, Nov. 26, 2015). The immediate objective is to create a biometric tattoo that monitors body temperature, hydration, and stress levels and uploads this information to military networks. Of course, some sort of technology like this could be used by the Antichrist to control the economic activity of every individual on earth. "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17).

40% OF MILLENNIALS ARE OPPOSED TO FREE SPEECH IF IT IS OFFENSIVE (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Study: 40%," Charlie Nash, Breitbart, Nov. 23, 2015: "A new study conducted by Pew Research came out on Friday, revealing the depressingly sorry state of today's youth and the respect that they have for the 1st Amendment and freedom of speech in general. When asked whether the government should intervene if citizens say something that might be considered offensive to minorities, 40% of millennials agreed. This is, of course, still a minority of respondents, but when compared to those of the previous generations (even just the last), it is still an incredibly significant figure. Only 27% of Gen Xers, 24% of Baby Boomers, and 12% of Silent Generation respondents agreed that the state should control and limit potentially offensive speech, so the comparative increase among the youth of disregard for the First Amendment should be a major cause for concern. This is simply the result of what most journalists on the right have been saying for years. Freedom of speech is under attack, not by direct legislation, but by erasing the value of freedom of expression in schools and colleges. Just 10 to 20 years ago, college campuses were places defined by their open debates, easy access to learn new things, and free student discussion. College campuses are now defined by 'safe spaces,' authoritarian student unions, and bourgeoisie middle-class-but-I'm-down-with-the-poor protesters. Students of today do not want a free discussion if anything said could hurt someone's feelings (unless you're straight, male, and white; then fire away). ... Despite the worrying increase in those against free speech, the United States of America turned out to be the most freedom-loving country on its own, with only 28% in favor of government regulation on speech, while Germany had a troubling 70% in favor, the most out of the all countries in the study. The United Kingdom was the most freedom-loving country in Europe, with 54% favoring free speech."

THE LOVE OF GOD IS INCLUSIVE OF ALL THAT IS GOOD (Friday Church News Notes, December 4, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from the *Biblical Illustrator's* comment on James 4:4 -- "When desire is normal it centres in God, and the soul comes into harmony with the universe. When we love the Creator supremely, we must receive delight from every part of the creation in the degree its Lord designed. The love of God is inclusive of the love of all that is good. Instead of narrowing, it expands infinitely our capacity of happiness. It awakens the dullest soul to a consciousness of the beautiful and the sublime in nature. It sanctions with the loftiest motives the pursuit of knowledge, it pronounces a blessing even on those lesser gifts which minister to the gratification of bodily appetite. All these contribute to his pleasure whose chief delight is in the Maker of all. Godliness has not only the promise of the world that now is, it has whatever is excellent in that world. Lovely as this earth may appear to the believer, his controlling impulse is not love of the world, but the love of God. If, on the other hand, our desires turn away from the great Father, they must rest on something He has made. It may be a person, it may be wealth, art, pleasure, fame; in any case the result is the same. We have wrecked the universal order; we have assailed the symmetry and splendour of the cosmos. We have turned things upside down. We have put the less in the place of the greater. We have deified the material and dethroned the eternal. Such an

affection is in its essence exclusive and intolerant. We may love God and enjoy all else, but the converse of the proposition is never true; the friendship of the world is enmity with God."

U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL VOWS TO GO AFTER "ANTI-MUSLIM" SPEECH (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Speaking to a Muslim legal advocacy group less than 24 hours after the mass slaughter of American citizens in California by Islamic jihadists Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik, U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch turned her legal guns on "anti-Muslim speech." At the Muslim Advocate's 10th anniversary dinner on December 3, Lynch said that her "greatest fear" is--not Muslim murder and mayhem--but the "incredibly disturbing rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric" ("AG Lynch vows to prosecute," WND, Dec. 5, 2015). She vowed to take aggressive action against people whose anti-Muslim rhetoric "edges towards violence." She said, "... we believe that there needs to be more attention, more resources put into investigating and prosecuting these cases..." Speech that "edges toward violence" is a vague term that could mean whatever the Attorney General wants it to mean, but we suggest that a good place to start in the investigation of such speech would be the Muslim mosques that dot the land from coast to coast. There are more than 100 verses in the Quran that command Muslims to spread Islam with the sword, including the following: "Make war on those who have received the Scriptures but do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day" (Surah 9:29). If the Obama Justice Department does turn its power to investigating and prosecuting "anti-Muslim speech," and we have no reason to doubt Lynch's word, the U.S. federal government will be taking the first step toward enforcing Sharia law, which labels any speech against Allah or Mohammed or Islam as blasphemy.

