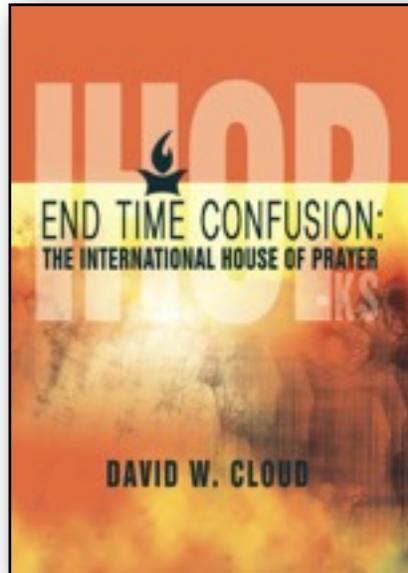

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

CATHOLICS, PENTECOSTALS, AND SOUTHERN BAPTISTS IN “BEAUTIFUL UNITY”

Last week, Southern Baptist President Ronnie Floyd participated in the the Onething 2015 interdenominational conference in Kansas City, hosted by the International House of Prayer (IHOP). In his speech to the rockin’ mixed multitude, the Baptist pastor said, “My being here isn’t an endorsement of your theology or your endorsing my orthodoxy. ... We’re not in total agreement about life, ministry or the Bible. ... Yet my being here is a clear indication that people must come together and pray” (“Southern Baptist President Leads,” *Charisma News*, Jan. 4, 2016). Pastor Floyd has no biblical authority to pray with a mixed multitude representing different theologies and even different gospels. IHOP is a radical charismatic outfit that believes it will release the judgments described in the book of Revelation and usher in the return of Christ by its “spiritual warfare.” As we have documented in the book *End-Time Confusion*, IHOP is built on lying prophecies and false “signs and wonders.” They are deceived by demons masquerading as angels of light. One of the worship leaders at Onething 2015 was Matt Maher, a Roman Catholic who prays to Mary and believes that his musical calling is to create ecumenical oneness. Other Catholic charismatics were in attendance. Leslie Bertucci posted, “As a Catholic



Charismatic, I wept tears of joy so many times this week as I had the privilege of worshipping the living God with so many diverse brothers and sisters in Christ.” Ryan Baptista added, “There was a beautiful unity across denominations this week.” Ronnie Floyd is disobeying the Word of God and is therefore helping create a “one world church.” The Bible commands God’s people to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), but Pastor Floyd did not do this. If he were an earnest contender, he would not have been invited in the first place. The Bible commands God’s people to mark and avoid those that create

divisions by false doctrine (Romans 16:17). Floyd ignored this and the Bible’s many other separation commands. Further, the Bible commands God’s people to have the same mind and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10). The unity spoken of in Scripture is always a unity in truth. This forbids the type of “unity in diversity” that is promoted by IHOP. The spiritual blindness and deep compromise of the Southern Baptist Convention was on full display by Floyd’s presence at Onething. (For more about IHOP, including an eyewitness report of their 24/7 prayer room, see *End-Time Confusion: The International House of Prayer*, available in the free eBook section at www.wayoflife.org.)

SECULAR REPORTER EXPLAINS HILLSONG’S POPULARITY

Hillsong is one of the world’s most influential groups of megachurches and produces some of the most influential contemporary worship music. Hillsong is a multimillion dollar brand, and its leaders know exactly what they are doing by conforming Christianity to the Western pop culture. A reporter for the ultra-hip, “metro-sexuality” *GQ* magazine defined Hillsong’s popularity in a recent report on Hillsong New York City. After identifying Hillsong as the church of choice for the likes of Justin Bieber, Kendall Jenner, Selena Gomez, and Bono, and after

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interviewing Hillsong attendees, she says: "And all around the church, that is the story the congregation tells from beneath their hats: that finally there are clergymen who look familiar, who offer messages that relate to their actual lives, who accept that they've lived in New York long enough to know **it won't fly to smear gay people, or tell women to go home and have kids, or expect young, bright, beautiful, maybe-cool people to dress humbly and plainly and ignore the thrills of modern life in a mega-city.** This church is the one, finally, that really is different" (Taffy Brodesser-Akner, "What Would Cool Jesus Do?" GQ, Dec. 17, 2015). Taffy's report makes it clear that she doesn't understand the gospel, thinking that baptism is regeneration, but then again, a visit to Hillsong probably didn't help her much in the theology department, that not being their strong suit. She definitely understands worldly cool, though, and she recognizes that Hillsong's draw is its compromise with the pop culture and its refusal to preach against the elements of worldly cool that people love the most. If Hillsong suddenly started preaching repentance and the whole counsel of God and proclaiming the command of God's Word to separate from "the thrills of modern life in a megacity," they would just as suddenly be *mega nothing*. I suggest that they start with this one: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Ephesians 5:11).