HEZEKIAH SEAL FOUND IN OPHEL (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem has announced the discovery of a clay seal bearing King Hezekiah's name in an archaeological site that is under the oversight of Eliat Mazar ("Impression of King Hezekiah's Royal Seal Discovered," Hebrew University, Dec. 2, 2015). The tiny seal (bulla) was found in 2010 in the Ophel at the foot of the southern wall of the Temple Mount, but recently it was more carefully analyzed by Reut ben-Ariyeh. It has a symbol of a two-winged sun, two ankhs, and an inscription in ancient Hebrew that is translated, "Belonging to Hezekiah (son of) Ahaz king of Judah." The bulla originally sealed a papyrus roll tied with thin cords. The symbols of the winged sun from Assyria and the ankh from Egypt, show the pagan

influence that had permeated Israel in that day, even in the court of the good king Hezekiah who led the nation in revival. Doubtless he gave the symbols different meanings than they had in their original pagan context, but the fact remains that he borrowed symbols of idolatrous sun worship. This is the first time a seal bearing the name of a king of Israel was found under a controlled archaeological excavation. Others exist, but they turned up on the antiquities market. The Hezekiah bulla is a wonderful piece of evidence supporting the biblical account of history, but we must not forget that we have a more sure word in Scripture than anything that is retrieved by an archaeologist's spade.

POPE CRITICIZES FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO BELIEVE THEY POSSESS "ABSOLUTE TRUTH" (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Pope Francis Criticizes," *Christian Headlines*, Dec. 1, 2015: "Pope Francis has strictly denounced proponents of fundamentalism who claim that they possess 'absolute truth.' The Pontiff recently concluded his three-country tour of Africa, visiting the Central African Republic, Uganda, and Kenya. The *Christian*

Post reports that during an in-flight press conference on his return trip to Rome, Francis stated, 'We Catholics have some--and not some, many--who believe they possess the absolute truth and go ahead dirtying the other with calumny, with disorientation, and doing evil. They do evil. I say this because it is my Church.' He added that 'ideas and false certainties' can replace faith, love, and God." CONCLUDING NOTE: The confused pope needs to read the Bible, which never contrasts faith and love with doctrinal absolutes. The Psalmist represented the thinking of the true man of God when he said, "Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:128). On his trip to Africa, the pope focused on unity between Christians and Muslims. He said that all "religious believers" need to "support each other as members of our one human family; for all of us are God's children." If this is true, we wonder why the Lord Jesus Christ said to some people, "Ye are of *your* father the devil" (John 8:44)?

THE MOST LETHAL PERSON YOU CAN PUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD IS A MAN (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following statement is excerpted from the personal Facebook page of a highly decorated Marine combat veteran and non-commissioned officer who participated in the 2015 Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF). "We selected our best women for this test unit, selected our most mature female leaders as well. The men (me included) were the most progressive and open minded that you could get. The commander of this unit was a seasoned and successful infantryman. ... No one went in to this with the mentality that we did not want this to succeed. No Marine, regardless of gender, would do that. With our limited manpower, we cannot afford to not train everyone to the best of their abilities. This was as stacked as a unit could get with the best Marines to give it a 100 percent success rate if we possibly could. End result? ... [The data showed that women] are slower on all accounts in almost every technical and tactical aspect and physically weaker in every aspect across the range of military operations. ... Make no mistake. In this realm, you want your fastest, most fit, most physical and most lethal person you can possibly put on the battlefield to overwhelm the enemy's ability to counter what you are throwing at them and in every test case, that person has turned out to be a man. There is nothing gender biased about this; it is what it is" (quoted by Hope Hodge Seck, "Marine War Hero: SecNav 'Off Base' on Women in Combat," *Marine Corps Times*, September 14, 2015).

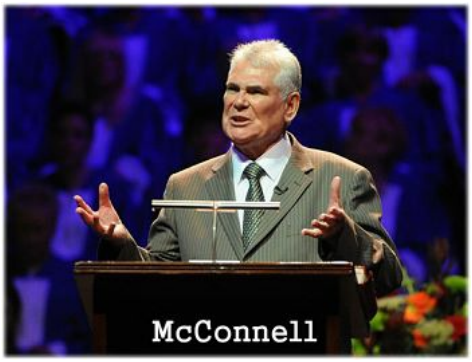
MARS HILL PASTOR RESIGNS, NOT FEELING COMFORTABLE WITH "GOD TALK" (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- Kent Dobson, who took the pastorate of Mars Hill Church in Grand Rapids after its founder left in 2012, has resigned, saying that he is uncomfortable around "too much God talk" and that he isn't sure who God is. "I've always felt restless and a bit homeless when it comes to church and when it comes to God talk. When I hear too much God talk, I start to feel like (shudders) [it's] too much religion. I don't know; it gives me a restless feeling. ... I have always been and I'm still drawn to the very edges of religion and faith and God. I've said a few times that I don't even know if we know what we mean by God anymore. That's the edges of faith" ("Too Much God Talk," *Christian News*, Nov. 25, 2015). This poor man is as deceived as Mars Hill founder Rob Bell. Not knowing "what we mean by God" is not the "edges of faith"; it is wicked unbelief, because God has revealed Himself in the clearest manner possible in the Scriptures. The emerging church is a

bewildering conglomerate of doctrines and practices, and it has "conservative" elements as well as the most liberal and radical. As we explained in the book *What Is the Emerging Church?*, it is the logical outgrowth of New Evangelicalism and its non-judgmental, broad tent philosophy. Contemporary Worship Music is a bridge to the emerging church in all of its forms, and those who cross that bridge can never know where they will end up. They could end up in the radical camp occupied by the Rob Bells and Brian McLarens. Both are "interspiritualists." In 2008, Bell joined the Dalai Lama for the New Agey Seeds of Compassion InterSpiritual Event in Seattle which brought together Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, and others to dialogue on "the themes common to all spiritual traditions." In his book *Velvet Elvis*, Bell gives a glowing recommendation of New Age philosopher Ken Wilber, who believes that man is God. Bell recommends that his readers sit at Wilber's feet for three months! Emerging leader Brian McLaren also recommends Wilber's work. McLaren has said that the emergents are targeting the children and grandchildren of today's "fundamentalists," and when I consider the weakness of the average independent Baptist and "fundamentalist" church and the shocking ignorance of so many pastors, I am convinced that the emergents will indeed succeed in this endeavor.

THE SIN OF WORRY (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from William MacDonald's *Believer's Bible Commentary*: "Worry is unnecessary; there is no need for us to bear the burdens when He is willing and able to bear them for us. Worry is futile; it hasn't solved a problem yet. Worry is sin. A preacher once said: 'Worry is sin because it denies the wisdom of God; it says that He doesn't know what He's doing. It denies the love of God; it says He does not care. And it denies the power of God; it says that He isn't able to deliver me from whatever is causing me to worry.'" "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippines 4:6). "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

PASTOR TO GO ON TRIAL FOR COMMENTS ON ISLAM (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - In a portent of the times, a pastor is going to trial in Northern Ireland for comments about Islam in a sermon. Pastor James McConnell of Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle in Belfast called Islam "Satanic" and "heathen," both of which are true according to the Bible's teaching. Pastor McConnell is charged by God to "preach the Word, reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Timothy 4:2), and that is what he was doing. The Irish government has become so audacious as to try to rule over the content of Bible preaching. Because the sermon was streamed online, the 78-year-old pastor is being prosecuted under the 2003 Communications Acts for allegedly "causing a grossly offensive message to be sent by means of a public electronic communications network" ("Pastor to go on trial," RTE News, Dec. 14, 2015; RTE is Ireland's national broadcasting service). Hundreds of Christians have attended the pre-trial hearings to show their support of the preacher and their protest of this brazen attack on the freedom of religion and the freedom of speech. Pastor McConnell isn't cowed. He told the press, "It's a good day for hanging--particularly to hang the prosecution." "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:1-3).