SECULAR REPORTER UNDERSTANDS THE MOTIVATION FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

An official report published by Rome says that Jews (and everyone else) are saved, and Jews should not be the target of evangelism. The document, "The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable," was published by The Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, one of Rome's many ecumenical ventures that began with the Second Vatican Council. The fifth chapter of the report "emphasizes that through Jesus Christ--and through his death and resurrection--all people have a part in salvation, all are saved. Although Jews cannot believe in Jesus Christ as the universal redeemer, they have a part in salvation, because the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable." The sixth chapter deals with evangelism, and urges Catholics to "refrain from attempts at conversion or mission toward Jews" ("Summary of 'The Gifts and Calling of God,'" *Vatican Information Service*, Dec. 10, 2015). If Jews are saved by means of the covenants of God without faith in Jesus Christ, why did Christ Himself call upon them to repent and believe (Luke 13:1-5), and why did He warn them of eternal judgment when they rejected Him (Matthew 11:20-24)? The Roman Catholic Church is the heart and soul of Mystery Babylon, and she is uniting with all of her daughters today. Note that this latest document says that ALL men have a part in salvation. It is impossible to be more ecumenical than that. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

SECULAR REPORTER DESCRIBES THE POWER OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP: HOT-BREATHED AND SEXY

While researching Hillsong New York City, a reporter for *GQ* magazine experienced the power of Hillsong's worship music. Taffy Brodesser-Akner described the experience as follows: "The music of Hillsong is a catalog of Selena Gomez-grade ballads, with melodies that all resemble one another, pleasingly, like spa music. ... **Lyricaly, it's a hymn, and yet the singing is hot-breathed and sexy-close into microphones. It made my body feel confused**" ("What Would Cool Jesus Do?" *GQ*, Dec. 17, 2015). What the reporter experienced is the confusion of combining the holy with the sensual. From my late 60s and early 70s "hippie" days, I understand all too well the sensual power of rock & roll, even in its "soft" forms. After I came to Christ in 1973 at age 23, the Spirit of God dealt with me about separating from the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John. 15-17), which is a perfect definition of the music I had loved since the early 60s. It was not an easy decision or a quick one, but one day, probably in early 1974, I shut off my car radio and turned my

back on rock & roll for good. I have never regretted it, and through the years I have re-examined that decision before the Lord and have been reaffirmed and strengthened in my resolve. I made that decision because rock is sensual and worldly. By its lyrics and music, it has, from its inception, promoted rebellion to God's "strict" path of holiness. More than any other one societal influence, rock has promoted selfishness, stirred up rebellion, broken up homes, created alienation, encouraged moral relativism. I lived rock & roll, and I have studied rock & roll. The *GQ* reporter unknowingly wrote one of the most candid and accurate descriptions of contemporary worship music that I have ever read. "Hot-breathed and sexy" (apart from the marriage bed, Hebrews 13:4) has nothing to do with biblical Christianity, and the fact that CCM can be described as making someone's "body feel confused" is an irrefutable witness to the fact that it is *not* holy. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

N. IRELAND PASTOR ACQUITTED OF OFFENSE AGAINST ISLAM

A pastor in Northern Ireland has been acquitted of charges that stemmed from remarks against Islam that he delivered in a sermon a year and a half ago. The judge ruled that the 78-year-old pastor's words were "offensive" but not "grossly offensive," therefore not falling under the purview of the 2003 Communications Act. In a sermon in May 2014, Pastor McConnell of Whitewell Metropolitan Chapel of northern Belfast defended Miriam Ibrahim who was in jail and was facing 80 lashes of the whip or possibly death because she converted to Christianity and married a Christian man. Pastor McConnell said, "People say there are good Muslims in Britain--that may be so--but I don't trust them. Islam is heathen,

Islam is satanic, Islam is a doctrine spawned in hell." Because the sermon was streamed online, McConnell was subsequently charged with violating the Communications Act that forbade "sending, or causing to be sent, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that was grossly offensive." The judge said, "The courts need to be very careful not to criminalise speech which, however contemptible, is no more than offensive. It is not the task of the criminal law to censor offensive utterances" ("Pastor McConnell not guilty," *BBC News*, Jan. 5, 2016). After the trial, Pastor McConnell said his only regret was the response from the Muslim community that he was "out to hurt

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THE HEATHEN RAGE

Psalm 2 is one of the Bible's amazing prophecies. It describes the atheism and moral rebellion of the end times. "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). Rage against God and His holy laws is the chief characteristic of the humanistic philosophy of the past three centuries, the philosophy that has largely overthrown the influence of Christianity in Western culture. In *The Age of Reason*, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) called the Bible "a book of lies and contradictions" and said it is more likely "the word of a demon than the word of God." Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) rejected a God who punishes those who displease Him. Bentham was an apologist for homosexuality and exhorted governments not to legislate against "drunkenness and fornication." Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) called himself "the most terrible opponent of Christianity." Nietzsche concluded his autobiography *Ecce Homo* (*Behold the*

Man) with the blasphemous words, "Dionysus vs. the Crucified" (not long before he went insane). John Dewey (1859-1952), father of "progressive education" and co-author of the *Humanist Manifesto*, called God "a faded piece of metaphysical goods" (Dewey, "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy," 1916). Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), father of existentialism and perhaps the most influential philosopher of the 20th century, was an atheist whose "life was one continuous celebration of debauchery." In his autobiography, Sartre blasphemed the Holy Spirit, claiming that he caught Him and threw Him out of his life. Rage against God's holy laws is also the chief characteristic of the western pop culture that has spread throughout the earth. The rage is expressed continually through movies, television, literature, the news media, the fields of education, fashion, and art. The rebellion is seen in pagan religions, communism, evolution, militant atheism (e.g., the American Atheists paid for billboard ads in September 2012 calling the God of the Bible "sadistic" and Jesus a "useless Savior"), and the homosexual rights movement.

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them." Sammy Wilson, Democratic Unionist Party MP, who appeared as a character witness for McConnell, told BBC Radio Ulster's *Talkback*, "Anyone who is engaged in public debate or speech ought to be happy at the result today. We live in a free society and in a free society, people should be free to express the beliefs that they hold." He added that if Mr. McConnell had accepted a police caution, it would have introduced "a chill factor" into issues of public speech.

INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.