GOOGLE CHAIRMAN WANTS "HATE-SPEECH SPELL-CHECKER" TO FILTER THE INTERNET (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The Internet is too powerful a

THE PLANT THAT BREATHES THROUGH A SNORKEL (Friday Church News Notes, December 11, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, Dec. 8, 2014: "Plants need oxygen, and those that live on the land breathe through their leaves. Other plants are designed to live and breathe under water. However, when a land plant is submerged in water, it can drown, just like one of us. Rice is actually a land plant that draws its oxygen from the air; yet, most of the plant must be submerged in water for it to survive. It can grow this way in water as deep as fifteen feet. In flood-prone areas, rice has been known to grow as much as a foot per day in order to keep its topmost leaves out of the water. The reason that rice plants don't drown brings us to another of the Creator's clever designs. The rice plant draws air in through its leaves, as well as through a sheath of air that surrounds its submerged stalk. Rice gives off one carbon dioxide molecule for every oxygen molecule it consumes. But because carbon dioxide dissolves more quickly in water than does oxygen, a vacuum is created within the plant, pulling in still more air. It appears that God has created so many different forms of life that there are almost no conditions on Earth where

something couldn't live. That itself is a witness that He, and not the forces of evolution, is responsible for creating all living things."

communication device to be left alone by thought police, and I am convinced that it is only prayer and the grace of God that has kept it free in most parts of the world thus far. A reminder of what many want to do came recently when Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Google, wrote in the *New York Times* that he wants to use technology to "filter-out extremist material." He said, "We should build tools to help de-escalate tensions on social media--sort of like spell-checkers, but for hate and harassment." But who is to define "hate and harassment"? Many Islamists define any negative view of Islam as hate. Many homosexuals define support for traditional marriage as hate. Many feminists define anti-feminist speech as hateful harassment, and many economic liberals and socialists define speech opposing the welfare state as hate. In fact, on some college and university campuses, ANY "offensive" speech is hateful.

WALDENSES AND THE POPE (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Earlier this year, Pope Francis became the first pope to visit a Waldensian church. On June 22, he visited Turin, Italy, and spoke in the church there. He even kissed the Bible which was banned and burned by his infamous predecessors. For 600 years, the Roman Catholic Church hounded and slaughtered Waldenses in their home territory in the Cottian Alps in northwest Italy, in France, and elsewhere. This is a fact of history that was documented by Waldensian pastors who were on the receiving end of the Inquisition. For many years I collected these histories, and we eventually published them in the *Fundamental Baptist Digital Library*. As late as 1690, Waldenses were being killed for their faith at the hands of Roman armies, and they did not receive full religious liberty in Italy until 1848. Since then, they have apostatized. In 1947, the Waldenses built the Agape ecumenical center, and beginning in the early 1980s, it

hosted "ecumenical conferences for homosexuals" (*You Are My Witnesses: The Waldenses across 800 Years*, p. 303). In 1975, the Waldenses in Italy merged with the liberal Methodists and joined the World Council of Churches, which promotes unity among all churches and religions. In 2003, David Brown, Brian Snider, and I visited the Waldensian Museum in Torre Pellice, not far from Turin, and the woman in charge told us that she doesn't believe in heaven or hell. She said that heaven is a metaphor. When asked how a person can be saved, she replied that "the main task we have is to live our life and when we are dead, God will think about us. Just try to be faithful to your vocation that God calls you to do."

THE WALDENSIAN BIBLE (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The Waldenses lived in northern Italy and France and had congregations in many other parts of Europe through their missionary work. The name "Waldenses" encompassed a variety of doctrine and practice, but most Waldenses held the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice and rejected Rome's errors. Many, if not most, were baptistic (prior to the Reformation). For this reason, they

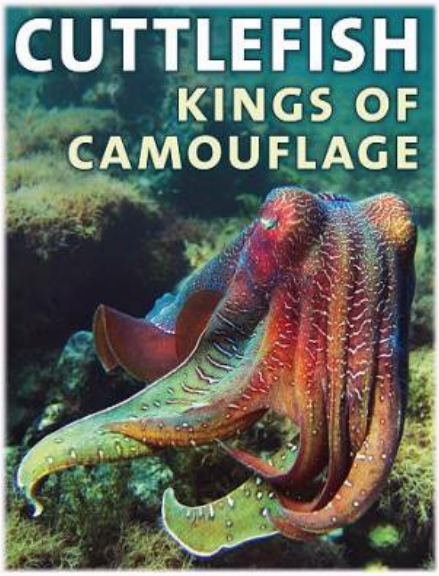
were bitterly and terribly persecuted for hundreds of years. They believed in salvation by God's grace alone without works and loved the Bible as God's infallible Word. They read the Bible, memorized the Bible, and taught the Bible. One of their Bible colleges was in Piedmont in northern Italy. A beautiful, full-size model of the multi-room stone building can be seen in the Waldenses museum in Valdes, North Carolina, where a group of Waldenses settled in 1893. Their most ancient Bible was in the Romaunt language, a common language of the south of Europe from the 8th to the 14th centuries. It was the language of the troubadours, nobles, knights, and men of letters. Only seven of the Waldensian Romaunt New Testaments survived Rome's burnings, and I have examined two of these, one at Cambridge University and one at Trinity College, Dublin. They were based on the Latin text, and as a result they have the Trinitarian "comma" in 1 John 5:7, but they lack "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16, which was preserved in Greek but not in Latin. For many centuries, Rome forbad the Bible to be translated into and read in the common languages. Well into the 19th century, the popes continued to hurl curses at the Bible societies for the "sin" of distributing the Bible among the people, even though those Bibles were usually "without note or commentary." Rome cursed the Waldo Romaunt, the Olivetan French, and the Diodati Italian. But in the 1970s, the Waldenses joined hands with the Roman Catholic Church to produce an "interconfessional Bible" based on the corrupt Egyptian text of ancient heretical origin. It is this corrupt interconfessional Bible that Pope Francis kissed in his visit to the Waldenses of June 2015. (Our studies on the Waldenses can be found in the book *Rome and the Bible: Tracing the History of the Roman Catholic Church and Its Persecution of the Bible and Bible Believers*, available from www.wayoflife.org.)

CHURCH OF ENGLAND BISHOP SAYS GOD SHOULD NOT BE REFERRED TO AS "HE" (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The Church of England has appointed seven female "bishops" since last December. One of those, Rachel Trewood, Bishop of Gloucester, said that it is wrong to refer to God as "He" because God is "gender neutral" ("God is not a he or a she," *The Guardian*, Oct. 24, 2015). Trewood is one of the House of Parliament's "26 Lords Spiritual," which is sad because she doesn't believe the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: OUR FATHER which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). Trewood also says that she is not comfortable with the term "mother." "There is something about the whole connotation of 'mother' that has a sense of dependency for me. It's not how I want to be looked at. I see myself as a leader, as leading from among the people."

CHURCH OF ENGLAND APPOINTS FEMALE NUDIST AS BISHOP (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Another one of the seven new female Church of England bishops appointed since December 2014 is Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne, a supporter of nudist colonies. Part of her ecclesiastical territory is the Studland nudist beach where her family experienced "naturism" when she was a child ("Church of England appoints nudist bishop," Breitbart, Nov. 30, 2015). Though Gorham allegedly "stopped going nude while she was a teen," she has written a treatise supporting the practice and urging "the Church" to remove "false taboos." "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). "And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid" (Mark 5:15).

SCIENCE MIXED WITH SCIENCE FICTION (Friday Church News Notes, December 18, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, November 25, 2015: "Many people--especially those who believe in creation--avoid watching science shows on TV because these programs are usually saturated with unscientific claims favoring evolution. However, even Darwinian soapboxes like Nova can be worth watching, just as long as you do so with a discerning eye. You especially need to pay close attention to the unwarranted assumptions and faulty logic you'll often encounter. For instance, there's 'Kings of Camouflage'--a Nova program about the cuttlefish's amazing ability to instantaneously change the color and texture of its skin. The program did a good job of describing the color disks that expand or shrink in size. But then the scientist added: 'My guess is that their skin evolved for camouflage, because as soon as they got rid of the big shell, they had to hide from predators.' Well, Mr. Scientist, why did the cuttlefish discard its shell in the first place if it was beneficial to its survival? And why didn't the cuttlefish just evolve its old shell back? Instead, evolutionists guess that the cuttlefish evolved the most



complex skin of any creature on the planet as well as an amazingly complex eye and nervous system that allows it all to work. So when you watch science shows on television, learn what you can from the true science. Enjoy the breathtaking photography as you marvel at the wondrous creatures that God has designed. And teach your children how to spot the atheistic philosophy that's camouflaged to look like true science." **NOTE FROM BRO. CLOUD:** We would also ask "Mr. Evolutionary Scientist" the following question: Assuming that your "just so" story was true and the cuttlefish evolved its amazing, mind-bogglingly complex biological camouflage system because it needed to, HOW exactly did this happen? What was the evolutionary creative mechanism?

APPEALS COURT OVERTURNS CONVICTION OF STREET PREACHER WHO QUOTED THE BIBLE (Friday Church News Notes, December 25, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - On December 11, an appeals court in the United Kingdom overturned the conviction of a street preacher who quoted from the Bible against homosexuality. Michael Overd was convicted in March of offending public order because he quoted Leviticus 20 in a public conversation. The homosexuals who brought the accusation had actually instigated the conversation in an apparent attempt to antagonize Overd. He was fined $300 and ordered to pay compensation and costs totaling

$1800 for causing "emotional pain." Now this conviction has been overruled by Taunton Crown Court Circuit Judge David Ticehurst, who upheld Overd's appeal. He was defended by Christian Concern. In comments following the reversal of his conviction, Overd said: "I give thanks to God for today's vindication. I have known God's peace and presence throughout this difficult time. Today the Court was faced with the farcical situation of a witness telling the judge that he couldn't even remember what I had said, but simply asserting that it was 'homophobic'--as though the mere assertion that something is 'homophobic' is enough to curtail free speech. In this country, we are now in the ludicrous situation where the slightest accusation of a 'phobia', be it 'homophobia' or 'Islamaphobia', is enough to paralyse rational action by the police and authorities. The highly politicised dogma of 'phobias' now too often results in trumped up charges and legal action. There is a chilling effect. Reasonable, law-abiding people now feel that they can't say certain things and that is dangerous. Totalitarian regimes develop when ordinary people feel that there are certain things that can't be said" ("Christian preachers wins appeal," *Christian Concern*, Dec. 11, 2015).

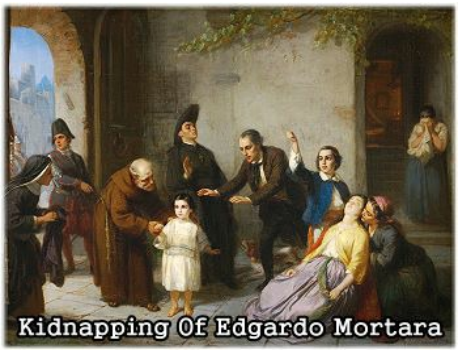
TEXAS LAW ALLOWS HOSPITAL TO "TERMINATE" PATIENT IN SPITE OF PATIENT'S OR FAMILY'S WISHES (Friday Church News Notes, December 25, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from from "Striking video shows patient begging to stay alive," LifeNews.com, Dec. 7, 2015: "Ri*ght now*, an American hero is fighting for his right to make that decision from his hospital bed at Houston Methodist Hospital. David Christopher "Chris" Dunn is one of countless Texans who have been victimized by the draconian Texas Advance Directives Act (TADA), enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999. The law--which benefits the medical lobby and jeopardizes medically vulnerable Texans--protects the financial and discriminatory interests of hospitals and physicians by abrogating the civil liberties of patients. When a hospital or physician determines for any reason that they disagree with a patient's decision about his or her own medical treatment and invokes TADA, Texas law protects those healthcare providers as they remove life-sustaining treatment from the patient even when doing so means overriding the patient's desire and right to life--and even when the treatment is benefitting the patient. The law does not require that the hospital inform the patient or family about the reasons or basis for the removal of treatment, which could include financial reasons, discrimination, or subjective quality of life value judgments about the life of the patient. Chris, who has served Texas and the nation as an EMT, in the Harris County Sheriff's office, and Homeland Security employee, received his death sentence when Methodist invoked the TADA statutory process last month. After the hospital announced that care would be forcibly removed from Chris against his will, Chris's family contacted Texas Right to Life, and, with legal aid, an extension of the ten-day waiting period was secured. ... A Harris County judge has granted two consecutive two-week extensions thus far, but Houston Methodist Hospital has countered these interventions with additional court filings to remove Chris's mother from the process. His mother, Evelyn, has been vigilant in

protecting Chris since he is intermittently sedated. ... What makes the Texas Advance Directives Act even more despicable is the airtight power of the hospital to kill patients without *any* recourse to appeal the death sentence imposed by the hospital committee. That's right--the final arbiter over the hospital's fatal decision is the hospital!"

TODD BENTLEY RAISING THE DEAD (Friday Church News Notes, December 25, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Todd Bentley, the discredited

healing evangelist of "Lakeland Outpouring" infamy, is back at it. Now he claims to be raising the dead in Pakistan. A "healing" crusade in Karachi was allegedly attended by 500,000 Muslims, 290,000 of whom "accepted Christ as their Saviour." The highlight, though, was the raising from the dead of three people, including a boy who had been dead for "20 minutes." In a YouTube clip, Bentley says, "The Archbishop over the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches of Pakistan was on the platform. And he came like the Pope himself to Pakistan to welcome us into the country" ("Controversial Evangelist," *Christian Post*, Dec. 18, 2015). Bentley was the "evangelist" of a Pentecostal healing "revival" at Ignite Church in Lakeland, Florida, in 2008, where he made all sorts of outrageous claims, such as a man being able to see out of a glass eye. His ministry was unable to document any of the healing miracles. After weeks of hoopla, the meeting shut down when it was learned that Bentley had an "unhealthy relationship" with a female staffer and was engaged in "excessive drinking." He subsequently divorced his wife and married the staffer. Bentley's meetings have a sideshow feel with raucous music and the grossly-tattooed "evangelist" crying out, "Come and get some," and "[Miracles are] popping like popcorn." He claims to know what is happening in the audience, calling out things like, "Someone's getting a new spinal cord tonight." He "flings" the Spirit upon people while weirdly yelling, "blah, blah, blah, blah." "Holy laughter," spiritual drunkenness, violent shaking, and "falling under the power" are an integral part of the "revival." Bentley claims to have seen many angels, including "financial angels" who spread prosperity to him and those who attend his meetings. One of his angels is named "Emma," though there are no female angels in Scripture. My friends, God is not dead, but He has given us clear instructions in Scripture about healing. If someone is sick, he is to call the elders of the church and confess any sins, and they are to anoint him with oil and pray over him (James 5:13-16). This assumes, first, that the individual is born again through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It assumes, second, that he or she is a member of a Bible-believing church. James 5 does not describe a "healing crusade." We believe in divine healing for today through prayer, but we don't believe in Pentecostal showmen. See the reports "*I Believe in Miracles*" and "*Todd Bentley and the Lakeland Deception*" at www.wayoflife.org.

WHEN THE POPE KIDNAPPED A JEWISH BOY (Friday Church News Notes, December 25, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The last official recorded action of the Inquisition in Italy was in 1858, when the Catholic authorities seized a six-year-old boy, Edgardo Mortara, from a Jewish family. Since he had supposedly been secretly baptized by his Catholic nursemaid when he was in danger of death, the little boy was considered a Catholic and a Christian! It being illegal in the Papal States for a Catholic child to be raised by Jews, police and a Catholic inquisitor entered the house one evening in June and seized the boy. He was taken to Rome and adopted by Pope Pius IX. His parents were not allowed to see him for weeks, and afterward they could visit him only under supervision. The boy's distraught father, Momolo Mortara, spent years seeking help "in all quarters," but it was in vain. He was informed that they could only have Edgardo back if the family would



convert to Catholicism, which they refused to do. They had seven other children. The outcry against the pope's actions was loud, but he called his detractors "dogs." In a speech in 1871, he said, "Of these dogs, there are too many of them at present in Rome, and we hear them howling in the streets, and they are disturbing us in all places" (Kenneth Stowe, *Popes, Church, and Jews in the Middle Ages*, pp. 57-58). Edgardo became a Catholic priest, traveling widely in an attempt to convert Jews, though largely unsuccessfully.

THE TEARS OF GOD (Friday Church News Notes, December 25, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The Bible was given to reveal God to man, and He is a God like no God that man could devise. He is one God, but He is a Trinity. He is Spirit, but He became a man. He is a lion

and a lamb. He is a Judge and a Saviour. He is a tender father and a consuming fire. He is the God of heaven and hell. The most amazing side of God is His tender mercy. God is so merciful that He humbled Himself to become a man, to come into this sin cursed world, to live among sinners, to live as poor man, to live as a Servant, and to allow Himself to be shamefully treated and crucified in order to atone for the sins of His enemies. God is meek and lowly in heart (Mat. 11:29). He is so merciful that He humbles Himself to seek sinners and to call them to His feast of salvation. He humbly knocks on the door of the rebel, desiring him to open the door so that He might sup with him (Rev. 3:20). God is so merciful that He weeps over sinners even when He knows they won't repent. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it" (Luke 19:41). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

THE ROCKS BEAR WITNESS (Friday Church News Notes, December 25, 2015, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, January 19, 2015: "We have always been told that it takes millions of years for muddy deposits to turn into rock. Those who believe in creation have always disagreed. It seems pretty clear to us that much of the sedimentary rock we see today was deposited during the Great Flood at the time of Noah, which was not millions of years ago. Creationists generally place the Flood at about 4,600 years ago. Until recently, evolutionists dismissed this date as impossible: sedimentary rocks simply could not form that fast. Well, now it seems that they spoke too soon. While digging some trenches in a salt marsh, a team of sedimentologists found stony nodules in the mud. Further research on how the nodules formed revealed that a mud deposit can be transformed into a layer of sedimentary rock in as little as six months! They found that two bacteria are responsible for this. One species gets its energy from the sulphates in sea water. In the process, it produces hydrogen sulphide. The second species of bacteria can do the same thing. But if there is too much hydrogen sulphide, it can also change iron compounds so that they react with hydrogen sulphide and other salts. The result is stony lumps of iron sulphide and iron carbonate--sedimentary rock that is hardened quickly enough to fossilize any animal before it decays. Science has now confirmed what creationists who believe the Bible have always suspected. There are natural processes that can form sedimentary rock within the limited timeframe allowed by a literal reading of scriptural history." (Source Andy York, "Set in Stone," *New Scientist*, Sept. 19, 1998).

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- Exalting the Lord Jesus Christ; His eternal perfect, and preserved Word; and the Gospel of his Grace. (2 Peter 3:1-2, 18)
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- Challenging Christian workers to uphold the truth and resist the apostasy of our times. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)
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